



What is Twain satirizing in the first sentence?

A. He is satirizing the red tape and bureaucracy that usually accompany the appointment of commissions and their representatives.

Some Learned Fables, for Good Old Boys and Girls

Mark Twain

FOCUS: SATIRE

Part I

HOW THE ANIMALS OF THE WOOD SENT OUT A SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION

Once the creatures of the forest held a great convention and appointed a commission consisting of the most illustrious scientists among them to go forth, clear beyond the forest and out into the unknown and unexplored world, to verify the truth of the matters already taught in their schools and colleges and also to make discoveries. It was the most imposing enterprise of the kind the nation had ever embarked in. True, the government had once sent Dr. Bull Frog, with a picked crew, to hunt for a northwesterly passage through the swamp to the right-hand corner of the wood, and had since sent out many expeditions to hunt for Dr. Bull Frog; but they never could find him, and so government finally gave him up and ennobled his mother to show its gratitude for the services her son had rendered to science. And once government sent Sir Grass Hopper to hunt for the sources* of the rill*



sources — here, starting points.
rill — a very small brook.

that emptied into the swamp; and afterward sent out many expeditions to hunt for Sir Grass, and at last they were successful — they found his body, but if he had discovered the sources meantime, he did not let on. So government acted handsomely by deceased, and many envied his funeral.



In what way is Twain satirical in this passage?

Why does Twain state that the hunt for Sir Grass was finally successful?

Why do others envy Sir Grass Hopper's funeral? Why is this ironic?



In what way is Twain satirical in this passage?

A. Twain mocks a government that not only finances an exploratory expedition, but is also later compelled to mount an expedition in search of the lost explorers!



Why does Twain state that the hunt for Sir Grass was finally successful?

A. It seems as if what Sir Grass discovers is less important than the fact that his body is finally found.



Why do others envy Sir Grass Hopper's funeral? Why is this ironic?

A. The government gives him an extravagant hero's burial. Envyng the dead for the posthumous recognition of their deeds is ridiculous. How ironic to be given an elaborate funeral if the recipient cannot enjoy the "handsome" actions of the government. As far as the "many" who envied his funeral, would it not have been better had they appreciated him and his achievements while he was still alive?

A CLOSER LOOK

Between 1750 and 1900, European and North American governments and wealthy individuals sponsored scientific expeditions all over the world. Acclaimed naturalists, academics, cartographers, and geographers visited sparsely inhabited regions, such as Tanzania, the Arctic, Africa, and the Amazon River, and brought back countless specimens of plants, animals, and cultural artifacts. Many of them wrote of their adventures and discoveries, much to the delight of 19th-century arm-chair readers. One famous account was written by journalist Henry Stanley, who published details of his search for Dr. David Livingstone in the heart of Africa.

Dr. Bull Frog's tragic expedition to find a northwesterly passage through the swamp satirizes actual events. In 1846, a 129-man British crew sailed two well-stocked ships into the Atlantic Ocean, searching for a viable northwest passage to the Pacific Ocean through the Arctic Sea. The men never returned, and later search parties discovered only their bones. In 1850, another British team of explorers set out to locate a northwestern passage, but they, too, failed. Rescue missions discovered them trapped by the ice and dangerously close to starvation.

But these expeditions were trifles compared with the present one; for this one comprised among its servants the very greatest among the learned; and besides it was to go to the utterly unvisited regions believed to lie

4 Dr. David Livingstone (1813–1873) was among the first Westerners to explore Africa. He wished to bring Western-style culture and trade to the natives, and spent much of his life trekking through the continent. He wished to abolish the slave trade and introduce Christianity. In 1866, he began his search for the source of the Nile River. Search parties were sent out after several years had passed without word from him. Henry Stanley, a noted journalist, found Livingstone and greeted him with the now-famous words, "Dr. Livingstone, I presume." Livingstone died in Africa; his embalmed body was returned to England and he was buried in Westminster Abbey.