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LIFE

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EDITORS' NOTE

Bureau Chief for Outer Space

A year ago last March, Dora Jane Hamblin, a staff writer, once our bureau chief in Rome, forsook her more ordinary duties to become our bureau chief for Outer Space, and her report on the mechanics of the Saturn V rocket and the humans involved in its flight around the moon appears in this issue. Several times in this column we have told of Dodie's Iowa origins and her adventures almost everywhere; this week we asked her to remember how she got off the pad. "Well," she said, "I went down to Houston and checked in at the space center. I didn't know quite where to begin and I was wondering how I was going to get along with the spacemen and their wives. I was feeling kind of fat so I went to a health club. I was joggling on a vibrator when the girl next to me said something about Japan. 'I was there in 1945,' I said. So was she. Then Germany. Same thing. Turned out she was Marge Slayton, wife of Deke. I went back later and was baking in a sauna when I met Sue Borman."

DODIE HAMBLIN

"That's right," says Sue Borman, wife of the commander of Apollo 8, "and we've since become very good friends. Dodie has made a real effort to get to know all of us—she's really had to put on her track shoes for this job because there are three different groups of us living in three different places. She's got to know us well, which means she can drop in anytime she wants."

Since that March Dodie has taken an apartment near Taylor Lake. Because the three families, the Bormans, Lovells and Anderses, whose men will fly Apollo 8 live on different shores, she sometimes commutes in a red canoe named (after an old camp director) the *M. Genevieve Clayton*.

"The canoe was no trouble at all," she says. "I learned the tricks of paddling one in a swimming pool at camp. What was hard was that I had to learn an entirely new language. If you're going to talk to these men and their families you have to understand what they're doing and what they mean when they say the thruster does this or the inertial platform does that. These men are unbelievably patient. They talk business constantly and are willing to explain everything step by step, over and over again. When I was in Rome the space program didn't mean much to me. Now I'm a convert. I'm going to stay in Houston most of the time until we get to the moon.

"These are warm and remarkable people. Before the last launch one of the astronauts said to his kids, 'Goodby now, I'm going to work. I'll be back in a couple of weeks.' Each of the wives has a special NASA squawk box tuned to the capsule in orbit; each learns to know when her husband will be asleep or on duty in space, and adjusts her Texas life to match his waking voice." Dodie's deep interest is not lost on the wives. "Some of us aren't at our best before a launch," says Sue Borman, "so it's important to know us as we really are—when we're not under pressure. Right now I look forward to Dodie's visits during the seven days when Frank is up. I know she's going to be a real help to me then."

George P. Hunt

GEORGE P. HUNT,
Managing Editor

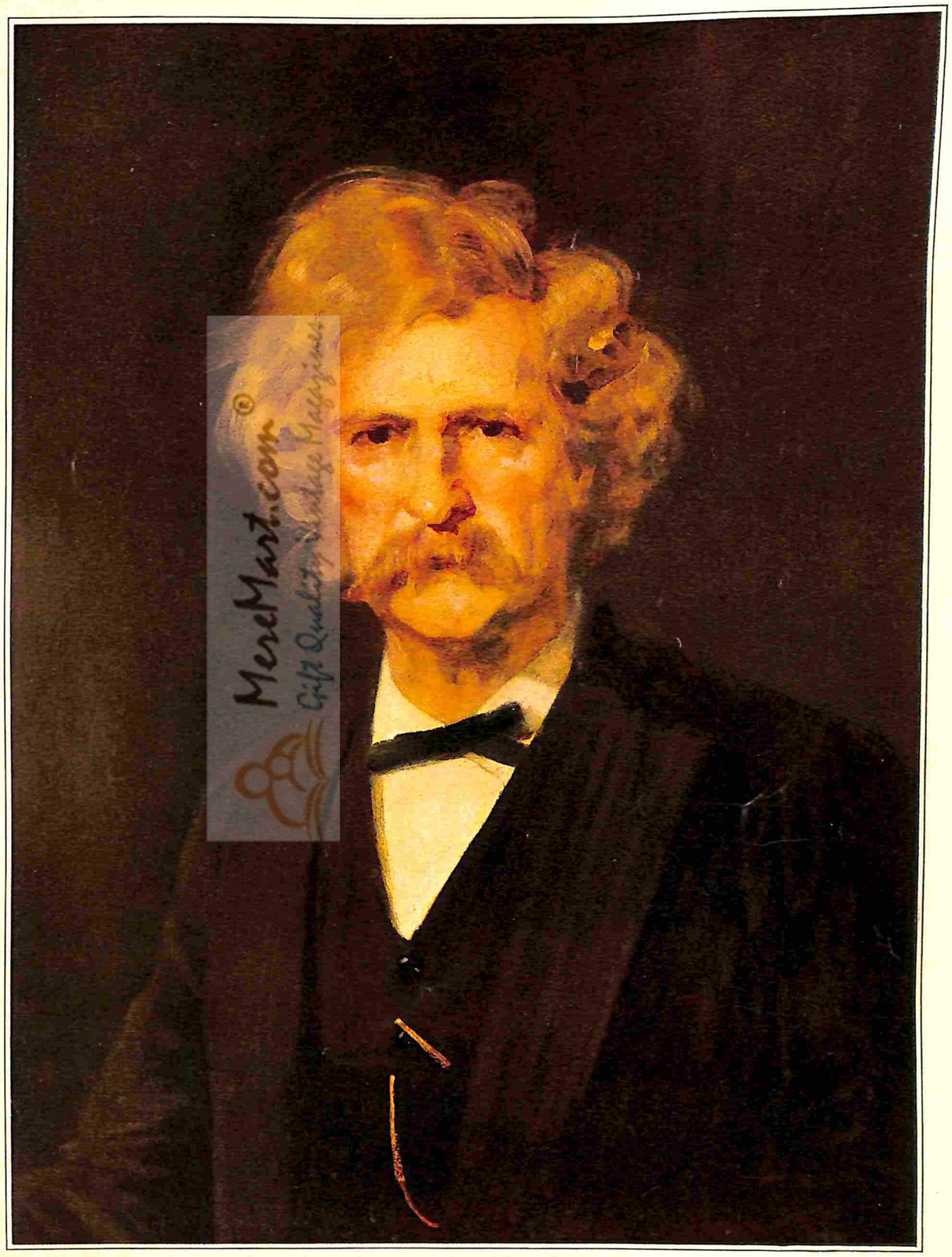
LIFE

An unpublished manuscript

by

MARK TWAIN

Huck Finn & Tom Sawyer Among the Indians



Mark Twain at age 55, painted by Charles Noël Flagg

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