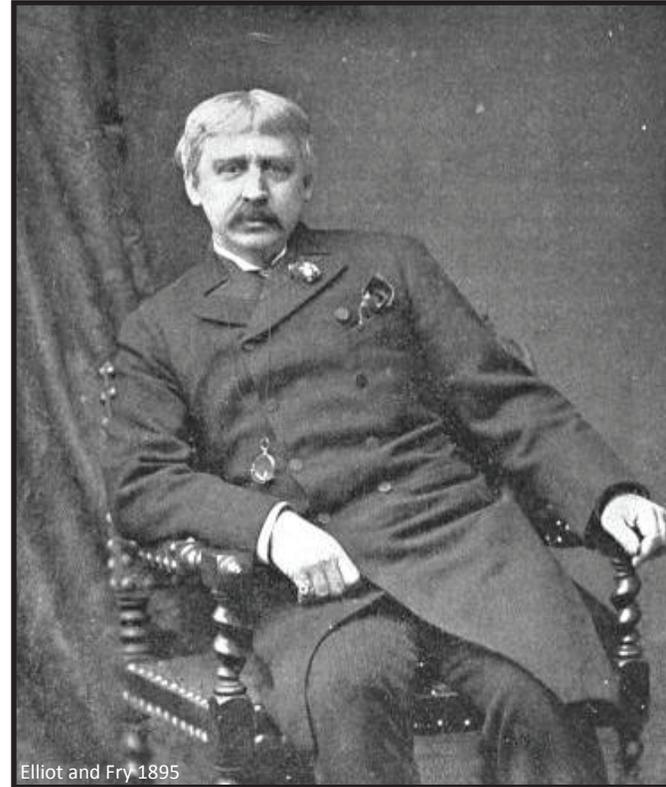


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Left: Mark Twain, ca. 1907; *Right:* Bret Harte, ca. 1895.



Elliot and Fry 1895

Writers and the Cliff House

The dramatic surroundings and exciting events at the Cliff House have inspired writers, artists, and poets for over a century.

San Francisco literary circles in the 1860s and 1870s included writers such as Mark Twain, Ambrose Bierce, Ina Coolbrith, Joaquin Miller, Prentice Mulford, and Bret Harte, who described early California dialect, ways of life, landscapes, and characters. Satirist, poet, editor, and short story writer, Bret Harte, was a dominant figure among this circle of writers, who mastered the art of Gold Rush fiction. Harte wrote “Legend of the Cliff House”, a poem about James Cooke’s 1865 tightrope walk to Seal Rocks.

Mark Twain, during an 18-week stint as a full time reporter for the *Morning Call*, wrote one of his first articles about visiting the Cliff House. In June 1864 he wrote, “If one tire of the drudgeries and scenes of the city, and would breathe the fresh air of the sea, let him take the cars and omnibuses, or, better still, a buggy and pleasant steed, and, ere the sea breeze sets in, glide out to the Cliff House”.