

**AMONG the HUMORISTS and AFTER DINNER SPEAKERS**

**OLIVER HERFORD**

**AMONG THE  
HUMORISTS AND AFTER-  
DINNER SPEAKERS**

**A NEW COLLECTION OF HUMOROUS STORIES AND  
ANECDOTES SELECTED AND ARRANGED BY WILLIAM  
PATTEN** Editor of American Short Story Classics, Foreign Short Story  
Classics, etc. **VOL. I**

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## **PARTIAL LIST OF THE NAMES OF STORY-TELLERS IN THIS VOLUME**

**George Ade  
Bret Harte  
Mark Twain  
Sec. of State P. C. Knox  
W. M. Evarts  
De Wolf Hopper  
King Edward of England  
Joseph Jefferson  
Lord Beaconsfield  
Abraham Lincoln  
Alvey A. Adee  
Patrick A. Collins  
Horace T. Eastman  
D. G. Rossetti  
J. M. Maclaren  
Dean Swift  
Clyde Fitch  
J. McNeill Whistler  
Leigh Hunt  
Edward Everett Hale  
Dean Hole  
Irving Bacheller  
Thomas B. Reed  
J. C. S. Blackburn  
N. C. Goodwin  
Brander Matthews  
Andrew Carnegie  
Speaker Cannon  
Walter Damrosch  
Rev. Robert Collyer  
Rev. Sam Jones  
Dean Kirchwey  
John Wanamaker  
Henry Guy Carleton  
Charles Francis Adams**

**Sir Wilfrid Laurier  
Oliver Herford  
J. M. Barrie  
Richard Mansfield  
John Sharp Williams  
J. G. Blaine  
Phillips Brooks  
Daniel J. Sully  
Bill Nye  
John C. Spooner  
Robert Edeson  
Andrew Lang  
Benjamin R. Tillman  
William E. Gladstone  
Charles Lamb  
Edwin Booth  
Weedon Grossmith  
Senator W. A. Clark  
Francis Wilson  
Chauncey M. Depew  
Albert J. Beveridge  
Beerbohm Tree  
Herbert S. Stone  
Frank R. Stockton  
Henry James  
William Allen White  
Bishop Brewster  
Frederic Remington  
Julian Ralph  
Senator John T. Morgan  
J. J. Ingalls  
Archbishop Ryan  
J. A. Tawney  
Thos. Bailey Aldrich  
Elihu Root**

## **PREFACE**

**THE** collection of these humorous paragraphs has extended over a number of years. Even a small beginning became a source of such entertainment that the collection grew and grew, always without any thought of publication.

The man who can not laugh has yet to be found. Therein lies that immediate appeal to a common ground which the sense of humor gives, and it has been a conspicuous characteristic of those who look to the public for appreciation and support. Lord Palmerston and Abraham Lincoln were two notable examples of men for whom sympathy quickened through their ready wit, and no political speaker drives home his arguments half so well as he who can introduce a witty illustration. The joke has ever been a potent factor in combating oppression and corruption, in ridiculing shams. It has embalmed some reputations, and has blasted others. It is the champion of the weak against the strong, and has often illuminated for us, as in a flash, a glimpse of character or custom that would otherwise have been lost to the world.

There is only one similar collection of which I am aware, the "Jest Book" by Mark Lemon, who was for twenty-nine years the editor of "Punch." Alas that there should be fashions in jokes as well as in hats, for much of his book that we know must have been humorous reading to his contemporaries, leaves us, of the present generation in America, indifferent.

I shall be glad if some of my readers are minded to do a graceful act and send me, in return, some paragraphs to add to my collection.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the following publications for the paragraphs borrowed from their columns:

Evening Sun, Lippincott's, Pittsburg Dispatch, San Francisco News-Letter, Ladies' Home Journal, Washington Star, Mail and Express, Youth's Companion, Life, Good Housekeeping, Argonaut, Buffalo Commercial, Tit-Bits, Punch, The Tattler, Harper's Weekly, Harper's Monthly, Democratic Telegram, Cleveland Plaindealer, Harvard

*Lampoon, Judge, Philadelphia Ledger, Saturday Evening Post, Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, Boston Herald, Kansas City Star, Washington Post, Success, Atchison Globe, New York Times, Woman's Home Companion, London Mail, Louisville Courier-Journal, Rochester Post-Express, New York Tribune, New York Observer, Chicago Daily News, Pittsburg Post, Pittsburg Observer, Philadelphia Public Ledger, New York World, Pick-me-up, Harper's Bazar, The Green Bag, Tacoma Ledger, Pittsburg Dispatch, The Wasp, Cornell Widow, Washington Post, Kansas City Independent, Short Stories.*

*W. P.*

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## **AMONG THE HUMORISTS AND AFTER-DINNER SPEAKERS**

**THERE** is a delicious flavor about this story of a Virginia lady, married to a man who, though uniformly unsuccessful in his hunting trips, boastingly spoke of his "killings."

One day, returning from a trip, with the usual accompaniment of an empty bag, it occurred to him that his wife would make fun of him if he returned without even one proof of his oft-boasted skill. So he purchased a brace of partridges to deceive his trusting spouse. As he threw them on the table in front of her, he observed: "Well, my dear, you see I am not so awkward with the gun after all."

"Dick," replied the wife, turning from the birds with a grimace, after a brief examination, "you were quite right in shooting these birds to-day; to-morrow it would have been too late."

Uncle Toby was aghast at finding a strange darky with his arm around Mandy's waist.

“Mandy, tell dat niggah to take his ahm ’way from round yo’ waist,” he indignantly commanded. “Tell him yo’self,” said Mandy haughtily. “He’s a puffect stranger to me.”

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A Cockney tourist was on a visit to a Highland town famous for its golf-links. Through wearing a pair of stiff leather gaiters several sizes too large for him, he was compelled to walk bow-legged. Being a very slow player, others were forced to wait for him at every hole. At the fourth hole a Highlander after watching the visitor miss the ball three times was unable to wait any longer, and drove his ball clean between the tourist’s legs. “What!” he of the gaitered legs yelled furiously. “Do you call that golf?” “Mebbe no,” replied the Gael, “but it’s very good croquet.”

After the sermon on Sunday morning the rector welcomed and shook hands with a young German.

“And are you a regular communicant?” said the rector.

“Yes,” said the German, “I take the 7.45 every morning.”

Meeting a negro, a certain Southern gentleman asked him how he was getting on.

The negro assumed a troubled look, and replied:

“Oh, so far’s physicality goes, I’m all right; but I sure do have ma troubles wif ma wife.”

“Well, Sam, I’m sorry to hear that. What seems to be the matter?”

“She thinks money grows on trees, I reckon. All de time she keeps pesterin’ me foh pinch o’ change. If it ain’t a dollah it’s half or a quarter she wants.”

“What on earth does she do with the money?”

“I dunno. Ain’t nevah give her none yet.”

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A mountaineer of one of the back counties of North Carolina was arraigned with several others for illicit distilling. “Defendant,” said the court, “what is your name?”

“Joshua,” was the reply.

“Are you the man who made the sun stand still?”

Quick as a flash came the answer, “No, sir; I am the man who made the moonshine.”

“They thought more of the Legion of Honor in the time of the first Napoleon than they do now,” said a well-known Frenchman. “The emperor one day met an old one-armed veteran.

“‘How did you lose your arm?’ he asked.

“‘Sire, at Austerlitz.’

“‘And were you not decorated?’

“‘No, sire.’

“‘Then here is my own cross for you; I make you chevalier.’

“‘Your Majesty names me chevalier because I have lost one arm! What would your Majesty have done had I lost both arms?’

“‘Oh, in that case I should have made you Officer of the Legion.’

“Whereupon the old soldier immediately drew his sword and cut off his other arm.”

There is no particular reason to doubt this story. The only question is, how did he do it?

A stranger in Boston was interested to discover, when dining with friends once, that the dessert he

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would have classed as cream layer cake at home was known in Boston as "Washington pie." And the next time he lunched at a restaurant, he ordered the same thing; but the waiter put before him a rather heavy looking square of cake covered with chocolate, instead of the cream cake the guest had made up his mind to enjoy. A puzzled expression came over his face as he said reprovingly, "I ordered *Washington* pie, waiter."

"That is Washington pie, sir."

"Well," expostulated the disappointed man, "I did not mean Booker T.—I want *George!*"

George Ade, automobiling in Indiana, dined at a country hotel among a roomful of ministers.

The ministers, who were holding a convention in the town, were much amused when Mr. Ade's identity was disclosed to them.

One of them said during dinner:

"How does a humorist of your stamp feel, sir, in such reverend company as this?"

"I feel," said Mr. Ade promptly, "like a lion in a den of Daniels."

It was a crowded tram car. Among those who could not find seats was a young lady. Close to where she stood an old man was sitting. He struggled as if to rise. The young woman cast a glance of scorn at one or two men hiding behind newspapers. "Please don't get up," she

said to the old man, "I beg you won't." The conductor rang the bell and the car went

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on. The old man's features worked convulsively and he mopped his face with his handkerchief. At the next stopping place he again tried to rise and again the young woman tried to stop him. "I would much rather stand," she said, continuing to block his way. "I don't care whether you would or not," said the old man, crimson with fury, "I want to get out. You've made me come half a mile too far already. Here, you, stop the car." But it was too late, the bell had already rung and he had to wait until the next stopping place was reached.

"I want some cigars for my husband for Christmas."

"What kind, madam?"

"Well, I don't know, exactly; but he is a middle-aged man and always dresses in black."

John D. Rockefeller, Jr., tells a story of his father:

"Father tells many stories. Sometimes he tells a new one. Not long ago he related one to me that concerned a man who had imbibed rather too freely. The man, in this condition, fell into a watering trough. To the officer who came to help him out as he wallowed in the water, he said:

"'Offzer, I ken save self. You save women an' shildern.'"

"On Sunday, September 20, the wife of ——— of a daughter. Others please copy."

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Bret Harte was so frequently complimented as the author of "Little Breeches" that he was almost as sorry it was ever written as was Colonel John Hay, who preferred his fame to rest on more ambitious works. A gushing lady who prided herself upon her literary tastes, said to him once: "My dear Mr. Harte, I am so delighted to meet you. I have read everything you ever wrote, but of all your dialect verse there is none that compares to your 'Little Breeches.'"

"I quite agree with you, madam," said Mr. Harte, "but you have put the little breeches on the wrong man."

Mr. Knox, the Secretary of State in Taft's Cabinet, was formerly engaged in the practise of law in Pittsburg.

One day, says a friend, Mr. Knox was much put out to find on his arrival at his office that everything was topsy-turvy and that the temperature of his rooms was much too low for comfort. Summoning his office-boy, a lad but recently entered his employ, the lawyer asked who had raised every window in the place on such a cold morning.

"Mr. Muldoon, sir," was the answer.

"Who is Mr. Muldoon?" asked the attorney.

"The janitor, sir."

"Who carried off my waste-basket?" was the next question.

"Mr. Reilly, sir."

"And who is Mr. Reilly?"

"He's the man that cleans the rooms."

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Mr. Knox looked sternly at the boy and said: "See here, Richard, we call men by their first names here. We don't 'mister' them in this office. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir." And the boy retired.

In a few minutes he reappeared and in a shrill, piping voice

announced:

“There’s a gentleman that wants to see you, Philander.”

A Scottish parson, still on the under side of forty, was driving home from an outlying hamlet when he overtook a young woman. He recognized her as the maid of all work at a farm which he would pass, so he pulled up and offered her a lift. Mary gladly accepted his offer and they chatted pleasantly all the way to the farm gate.

“Thank you, sir,” she said as she got down.

“Don’t mention it, Mary. Don’t mention it,” he told her politely.

“No, I won’t,” Mary obligingly assured him.

A little girl was shown her newly-arrived baby brother. Looking at him lovingly she said, “When will he talk, mother?” “Oh not for a long time yet,” said the mother. “Yes, but when?” persisted the child. “Well, not for a year or so.” After thinking for minute the child exclaimed, “How funny. Miss Clark read out of the Bible this morning that Job cursed the hour he was born.”

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W. A. Sponsler, when in the Pennsylvania State Legislature, was given to the making of very elaborate and florid speeches, and one day brought an address to a close with “*Vox populi, vox Dei.*”

“I’ll bet you don’t know the meaning of what Sponsler just said,” said Al Crawford to Hugh E. Mackin.

“I don’t know!” replied Mackin, indignantly. “Of course, I know!”

“You don’t know for ten dollars!” suggested Crawford.

Mackin, still indignant, posted his part of the wager with another

member of the Legislature, and Crawford said tauntingly:

“Well, now, tell us, what does it mean?”

“*Vox populi, vox Dei,*” quoted Mackin, solemnly, “as everybody knows, is French for ‘My God! why hast thou forsaken me?’”

“Give him the money,” said Crawford. “Darned if he don’t know after all!”

There is an old lady living in a small town in southern Pennsylvania who makes great efforts to keep abreast of the times. Her opportunities, however, are circumscribed, and she is sometimes compelled to resort to her imagination. She went to a church sociable lately, and as she entered the room one of the attendants said:

“Good evening, auntie. I am glad you came. We are going to have tableaux this evening.”

“Yes, I know,” replied the old lady; “I smelt ’em when I first came in.”

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Fifer was a dog of friendly and social habits, but when he wandered into the lecture-tent at a well-known New Thought summer school and went to sleep between the chairs, he did a very foolish thing. A woman coming in poked him in the ribs with her parasol, startling him from his peaceful dreams, and he sprang upon her with a savage bite. A man grabbed him and he grabbed the man. The excitement was intense when an earnest little woman standing on a chair cried, “Some one hold the Thought!” “Hang the Thought!” shouted a man in the rear. “Some one hold the dog!”

The boy was going away to school, full of high hope.

“I shall make the football team and color two pipes the first year!” he

said bravely.

His mother kissed him and wept. His father wrung his hand in silence.

They were too full for speech then.

But when he was gone, and they were calmer, they talked together of him, and prayed his ambition might not carry him beyond his strength.

The car was entirely empty with the exception of one man, but as I entered he rose, made me an unsteady but magnificent bow, and said: "Madam, please be kind 'nough to asshept thish plashe."

There was nothing else for me to do, so I thanked him and sat down. And for twenty blocks that idiot hung from a strap, swaying in the breeze, with not

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a soul in the car but ourselves. Occasionally I have been taken for other women; but I never before had any one think that I was a careful.

Husband (after the theater)—"Well, how do you like the piece?"

Wife—"Very much. There's only one improbable thing in it. The second act takes place two years after the first, and they have the same servant."

Thomas Hill (the original "Paul Pry") was endeavoring one evening to cut up an orange in such a fashion as to represent a pig. After strewing the table with about a dozen peels, he gave up the futile experiment, saying, "Hang the pig! I can't make him at all."

"Nonsense, Hill," said Theodore Hook, pointing to the table; "you have done splendidly. Instead of a pig you have made a litter."

An elderly churchwarden in shaving himself one Sunday before church-time made a slight cut with the razor on the extreme end of his nose. Quickly calling to his wife, he asked her if she had any court-plaster in the house. "You will find some in my sewing basket," she said. The warden soon had the cut covered. At church in assisting with the collection he noticed everyone smile as he passed the plate, and some of the younger people laughed outright. Very much annoyed, he asked a friend if there was anything wrong with his

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appearance. "Well, I should think there is," was the answer. "What is that on your nose?" "Court-plaster." "No," said his friend, "it is the label from a reel of cotton. It says, 'Warranted 200 yd. long.'"

A man who stuttered very badly went to a specialist, and after ten difficult lessons learned to say quite distinctly, "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers." His friends congratulated him upon this splendid achievement.

"Yes," said the man, doubtfully, "but it's s-s-such a d-d-deucedly d-d-d-difficult rem-mark to w-work into an ordin-n-nary c-c-convers-s-sation, y' know."

Toastmaster (to chairman of public dinner)—"Would you like to propose your toast now, my lord, or should we let 'em enjoy themselves a bit longer?"

A visitor to a Sunday-school was asked to address a few remarks to the children. He took the familiar theme of the children who mocked Elisha on his journey to Bethel—how the youngsters taunted the poor

old prophet and how they were punished when two she bears came out of the wood and ate forty-and-two of them. "And now, children," said he, wishing to learn if his talk had produced any moral effect, "what does this story show?" "Please, sir," came from a little girl well down in the front, "it shows how many children two she bears can hold."

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A curate who had left his parish on account of the attentions of his lady parishioners, meeting his successor one day in the street asked him how he got on in his new position. "Very well indeed," returned the other. "But are not the ladies rather pressing in their attentions?" "Oh, my dear fellow, I manage that all right, I find safety in Numbers." "I see," returned his companion, "well, I found safety in Exodus."

"I want some collars for my husband," said a lady in a department store, "but I am afraid I have forgotten the size."

"Thirteen and a half, ma'am?" suggested the clerk.

"That's it. How on earth did you know?"

"Gentlemen who let their wives buy their collars for 'em are almost always about that size, ma'am," explained the observant clerk.

On a recent occasion before leaving Marlborough House new clothes were ordered for Prince Edward, and according to custom a tailoress was sent to fit him at a time which would not interfere with his lessons. The tailoress duly arrived and was ushered to the Prince's sitting-room, but on the door being opened she paused as she saw that a gentleman, whose face was turned toward the fireplace, was sitting smoking and chatting with the children. Prince Edward, whose manner is most friendly, at once ran forward and told her to come in, and seeing that she still hesitated added in a reassuring voice, "You

needn't mind, it's only grandpapa."

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A physician engaged a nurse, recently graduated, for a case of delirium tremens. The physician succeeded in quieting his patient and left some medicine, instructing the nurse to administer it to him if he "began to see snakes again." At the next call the physician found the patient again raving. To his puzzled inquiry the nurse replied that the man had been going on that way for several hours, and that she had not given him any medicine.

"But didn't I tell you to give it to him if he began to see snakes again?" asked the physician.

"But he didn't see snakes this time," replied the nurse confidently. "He saw red, white, and blue turkeys with straw hats on."

Shortly after his entrance into political life Disraeli stood for a certain Middlesex borough in the Conservative interest. It was a "personally conducted" canvass, and, among others, the future Prime Minister solicited the vote and interest of a well-to-do but somewhat irascible farmer, who was supposed to be rather doubtful in his political convictions.

"Vote for you!" he shouted when Mr. Disraeli made known the object of his call. "Why, I'd vote for the devil sooner."

"Ah, quite so!" said Mr. Disraeli, suavely, "but in event of your friend not standing, may I hope for your interest?"

An ambitious youth once sent his first MS. to Dumas, asking the distinguished novelist to become his

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*collaborateur*. The latter was astounded at the impertinence. Angrily seizing his pen, he wrote: "How dare you, sir, yoke together a noble horse and a contemptible ass?"

He received the following reply:

"How dare you sir, call me a horse?"

His anger vanished and he laughingly penned the following:

"Send on your MS., my friend; I gladly accept your proposition."

An old farmer recently came into possession of a check for \$200. He finally summoned up nerve enough to go to the bank.

"What denomination?" said the teller, hastily, as the check was passed in through the window.

"Luther'n, gol darn it. But what has that got to do with it?"

A young woman was in company with a university graduate, and naturally the talk ran upon books. By and by there was a lull in the conversation, broken presently by the young woman, who said: "What do you think of Fielding, Mr. Smith?"

"Oh," was the answer, "fielding is important, of course; but it isn't worth much unless you have good pitching and batting."

General Frederick D. Grant said to his servant one morning: "James, I have left my mess boots out. I want them soled."

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"Yes, sir," the servant answered.

The general, dressing for dinner that night, said again:

"I suppose, James, that you did as I told you about those boots?"



James laid thirty-five cents on the bureau.

“Yes, sir,” said he, “and this is all I could get for them, though the corporal who bought ’em said he’d have given half a dollar if pay day hadn’t been so far off.”

President Lincoln once wrote to General McClellan, when the latter was in command of the army. General McClellan, as is well known, conducted a waiting campaign, being so careful not to make any mistakes that he made very little headway. President Lincoln sent this brief but exceedingly pertinent letter:

*“My dear McClellan:* If you don’t want to use the army I should like to borrow it for a while.

“Yours respectfully,     “A. Lincoln.”

It was at a children’s party in West Kensington. The youngsters had just done more than justice to the luxurious spread provided by their hostess, and games were now the order of the evening.

“Now, children,” said she, “we will play the zoo, and each of you must represent a different animal.”

Then, going to a little girl, she asked:

“Now, Carrie, what are you going to be?”

“I’ll be an elephant.”

“And you, Reggie, what are you going to be?”

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“I’m going to be a lion.”

“And what are you going to be, Hilda?”

“I’m going to be a tiger.”

Then, crossing to the other side of the room, the hostess, noticing a

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