

HUCKLEBERRY FINN JOINS THE GANG

by
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From "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer."

Everyone is familiar with the cave adventure of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn. The treasure they found made a mighty stir in the poor little village of St. Petersburg. So vast a sum, all in actual cash, seemed next to incredible. Wherever Tom and Huck appeared they were courted, admired, stared at. The village paper published biographical sketches of the boys.

Huck Finn's wealth and the fact that he was now under the Widow Douglas's protection introduced him into society--no, dragged him into it, and his sufferings were almost more than he could bear.

He bravely bore his miseries three weeks, and then one day turned up missing. For forty-eight hours the widow hunted for him everywhere in great distress. The public were profoundly concerned; they searched high and low, they dragged the river for his body. Early the third morning Tom Sawyer wisely went poking among some old empty hogsheads down behind the abandoned slaughter-house, and in one of them he found the refugee. He was unkempt, uncombed, and clad in the same old ruin of rags that had made him picturesque in the days when he was free and happy. Tom routed him out and urged him to go home.

Huck's face lost its tranquil content, and took a melancholy cast.

"Don't talk about it, Tom. I've tried it, and it don't work; it don't work, Tom. I ain't used to it. The widder's good to me, and friendly; but I can't stand them ways. She makes me git up just at the same time every morning; she makes me wash, then combs me all to thunder; she won't let me sleep in the woodshed; I got to wear them blamed clothes that just smothers me, Tom; they don't seem to let any air git through 'em, somehow; and they're so rotten nice that I can't set down, nor lay down, nor roll around anywher's; I hain't slid on a cellar-door for--well, it 'pears to be years; I got to go to church and sweat and sweat--I hate them ornery sermons! I can't ketch a fly in there, I can't chew. I got to wear shoes all Sunday. The widder eats by a bell; she goes to bed by a bell; she gits up by a bell--everything's so awful reg'lar a body can't stand it."

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