Dr. D's Mystery Hero

Fast Friends

by Dennis Denenberg

We know from reading this issue that Mark Twain's reputation and extensive traveling enabled him to meet many famous people. But I started to wonder: Did he admire any of them? Did he consider anyone he knew a hero?

Well, indeed he thought very highly of one of his *contemporaries.* In fact, Twain described this amazing American in words filled with praise and admiration. He compared her to some of the greatest men in history:
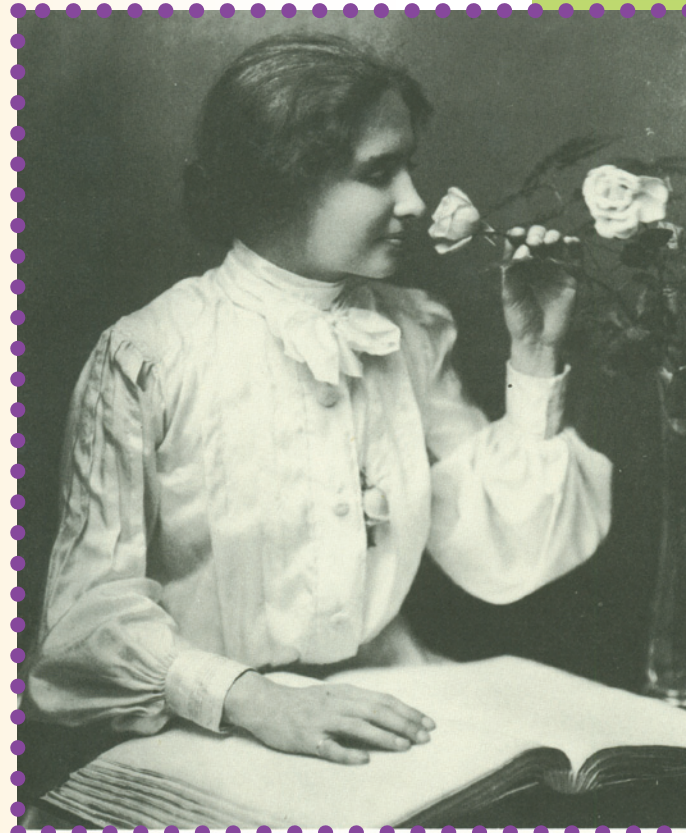
"_____ _____ is fellow to Caesar, Alexander, Napoleon, Homer, Shakespeare and the rest of the immortals.... She will be as famous a thousand years from now as she is today."

Twain first met our hero when she was only 14 years old. He later introduced her to a wealthy couple who paid for her education at Radcliffe College. When she wrote *The Story of My Life* at age 22, he wrote a letter commending her.

So, who is our mystery hero? Over the past months, I've tried to challenge you by not giving you easy clues. This month, my task is pretty difficult, since I think one of my clues will instantly reveal her identity.

So, your first clue is that our hero had an equally famous friend and teacher who was her companion for 49 years. Still not sure? Okay, here's the giveaway clue: From the age of 19 months, our hero was blind, deaf, and had severe speaking problems. Despite these major obstacles, she became an author, lecturer, and active worker for social change in America. Can you name both our hero and her remarkable teacher? Answers are on page 48.

Contemporaries are people who live at the same time as one another.

"Dr. D" — as **Dr. Dennis Denenberg** was known to his students — loves history and *real* heroes. When Dr. D was your age, he loved reading biographies, and that's still one of the best ways to learn about heroes who have made our world a better place! For almost 20 years, he's been writing, teaching, and speaking about heroes all over America. Visit **www.heroes4us.com** to learn all about his award-winning book and his new Hero-Virtue trading cards.