



## A Pragmatic Discourse Analysis of Speech Acts in Mark Twain's Short Story "Journalism in Tennessee"

Sarah Qasim Abdulameer Asst. Prof. Ya'arub Mahmood Hamiedi (M.A.)  
University of Diyala College of Education for Humanities

### Abstract

*This paper is a pragmatic discourse analysis of speech acts that are performed by major characters in the short story "Journalism in Tennessee" by Mark Twain. This paper deals with the theory of speech act and the issue of indirectness in English. It sums up and comments on theoretical definitions and assumptions concerning the theory of speech act given by some linguists and language philosophers. Speech act theory is a theory of action. It is concerned with the ways in which words can be used not only to give information but also to carry out actions. The primary theory used in this study is Searle's (1969) model of speech act. The study shows that Twain's use of speech acts adds depth and comedic effect to the story.*

### Email:

*malinguistics2024@uodiyala.edu.iq*  
*yaarubmh@gmail.com*

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## المخلص

هذه الورقة البحثية هي تحليل تداولي خطابي لافعال الكلام التي تقوم بها الشخصيات الرئيسية في قصة "الصحافة في تينيسي" لمارك توين. تتناول هذه الورقة نظرية افعال الكلام والكلام غير المباشر في اللغة الإنجليزية. تلخص هذه الورقة البحثية وتعلق على التعريفات والافتراضات النظرية المتعلقة بنظرية الأفعال الكلامية التي قدمها بعض اللغويين وفلاسفة اللغة. نظرية الأفعال الكلامية هي نظرية فعلية. وهي تهتم بالطرق التي يمكن بها استخدام الكلمات ليس فقط لإعطاء المعلومات ولكن أيضاً لتنفيذ أفعال. النظرية الأساسية المستخدمة في هذه الدراسة هي نموذج سيرل (1969) للأفعال الكلامية. وظهرت الدراسة ان استخدام توين لافعال الكلام يضيف عمقاً وتأثيراً كوميدياً للقصة.

### 1.1 General Introduction

Language is an inseparable part of our everyday lives. It is the main tool used to transmit messages, to communicate ideas, thoughts and opinions. It situates us in the society we live in; it is a social affair which creates and further determines our position in all kinds of various social networks and institutions. In certain circumstances we are literally dependent on its appropriate usage and there are moments when we need to be understood quite correctly. Language is involved in nearly all fields of human activity and maybe that is why language and linguistic communication have become a widely discussed topic among linguists, lawyers, psychologists and philosophers.

According to an American language philosopher J.R. Searle (1976,16) speaking a language is performing speech acts, acts such as making statements, giving commands, asking questions or making promises. Searle states that all linguistic communication involves linguistic (speech) acts. In other words, speech acts are the basic or minimal units of linguistic communication. They are not mere artificial linguistic constructs as it may seem, their understanding together with the acquaintance of context in which they are performed are often essential for decoding the whole utterance and its proper meaning. The speech acts are used in standard quotidian exchanges as well as in jokes or drama for instance.

Speech act theory was pioneered by another American language philosopher J.L. Austin. His observations were delivered at Harvard University in 1955 as the William James Lectures which were posthumously published in his famous book *How to Do Things with Words*. It is Austin who introduces basic terms and areas to study and distinguishes locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. As Lyons puts it: Austin's main purpose was to challenge the view that the only philosophically (and also linguistically) interesting function of language was that of making true or false statements (Lyons,1981,173).

Austin proves that there are undoubtedly more functions language can exercise. The theory of speech acts thus comes to being and Austin's research becomes a cornerstone for his followers. Performatives are historically the first

speech acts to be examined within the theory of speech acts. Austin defines a performative as an utterance which contains a special type of verb (a performative verb) by force of which it performs an action. In other words, in using a performative, a person is not just saying something but is actually doing something (Wardhaugh, 1992:283).

Searle is conscious of the additional requirement for non-linguistic institutions to exist so that 'directive speech acts' are successful (happy). A command, for example, is obeyed once the speaker is in a position of authority over the hearer (Searle, 1969, 66). This point was made in the Harvard Lectures as well (Austin, 2020, 18). In the case of 'Expressives' the direction of fit is presupposed because when one congratulates or expresses condolence there is already an antecedent speech act that is being assumed.

## 1.2 The problem

The problem addressed in this study can be represented by the answers to the following questions:

- 1- In Mark Twain's "Journalism in Tennessee" what kinds of illocutionary speech acts are delivered?
- 2- How are such speech acts carried out in "Journalism in Tennessee"?

## 1.3 The Aims

This study aims to investigate the pragmatic functions and aesthetic influence of different illocutionary speech acts in "Journalism in Tennessee".

## 1.4 Scope of the study

This study is restricted only to speech acts and their classifications in "Journalism in Tennessee".

## 1.5 Value of the Study

The study will enable students or readers to understand the diverse types of illocutionary speech acts used in "Journalism in Tennessee", which one is more frequently used and for which purpose .

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 On Discourse Analysis

According to paltridge discourse analysis is concerned with linguistic patterns in different text and analyses, how language is used in different social and cultural situations. Discourse takes into account the manner in which language is used to convey various understanding and points of views about the world. It looks at how language use affects social identities and interpersonal relationships. It also takes into account the way in which language is used to create identities and world views (Paltridge, 2012 , 2) .

The fact that we identify our work as "discourse analysis " rather than "language analysis" reflects that language is not our primary concern as an

abstract system, instead we usually show interest in what follows . People use their knowledge of language, which is based on experiences of things they have said, heard, seen or written before to achieve a variety of tasks in the world including information interchange, emotional expression, creating beauty, amusing others and oneself and so forth .While language analysis which can be thought as an abstract system. Discourse is both the source of this knowledge and the result of it. People use what they already know in creating and interpreting new discourse.(Johnstone and Andrus , 2023,2).

## 2.2 On Speech Act Theory

J.L. Austin is the first philosopher who highlighted the concept of speech act theory and the use of utterances not only to say something but also to perform the action which are called performatives. He refutes the traditional philosophical view which is concerned with how to describe statements either to state of affairs or to state some facts that can be either true or false these statements are called constatives. (Austin,1962, 6).

(Levinson,1983,134 ) points out that Austin during his investigations, the distinction between constative and performative should be abandoned. He notices that the declarative sentence can be described as a part of action not as a state of affairs. Although the sentence (I state that there is life on earth) has been already deemed as an example of the constatives, it shows a strong tendency towards the performatives. Similarly, the verbs: assert, declare, claim, mention, etc., seem to bear all the hallmarks of a performative verb. (Quirk et al. ,1985:804) supports this view that there is no clear distinction between performatives and constatives (statements).

Searle's accomplishment was to move beyond this stage and provide a theoretical framework that allowed the three dimension of utterance, meaning and action involved in speech acts to be seen as being united together, thereby giving substance to Austin's idea of a general theory of speech acts (Smith ,2003:8).

The term of felicity conditions was proposed by Austin who defines them as follows (Austin, 1962: 14 – 15):

- A. There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances.
- B. The particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked.
- C. The procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and completely.
- D. Where, as often, the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts or feelings, or for the inauguration of certain consequential conduct on

the part of any participant, then a person participating in and so invoking the procedure must intend so to conduct themselves, and further must actually so conduct themselves subsequently.

### 2.3 Locutionary, Illocutionary and Perlocutionary Acts

The locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts are, in fact, three basic components with the help of which a speech act is formed. Austin defines them as follow, the locutionary act is the act of saying something with a specific meaning and reference.

The Illocutionary act is the act performed in saying something. which is the act that is called and recognized by the explicit performative verb. The act carried out in response or as a result of speaking is known as perlocutionary act (Austin , 1962) .

Illocutionary acts are considered the core of the theory of speech acts. As already suggested above, an illocutionary act is the action performed by the speaker in producing a given utterance. The illocutionary act is closely connected with speaker's intentions, e.g. stating, questioning, promising, requesting, giving commands, threatening and many others. As Yule (Yule, 1996: 48) claims, the illocutionary act is thus performed via the communicative force of an utterance which is also generally known as illocutionary force of the utterance. Basically, the illocutionary act indicates how the whole utterance is to be taken in the conversation.

Sometimes it is not easy to determine what kind of illocutionary act the speaker performs. To hint his intentions and to show how the proposition should be taken the speaker uses many indications, ranging from the most obvious ones, such as unambiguous performative verbs, to the more opaque ones, among which mainly various paralinguistic features (stress, timbre and intonation) and word order should be mentioned. All these hints or let's say factors influencing the meaning of the utterance are called Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices(Yule, 1996: 49).

The locutionary act can be viewed as a mere uttering of some words in certain language, while the illocutionary and perlocutionary acts convey a more complicated message for the hearer. An illocutionary act communicates the speaker's intentions behind the locution and a perlocutionary act reveals the effect the speaker wants to exercise over the hearer. This can be demonstrated on a simple example:

- Would you close the door, please?

The surface form, and also the locutionary act, of this utterance is a question with a clear content (Close the door.) The illocutionary act conveys a request from the part of the speaker and the perlocutionary act expresses the speaker's desire that the hearer should go and close the door. Perlocutionary acts, Austin's

last element in the three-fold definition of speech acts, are performed with the intention of producing a further effect on the hearer. Sometimes it may seem that perlocutionary acts do not differ from illocutionary acts very much, yet there is one important feature which tells them apart. But the individual elements cannot be always separated that easily. Bach and Harnish say that they are intimately related in a large measure (Bach and Harnish, 1979: 3).

#### 2.4 Indirectness

Indirectness is a widely used conversational strategy. People tend to use indirect speech acts mainly in connection with politeness (Leech, 1983,108) since they thus diminish the unpleasant message contained in requests and orders for instance. Therefore similar utterances as in below are often employed.

- It's very hot in here.

In this example the speaker explains or even excuses the reason why he makes a request (Open the window!). Ardissono argues that the speakers often prefer indirect speech acts so that they do not infringe the hearer's face, which might be the case here too. Ardissono claims that sometimes direct addresses may even appear impolite as in 'Would you lend me some money?' and 'Lend me some money!' The latter variant would be absolutely unacceptable in some contexts.

However, politeness is not the only motivation for indirectness. People also use indirect strategies when they want to make their speech more interesting, when they want to reach goals different from their partners' or when they want to increase the force of the message communicated (Thomas, 1995, 143).

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Searle's (1969) Model

In 1969, the American philosopher John Searle, published his Speech Acts as an analytical modification and systematisation of Austin's theory in connection with a single speech act. He attempted to postulate the necessary and sufficient conditions for the performance of the speech act of "promise" in the hope that this would be taken as a practical step in the way that setting a pattern for analysing other kinds of speech acts in general, to be followed by extracting the corresponding semantic and syntactic rules which mark the utterance as an illocutionary act of a certain type (Searle,1971: 40). Searle (ibid) argues that speaking language is engaged by behavior. This means when someone asks question, makes statements, gives commands ...etc., these acts are performed according to the rules of language. He clarifies that speech acts are the basic units of linguistic communication, as the production of an utterance under certain conditions constitutes issuing a speech act.

#### Searle's Speech Act Classification (1979)

Speech Act	Illocutionary Point	Examples
Assertives	To commit the speaker to something being the case (truth value)	Assertive , statement Claims, hypothesis
Directives	Attempts by the speaker To get the hearer to do something	Commands, requests Invitations ,
Commissives	Commit the speaker to Some future course Of action	Promises , pledges, Vows
Expressives	Express a psychological State	Congratulations, Apologies, condolences.
Declarations	These speech acts, they create new states By representing them as being the case	Baptisms, marrying, hiring , firing , terminating a contract

#### 4. Data Analysis

Several illocutionary speech acts are selected from the story which are as follows:

##### 4.1 Assertives

*"When the chief editor went on with his erasure; and interlineations. Just as he finished them a hand grenade came down the stove-pipe, and the explosion shivered the stove into a thousand fragments. However, it did no further damage, except that a vagrant piece knocked a couple of my teeth out, chief editor says:*

***"That stove is utterly ruined,  
The speaker said: I believed it was"***

As a locutionary act, "That stove is utterly ruined," is a passive statement which means that somebody has done an act. As illocutionary act means to assert that the stove is destroyed completely. That the stove has to be changed sooner or later is the perlocutionary act.

##### 4.2 Directives

***" The chief said, "That was the Colonel, likely. I've been expecting him for two days. He will be up now right away."***

*He was correct. The Colonel appeared in the door a moment afterward with a dragoon revolver in his hand*

The verb "expect" is frequently used in speech act to convey belief or expectation for the future. It falls under the category of a directive speech act.

*The Colonel, "Sir, have I the honor of addressing the poltroon who edits this mangy sheet?"*

As a locutionary act, the colonel asks for permission to speak to the chief editor about the edition. As illocutionary act, it is a request to doing that.

#### 4.3 Commisive

*The chief editor said: "You have. Be seated, sir. Be careful of the chair, one of its legs is gone. I believe I have the honor of addressing the putrid liar, Colonel Blatherskite Tecumseh?"*

As the locutionary act, the chief editor says "you have" which means that he accept the request of the colonel to have a seat, it is illocutionary act. Since he accepts the request so it is commissive speech act . Having a seat by the colonel is a perlocutionary act.

#### 4.4 Expressive

*When the writer write his article, he passed his manuscript over to the chief editor for acceptance, alteration, or destruction. He glanced at it and his face clouded. He ran his eye down the pages, and his countenance grew portentous. It was easy to see that something was wrong. Presently he sprang up and said:*

*"Thunder and lightning! Do you suppose I am going to speak of those cattle that way? Do you suppose my subscribers are going to stand such gruel as that? Give me the pen!"*

The speech of the chief editor is an exclamation and interrogation. When he firstly expresses his exclamation when he says "thunder and lightning!" then he says some questions.

Since it is an exclamation .The locutionary act of the chief editor is exclamation and questions as it appear. The illocutionary act is a rejection which means that the chief editor reject the work and it is unacceptable. The perlocutionary act is that the chief editor wants the writer to rewrite or develop his way of writing.

*The speaker said, "I'll have to get you to excuse me; I think maybe I might write to suit you after a while; as soon as I had had some practice and learned the language I am confident I could. But, to speak the plain truth, that sort of energy of expression has its inconveniences, and a, man is liable to interruption"*

As locutionary act, the speaker uses the phrase ""I'll have to get you to excuse me". As illocutionary act, the speaker asks for permission to not come to the dinner.

#### 4.5 Declarative

Throughout the story declarative speech act has not been used by the writer .

#### 4.2 Discussion of Results

The following table explains the frequency and percentage of speech acts in the story under discussion.

No	Types of speech acts	Frequency	Percentage
1	Assertives	5	20%
2	Directives	10	40%
3	Commissive	1	4%
4	Expressives	9	36%
5	Declarative	0	2.5%

Table 1

The table shows the total number of speech acts utilised in this story is about 25. The most frequent type of speech act is directive speech act with high percentage about 40% while the less frequent speech act is commissive. It is about 4%.

## 5. Conclusion

The literary work of "Journalism in Tennessee" by Mark Twain reflects the use of speech act in the selected conversation by characters in the story. In Mark Twain's short story "Journalism in Tennessee", there are a lot of conversation which contain speech act; locutionary, illocutionary acts and perlocutionary. The study shows that the most frequently utilised speech acts in this narrative are directive ones. They do this because they strengthen the power of storytelling. The author draws the readers in and shapes their ideas and behaviour with requests and directives. It serves to highlight the power of language. The author illustrates how storytelling may be a powerful instrument for persuasion, able to influence and impact the actions of the audience, through directive speech acts. It gives the story greater depth and authenticity, which makes it more interesting and thought-provoking. While declarative speech acts are the least used in this story. Twain's use of speech acts adds depth and liveliness to his storytelling, allowing readers to engage with the narrative on a more personal level.

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#### Appendix

"Journalism In Tennessee" by Mark Twain [Written about 1871.]

The editor of the Memphis Avalanche swoops thus mildly down upon a correspondent who posted him as a Radical:--"While he was writing the first word, the middle, dotting his i's, crossing his t's, and punching his period, he knew he was concocting a sentence that was saturated with infamy and reeking with falsehood."--Exchange.

I was told by the physician that a Southern climate would improve my health, and so I went down to Tennessee, and got a berth on the Morning Glory and Johnson County War-Whoop as associate editor. When I went on duty I found the chief editor sitting tilted back in a three-legged chair with his feet on a pine table. There was another pine table in the room and another afflicted chair, and both were half buried under newspapers and scraps and sheets of manuscript. There was a wooden box of sand, sprinkled with cigar stubs and "old soldiers," and a stove with a door hanging by its upper hinge. The chief editor had a long-tailed black cloth frock-coat on, and white linen pants. His boots were small and neatly blacked. He wore a ruffled shirt, a large seal-ring, a standing collar of obsolete pattern, and a checkered neckerchief with the ends hanging down. Date of costume about 1848. He was smoking a cigar, and trying to think of a word, and in pawing his hair he had rumped his locks a good deal. He was scowling fearfully, and I judged that he was concocting a particularly knotty editorial. He told me to take the exchanges and skim through them and write up the "Spirit of the Tennessee Press," condensing into the article all of their contents that seemed of interest.

I wrote as follows:

#### SPIRIT OF THE TENNESSEE PRESS

The editors of the Semi-Weekly Earthquake evidently labor under a misapprehension with regard to the Dallyhack railroad. It is not the object of the company to leave Buzzardville off to one side. On the contrary, they consider it

one of the most important points along the line, and consequently can have no desire to slight it. The gentlemen of the Earthquake will, of course, take pleasure in making the correction. John W. Blossom, Esq., the able editor of the Higginsville Thunderbolt and Battle Cry of Freedom, arrived in the city yesterday. He is stopping at the Van Buren House.

We observe that our contemporary of the Mud Springs Morning Howl has fallen into the error of supposing that the election of Van Werter is not an established fact, but he will have discovered his mistake before this reminder reaches him, no doubt. He was doubtless misled by incomplete election returns. It is pleasant to note that the city of Blathersville is endeavoring to contract with some New York gentlemen to pave its well-nigh impassable streets with the Nicholson pavement. The Daily Hurrah urges the measure with ability, and seems confident of ultimate success.

I passed my manuscript over to the chief editor for acceptance, alteration, or destruction. He glanced at it and his face clouded. He ran his eye down the pages, and his countenance grew portentous. It was easy to see that something was wrong. Presently he sprang up and said:

"Thunder and lightning! Do you suppose I am going to speak of those cattle that way? Do you suppose my subscribers are going to stand such gruel as that? Give me the pen!"

I never saw a pen scrape and scratch its way so viciously, or plow through another man's verbs and adjectives so relentlessly. While he was in the midst of his work, somebody shot at him through the open window, and marred the symmetry of my ear.

"Ah," said he, "that is that scoundrel Smith, of the Moral Volcano--he was due yesterday." And he snatched a navy revolver from his belt and fired--Smith dropped, shot in the thigh. The shot spoiled Smith's aim, who was just taking a second chance and he crippled a stranger. It was me. Merely a finger shot off.

Then the chief editor went on with his erasure; and interlineations. Just as he finished them a hand grenade came down the stove-pipe, and the explosion shivered the stove into a thousand fragments. However, it did no further damage, except that a vagrant piece knocked a couple of my teeth out.

"That stove is utterly ruined," said the chief editor.

I said I believed it was.

"Well, no matter--don't want it this kind of weather. I know the man that did it. I'll get him. Now, here is the way this stuff ought to be written."

I took the manuscript. It was scarred with erasures and interlineations till its mother wouldn't have known it if it had had one. It now read as follows:

SPIRIT OF THE TENNESSEE PRESS

The inveterate liars of the Semi-Weekly Earthquake are evidently endeavoring to palm off upon a noble and chivalrous people another of their vile and brutal falsehoods with regard to that most glorious conception of the nineteenth century, the Ballyhack railroad. The idea that Buzzardville was to be left off at one side originated in their own fulsome brains--or rather in the settlings which they regard as brains. They had better, swallow this lie if they want to save their abandoned reptile carcasses the cowhiding they so richly deserve.

That ass, Blossom, of the Higginsville Thunderbolt and Battle Cry of Freedom, is down here again sponging at the Van Buren.

We observe that the besotted blackguard of the Mud Springs Morning Howl is giving out, with his usual propensity for lying, that Van Werter is not elected. The heaven-born mission of journalism is to disseminate truth; to eradicate error; to educate, refine, and elevate the tone of public morals and manners, and make all men more gentle, more virtuous, more charitable, and in all ways better, and holier, and happier; and yet this blackhearted scoundrel degrades his great office persistently to the dissemination of falsehood, calumny, vituperation, and vulgarity.

Blathersville wants a Nicholson pavement--it wants a jail and a poorhouse more. The idea of a pavement in a one-horse town composed of two gin-mills, a blacksmith shop, and that mustard-plaster of a newspaper, the Daily Hurrah! The crawling insect, Buckner, who edits the Hurrah, is braying about his business with his customary imbecility, and imagining that he is talking sense.

"Now that is the way to write--peppery and to the point. Mush-and-milk journalism gives me the fan-tods."

About this time a brick came through the window with a splintering crash, and gave me a considerable of a jolt in the back. I moved out of range --I began to feel in the way.

The chief said, "That was the Colonel, likely. I've been expecting him for two days. He will be up now right away."

He was correct. The Colonel appeared in the door a moment afterward with a dragoon revolver in his hand.

He said, "Sir, have I the honor of addressing the poltroon who edits this mangy sheet?"

"You have. Be seated, sir. Be careful of the chair, one of its legs is gone. I believe I have the honor of addressing the putrid liar, Colonel Blatherskite Tecumseh?"

"Right, Sir. I have a little account to settle with you. If you are at leisure we will begin."

"I have an article on the 'Encouraging Progress of Moral and Intellectual Development in America' to finish, but there is no hurry. Begin."

Both pistols rang out their fierce clamor at the same instant. The chief lost a lock of his hair, and the Colonel's bullet ended its career in the fleshy part of my thigh. The Colonel's left shoulder was clipped a little. They fired again. Both missed their men this time, but I got my share, a shot in the arm. At the third fire both gentlemen were wounded slightly, and I had a knuckle chipped. I then said, I believed I would go out and take a walk, as this was a private matter, and I had a delicacy about participating in it further. But both gentlemen begged me to keep my seat, and assured me that I was not in the way.

They then talked about the elections and the crops while they reloaded, and I fell to tying up my wounds. But presently they opened fire again with animation, and every shot took effect--but it is proper to remark that five out of the six fell to my share. The sixth one mortally wounded the Colonel, who remarked, with fine humor, that he would have to say good morning now, as he had business uptown. He then inquired the way to the undertaker's and left.

The chief turned to me and said, "I am expecting company to dinner, and shall have to get ready. It will be a favor to me if you will read proof and attend to the customers."

I winced a little at the idea of attending to the customers, but I was too bewildered by the fusillade that was still ringing in my ears to think of anything to say.

He continued, "Jones will be here at three--cowhide him. Gillespie will call earlier, perhaps--throw him out of the window. Ferguson will be along about four--kill him. That is all for today, I believe. If you have any odd time, you may write a blistering article on the police--give the chief inspector rats. The cowhides are under the table; weapons in the drawer--ammunition there in the corner--lint and bandages up there in the pigeonholes. In case of accident, go to Lancet, the surgeon, down- stairs. He advertises--we take it out in trade."

He was gone. I shuddered. At the end of the next three hours I had been through perils so awful that all peace of mind and all cheerfulness were gone from me. Gillespie had called and thrown me out of the window. Jones arrived promptly, and when I got ready to do the cowhiding he took the job off my hands. In an encounter with a stranger, not in the bill of fare, I had lost my scalp. Another stranger, by the name of Thompson, left me a mere wreck and ruin of chaotic rags. And at last, at bay in the corner, and beset by an infuriated mob of editors, blacklegs, politicians, and desperadoes, who raved and swore and flourished their weapons about my head till the air shimmered with glancing flashes of steel, I was in the act of resigning my berth on the paper when the chief arrived, and with him a rabble of charmed and enthusiastic friends. Then ensued a scene of riot and carnage such as no human pen, or steel one either, could describe. People were shot, probed, dismembered, blown up, thrown out of the window.

There was a brief tornado of murky blasphemy, with a confused and frantic war-dance glimmering through it, and then all was over. In five minutes there was silence, and the gory chief and I sat alone and surveyed the sanguinary ruin that strewed the floor around us.

He said, "You'll like this place when you get used to it."

I said, "I'll have to get you to excuse me; I think maybe I might write to suit you after a while; as soon as I had had some practice and learned the language I am confident I could. But, to speak the plain truth, that sort of energy of expression has its inconveniences, and a man is liable to interruption.

"You see that yourself. Vigorous writing is calculated to elevate the public, no doubt, but then I do not like to attract so much attention as it calls forth. I can't write with comfort when I am interrupted so much as I have been to-day. I like this berth well enough, but I don't like to be left here to wait on the customers. The experiences are novel, I grant you, and entertaining, too, after a fashion, but they are not judiciously distributed. A gentleman shoots at you through the window and cripples me; a bombshell comes down the stovepipe for your gratification and sends the stove door down my throat; a friend drops in to swap compliments with you, and freckles me with bullet-holes till my skin won't hold my principles; you go to dinner, and Jones comes with his cowhide, Gillespie throws me out of the window, Thompson tears all my clothes off, and an entire stranger takes my scalp with the easy freedom of an old acquaintance; and in less than five minutes all the blackguards in the country arrive in their war-paint, and proceed to scare the rest of me to death with their tomahawks. Take it altogether, I never had such a spirited time in all my life as I have had to-day. No; I like you, and I like your calm unruffled way of explaining things to the customers, but you see I am not used to it. The Southern heart is too impulsive; Southern hospitality is too lavish with the stranger. The paragraphs which I have written to-day, and into whose cold sentences your masterly hand has infused the fervent spirit of Tennesseean journalism, will wake up another nest of hornets. All that mob of editors will come--and they will come hungry, too, and want somebody for breakfast. I shall have to bid you adieu. I decline to be present at these festivities. I came South for my health, I will go back on the same errand, and suddenly. Tennesseean journalism is too stirring for me." |