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EVOLUTION: We seem to be developing ground-rules for this column as we go. Since it draws favorable mail, we'll keep at it. It covers publications we don't normally review—collections, texts, reference works, reprints, editions; for its history, see *American Studies* XXI, 1, 112; for translation of the title, see XXI, 2, 122.

MARK TWAIN'S LIBRARY: A Reconstruction. By Alan Gribben. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co. 1980. 2 Vols. $75.00. A reference work which argues a thesis: we are not to believe Twain's talk about his ignorance; he was well-read. Gribben's care and energy have been correctly praised by early reviewers. Having done the detective work, he assembled the results in a manner which connects what he found to the work of generations of Twain scholars and to the texture of Twain's life and works. Gribben is unquestionably right that Twain is not the unlettered common man trying his hand as an author: that figure was his persona. *Mark Twain's Library* suggests to me that Twain's talk about being the least educated author around is true, however, in an odd sense. He was, in fact, erudite, but he was not, I think, an intellectual. The human situation might trouble him deeply, but logical inconsistency bothered him hardly at all. This journal years ago devoted an issue to Twain. The Twain of our articles was different than the Twain of older accounts, we thought, but our Twain seems consistent with the man who steps from Gribben's pages. Critical of materialism, Twain built a pretentious home; skeptical of progress, he was also fascinated by it, and sunk his fortune in a contraption which caught his imagination because it represented change and progress. Although the author of one of our articles argued that Twain's attitudes toward the Catholic church developed as his career went on, I thought the evidence illustrated that Twain's attitudes toward it were as inconsistent at the end of his career as they were at the beginning. We children of small-town businessmen know lots of people who are in some ways like Samuel Clemens, though few are also gifted writers. I see in him an odd combination: first, the village talker who plays with ideas for recreation, for the fun of arguing, for conversational sociability, but not for logical continuity; second, the generous and troubled spirit, moved by the human dilemma; third, the entertainer, interested in contrast and effect; and fourth, whenever he is very good, the great artist. Gribben's scholarship reveals the wide range of Clemens' reading and the intelligence of his reactions; it also documents the persnickety persistence of his pose as provocateur or even as ignoramus.

Of Oscar Handlin's *Truth in History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press: 1979), $17.50, Richard Lowitt writes to say that Handlin finds history "in crisis, in disarray, experiencing serious decay from within," in part because "historians no longer show great respect for facts and the rules of evidence, preferring instead to emphasize techniques and approaches from other disciplines while being unduly influenced by concern for both relevance and relativism." The book consists of 17 essays, a number of them previously published. Most attention is paid to "the fields in which Handlin made notable contributions: ethnic, urban and social history." "The essays reveal Handlin's broad-gauged scholarship and impressive range of understanding."

*THE NECESSITY FOR RUINS:* And Other Topics. By J.B. Jackson. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press. 1980.