

# anguage

**PART 1** Linguistic  
Foundations  
of Humour



**PART 2** Jokes,  
Stories,  
Etc.

# umour and

BY G. G. POCHEPSOV

A Collection  
of Linguistically Based Jokes,  
Stories, Etc.

Topically Arranged, with  
a Discussion of the Linguistic  
Foundations of Humour

Second Edition, Revised and  
Enlarged

I ♥ YOU

KIEV  
"VYSCA SKOLA" PUBLISHERS  
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*Книга состоит из двух частей. В первой части освещается природа языкового юмора, во второй — приводятся разнообразные по своему языковому характеру и тематике краткие юмористические рассказы на английском языке. Каждый раздел второй части сопровождается небольшой объяснительной статьей. Для удобства пользования книгой в конце ее даны тематический указатель и указатель слов и выражений.*

*Второе издание книги дополнено значительным количеством юмористического материала, что позволило более полно и разносторонне проиллюстрировать явление языкового юмора и использование его в речевой деятельности.*

*Книга предназначена для студентов институтов и факультетов иностранных языков при изучении теоретических курсов английского языка, а также в курсе практики устной и письменной речи. Она может быть использована при изучении английского языка студентами неязыковых вузов.*

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## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

As anyone engaged in foreign language teaching well knows, the appropriate introduction of a joke in the course of a lesson can not only revive a student's flagging interest, but can contribute to his understanding and retention of the subject matter as well. It is primarily with this purpose in mind that the material in the present volume has been selected. At the same time, the jokes, stories, and other material in this collection are linguistically based, that is, they are limited to those which may serve as illustrations of various linguistic phenomena.

It is my belief that the nature of the material and its method of arrangement will render this book suitable for use both in theoretical courses and in the English classroom. It was above all with the practical aim of helping instructors in such courses that this book was designed. However, it can also serve as entertaining reading for English students at all levels.

An additional aim of the present work was to provide an outline of linguistic foundations of humour as reflected in the literary forms represented in this collection. This fascinating subject is discussed, in necessarily incomplete and sketchy form, in the introductory chapter.

Meyerhoff, one of the characters in Azimov's story "Jokester", assumed that jokes are eternal and persist from epoch to epoch. At best this view is only partly true, as each epoch produces innumerable records of its specific ideas, morals, customs, way of life, and so forth, in the form of this type of folklore only a small fraction of which ever finds its way into print. At the same time, however, many jokes persist for centuries, if not longer. Often the linguistic core of a joke will be left intact while the characters and situation are changed.

\* \* \*

The material in this collection has been drawn from numerous sources, for the most part British and American. For this reason it is only natural that most of the jokes mirror the British and Amer-

ican scene, showing at the same time some of the aspects of life these English-speaking peoples find laughable.

Shortly before the volume went to print the entire manuscript was read by Professor I. R. Galperin, to whom I am indebted for his valuable assistance and helpful suggestions.

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The rapidity with which the first edition of this volume has been exhausted would seem to indicate that there was a real need for such a book among English students.

The original plan of the book has been preserved, but most paragraphs have been enlarged. A number of corrections have also been made.

Professor E. N. Starikova has been kind enough to read the revised version of the book. I am deeply indebted to her for her assistance.

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## TO THE READER

This collection of jokes and stories is arranged systematically according to the various types of linguistic phenomena exhibited by them. The systematic arrangement of contents enables the reader to find material relating to a given subject simply by consulting the *Table of Contents*, which thus serves as a subject index to the theories, problems, and topics covered in the book.

In some cases the arrangement of material may appear arbitrary. Because of the sheer diversity of material which has been brought together and classified in this volume, it has been necessary in places to introduce completely unrelated sections next to one another, for example "Age Differentiation" and "Homonyms", "Borrowings" and "American English", and so forth. In many cases the placement of a particular joke in one section or another was completely up to the discretion of the author.

However, the system of cross references ('See also —' placed at the end of each section) allows the reader to have a complete command of the material on any subject no matter how widely scattered throughout the book it may be.

The *Thematic Subject Index* provides a different arrangement of the same material. It may be referred to whenever the reader might need material relating to such topics as "College Life", "Medical Aid", "In Court", "At a Restaurant", and so forth.

A still different arrangement of the material is achieved through the *Word and Phrase Index* which consists of an inventory of lexical items around which given jokes are constructed.



## Part 1

---

# Linguistic Foundations of Humour

*"I have fully understood the secret of the laughable and the laughable is no longer existent for me. For me, there is no more humour, jokes, gags. There are only categories, groups, formulas of the laughable."*

(A. Belyaev 'Mr. Laugh')

## On the Nature of Linguistic Humour

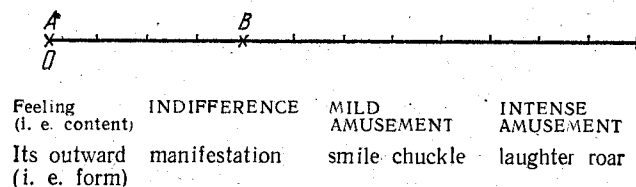
Is the analysis of humour generally feasible? It has been remarked that one should never attempt to express the essence of music in words. The two things are just too diverse and incompatible. Indeed, the aesthetic side of music, that which appeals to the human soul, can only be given an inadequate and approximate verbal rendering. Apart from its aesthetic aspect, however, music has a clearly definable structural nature, for example, the regularity of the musical scales, the exactitude of pitch, and the systematic ways in which the physical units of music are combined. These aspects are open to scientific analysis and description.

The same observations hold with respect to humour. As an aesthetic category, humour is subtle, evasive, and extremely difficult to describe. Descriptions of humour are liable to vary considerably from analyst to analyst. However, humour, like music, must surely have some underlying fundamental principles. For the material falling within the scope of the present volume, these principles consist of specific linguistic phenomena and their patterns of usage as elaborated during the course of centuries, if not millenia, of practice. Man is the only creature endowed with a sense of humour. Like other features, this sense of humour must have developed during the long course of human evolution.

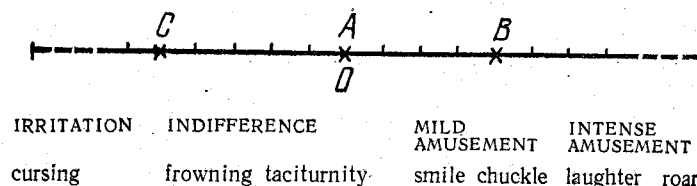
Humour, in particular linguistic humour, presupposes a highly developed intellect and can only exist within the framework of specific sociolinguistic conditions, the most important among these being a love for the mother tongue and the aesthetic pleasure derived from its use.

In general, two types of humour may be distinguished: situational humour and linguistic humour. Situations capable of eliciting a humorous response are innumerable. A monkey's awkward imitation of man's actions, a child's

babbling, the similarity of an inanimate object to a person or vice versa — these and a host of other situations can make one smile or laugh, outwardly or inwardly. Already in the illustrated situations we can observe the selective nature of humour. A child's babbling can bring a smile to its parents' lips, but a stranger may remain quite indifferent to it. If we assume that a feeling can be measured (and I think it can), the reaction of two such individuals (say A and B) can be represented graphically in the following way:



Interestingly, a particular situation can have a completely opposite effect with different individuals. Note the reaction of film audiences. At moments when sobs are repressed by many, almost invariably there is someone, usually a boisterous lad, who interprets the situation on the screen as funny and breaks into a laugh. The reverse is also possible. To use the above example, a child's babbling for a third individual (C) can be nothing but an unpleasant irritating noise. Represented graphically<sup>1</sup>:



Situational humour often appears to be grounded on the irrelation of an outward characteristic of an object

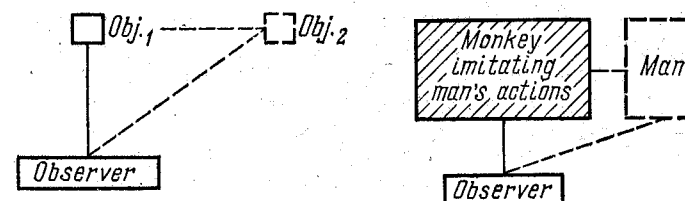
<sup>1</sup> Gradations in the formal expression of particular feelings and attitudes and in their repertoire are not universal. Different national and social communities may have specific repertoires of forms to express identical feelings and attitudes. It appears that in modern civilized societies a rise in cultural level is accompanied by a tendency towards discarding the extremities on the scale. The study of feeling and attitude structures characteristic of particular cultures would be a fascinating subject.

and the fundamental nature of that object, that is the non-correspondence or, to put it more strongly, the discrepancy between the two.

To establish the fact of irrelation a yardstick is needed. And this is the second component of the scene, namely another object not necessarily present 'in the flesh' but one which is invariably confronted, at least mentally, with the first object. In the figure below, we shall designate the first component, the one which displays discrepancy, as  $\boxtimes$  Obj.<sub>1</sub> and the other, "ideal" object as  $\square$  Obj.<sub>2</sub>.

Finally, the scene would be incomplete without the observer who views the relationship of cognation between the objects, thereby establishing, in spite of their superficial similarity, their distinct nature and recognizing the object with 'alien' features as having humorous content.

In this way we arrive at the following triangular relationship characteristic of situational humour:



This is one type of situational humour.

Another type of situational humour is the one based on situational ambiguity. Just as outward manifestations of a particular feature belonging to an object can be diverse, particular manifestations can themselves be a symbol of different features. Due to this type of 'feature — manifestation' relation, situations, just as linguistic items, can be ambiguous and allow for different interpretations. Temporarily, the ambiguity remains unnoticed, and this leads to an eventual wrong interpretation of the situation. The discrepancy between the two interpretations and the effect of the unexpectedness, for the given situation, of the 'correct' interpretation, bring about the humorous effect. For example:

(1) A young soldier who came home on leave was telling his folks about his military life. Suddenly he stop-

*ped to look with interest at four pretty girls coming down the street. His mother gave a nudge to the father.*

*"Look how our little boy has grown," she gasped. "He was never interested in girls before the Army."*

*Meanwhile their son watched the girls intently until they were out of sight, then turned back and announced, "One of them is out of step."*

*(2) Noiselessly the officer of the guard approached and, shaking the dozing sentry roughly by the shoulders, said, "Private Jones, you are under arrest for sleeping on duty!"*

*The soldier quickly replied, "A man can't even have a minute of prayer without someone coming to spoil it."*

Linguistic humour as displayed in jokes — appears isomorphic with situational humour in that it seems also to have "three scenic components". The third one is similar to that shown in connection with situational humour. It is the receiver of the joke or anecdote, that is, the reader or listener. The difference between the third components in situational and linguistic humour is insignificant, being determined by the idiosyncrasy of the channel of reception. In fact, all three (the observer, the reader, the listener) can be regarded as particular realizations of a more general category which can be called the recipient. (An analogy can be drawn here with the ideas elaborated in the applicational generative theory in linguistics. We would refer the recipient to the genotypical level and the observer, the reader, the listener to the phenotypical level in the advanced understanding of the mechanisms of humour.)

The recipient is an important figure, albeit one which exists in the background. It is ultimately for his sake that the joke is made, and whether or not it works depends not only on the quality of the joke but also on the 'quality' of the recipient, that is, the degree to which his feeling for humour is developed, his intellectual ability and the adequacy of his thesaurus (in the sense in which this concept is now used in information theory), his attitude towards particular types of jokes, even his disposition in general and at the moment. These are the provisions necessary for the recipient's comprehension, appreciation and enjoyment of the joke.

If we are on the right track in our search for isomorphic similarities between situational and linguistic hu-

mour, we should be able to establish the other two components which, when taken in their relationship to one another, are capable of producing a humorous effect which is up to the reader or listener to discover. It is the author's assumption that, similar to the two objects in situational humour, these components are two linguistic items comparable in some respects but essentially different. In other words, the trait(s) of similarity shared by the two are secondary and peripheral to the nature or to the accentuated feature of the linguistic items confronted in the joke.

The most common humorous effect in linguistically based jokes is that produced by the nondiscrimination or confusion of items of this kind. The absence of one-to-one correspondence between form and meaning in linguistic units and the nonsusceptibility of meaning to direct observation often results in linguistic units not being discriminated or in their being confused due to a coincidence or similarity of their formal manifestations. Types of linguistic items which allow for non-discrimination/confusion are numerous: homonyms, lexical, word-formative and syntactic; lexicosemantic variants of words (polysemy); words used metaphorically as opposed to those used literally; phraseologisms *vs* free syntactic combinations with superficially identical components, and so on.

Here, however, we come to a significant difference between situational and linguistic humour. While in situational humour the similarity of essentially different objects was the very source of humour, the similarity of linguistic items plays only a subsidiary role. By means of linguistic items, two situations are projected, an ordinary, normal one and a 'wrong' one (due to confusion non-discrimination or erroneous interpretation of linguistic items). The wrong situation may be generally possible but for some reason inappropriate or entirely fantastic in the given situation.

Thus the most general language phenomenon underlying many, though not all, linguistically based jokes, is ambiguity. Ambiguity is effected by various linguistic means. The repertoire of these means will be outlined in the course of subsequent discussion (a brief enumeration was given above). However, before proceeding to elaborate on the linguistic generation of humour as manifested in jokes

and the like, it would be good to describe the most popular and current type of this form of literature.

Commonly there are two basic participants in the plot of a joke. One produces an ambiguous sentence, usually not intending to be so. The ambiguity of the sentence allows one to interpret it in a different sense and this is what the other participant does not fail to do. This erroneous interpretation may be unintentional, as presumably in (3):

(3) *Irate Mother (at dinner) — "Johnny, I wish you'd stop reaching for things. Haven't you a tongue?"*

*Johnny — "Yes, Mother, but my arm's longer"*

or intentional, as in (4):

(4) *A taxi was creeping slowly through the rush-hour traffic and the passenger was in a hurry. "Please," he said to the driver, "can't you go any faster?"*

*"Of course I can", the cabby replied. "But I ain't allowed to leave the taxi."*

In both cases, the erroneous interpretation projects a situation much different from that implied by the first speaker. The difference and often the incompatibility of the two confronted situations linguistically brought together by the commonality of linguistic expression is the basis of humour.

Another type of joke is the joke with unconcealed ambiguity. A sentence with unconcealed ambiguity needs no clarification and therefore can conclude the joke. Here is an example:

(5) *"So your uncle is dead. Did he leave much?"*

*"Only his old clock".*

*"Well, there won't be much bother winding up his estate".*

Unconcealed ambiguity is characteristic of bon mots (q. v.). In fact, the concluding sentence with unconcealed ambiguity in a joke is a bon mot by itself.

To state that the basic part of a joke with concealed ambiguity is an ambiguous sentence is not sufficient to explain the mechanism of the joke. The important thing about a particular type of linguistic joke is that in order for the joke to work the ambiguity, when introduced, must remain unnoticed by the recipient or be resolved errone-

ously by him. Only within this condition does the clarification which usually winds up the joke reveal both the non-trivial use of language and, often, a new view on things, in this way enabling the recipient to enjoy the joke fully. This is one of the possible uses of ambiguity in jokes, and, it would seem, by far, the commonest. To push the recipient in the desired direction in his resolution of ambiguity, sometimes misleading indexes are introduced. Such, for instance, is the function of *waiting on the guests* in (6) (the action implies serving liquids), *Country Editor* in (7) (inclining the recipient to associate *pen* with writing):

(6) *Mistress (to new maid) — "Now, when you wait on the guests at dinner, I want you to be very careful not to spill anything."*

*Maid — "Don't worry. I won't say a word."*

(7) *Friend — "Why are you so jubilant?"*

*Country Editor — "I just received another fine contribution from Farmer Brown's pen."*

*Friend — "Huh — what was it?"*

*Country Editor — "A fine fat pig on subscription."*

Jokes with concealed ambiguity usually have the following structure:

(8)

Symbol	The name of the structural part	The part's functional content	An example
0	Introduction	The introduction of the listener/reader into the situation of the joke	<i>A serviceman was asked by a civilian friend</i>
1	A concealed arising of contradiction	A concealed, for the listener/reader, introduction of ambiguity	<i>A. «How many times do you shave in the Army?»</i>
2	An explication of contradiction	The baffling of the listener/reader. The arising of psychical tension	<i>B. «Oh, about thirty or forty»</i>
3	The removal of contradiction	The resolution of ambiguity and, in this way, of misunderstanding. The removal of tension	<i>A. «What are you, a nut?» B. «No, a unit barber»</i>

Parts 0 and 1 can be given together. Cf. the possibility of the following beginning for the same joke: "How many times do you shave in the Army?" a serviceman was asked by a civilian friend."

In any linguistically based joke we can distinguish its linguistic core (= central part). The linguistic core of the joke is the linguistic item (ranging from word to sentence) whose inherent feature(s) (its polysemy, homonymy, etc.) is (are) made use of to bring about humorous effect. Such are the sentence "Haven't you a tongue?" (3), the verb *go* (4), the verb *wind up* (5), the verb *spill* (6), the noun *pen* (7), and the verb *shave* (8) in the foregoing examples.

The linguistic core forms the indispensable, nonomissible and unchangeable part of the joke. The rest is a variable and, at least partially, reducible. Characteristically, it is the linguistic core of the joke that remains intact in variants of jokes while the rest is often subject to considerable change. Cf. the different variants of the following jokes:

(9) A very nice old lady had a few words to say to her granddaughter.

"My dear," said the old lady, "I wish you would do something for me. I wish you would promise me never to use two words. One is 'lousy' and the other is 'swell.' Would you promise me that?"

"Why sure, Granny," said the girl. "What are the words?"

(10) Professor Einstein was fascinated by American slang. He listened carefully three times to the story of the employ-

er who told his secretary, "There are two words I must ask you never to use in my presence. One of them is 'lousy,' the other is 'swell.' "That's all right by me," said the secretary. "What are the two words?" When he finally comprehended, the professor threw back his head and roared with laughter.

(11) The other day the manager of a firm in the City scolded the office-boy for arriving late. The office-boy, as so frequently happens, resented the reproof and forgot his position.

"What I'd like to know," said the youngster, "is whether I get here later than you."

"That's nothing to do with the question," replied the chief.

"Yes, it has," muttered the boy.

The manager's ire was aroused.

"Look here, young man, are you the manager of this business?" he said.

The boy felt that the position was growing dangerous.

"No, sir."

"Then," replied the chief, "why on earth are you talking like an idiot?"

(12) Prof.— "Young man, are you the teacher of this class?"

Stude — "No, sir."

Prof.— "Then don't talk like an idiot!"

The following jokes convincingly show the insignificance of the linguistic core's environment except as semantic actants whose fillers can be any number of referents.

(13) During a conversational clash Lady Astor said to Bernard Shaw, "If you were my husband I should put poison in your coffee."

G. B. S. replied, "If I were your husband I should drink it."

(B. Lewis, *Considered Trifles*, London, 1955, p. 35)

(14) An Irishman was sitting in a station smoking, when a woman came in and, sitting beside him, remarked:

"Sir, if you were a gentleman, you would not smoke here!"

"Mum," he said, "if ye was a lady ye'd sit farther away."

Pretty soon the woman burst out again:

"If you were my husband, I'd give you poison!"

"Well, mum," returned the Irishman, as he puffed away at his pipe, "If you wuz me wife, I'd take it."

(10,000 Jokes, Toasts & Stories, Garden City, New York, 1965, p. 737)

For (9–10) such semantic actants are animates "X" and "Y", of which one (say "Y") is in a subservient po-

sition to the other ("X"). "X" possesses knowledge which he/she tries to impart to "Y". The failure of communication is due to the difference of "X"'s and "Y"'s sociolinguistic attitudes/awarenesses.

For (11—12) the semantic actants "X" and "Y" are also two animates related by virtue of subservience.

For (13—14) the semantic actants "X" and "Y" are two animates of different sexes standing to each other in relation of equality.

It is now time to expand upon linguistic means capable of providing ambiguity. Particular attention will be paid to those means which have been studied less frequently, if at all.

Ambiguity is a semantic phenomenon. Ambiguity becomes manifest only in the course of speech perception, and although it can be attained by linguistic means belonging to various levels of language structure, it is realized primarily in the basic unit of discourse, the sentence. For this reason I shall begin the discussion by analyzing features of the sentence capable of introducing ambiguity.

The sentence is a multifaceted phenomenon. Here are some of its facets with which the feasibility of more than one semantic interpretation is associated.

#### CONTENTIAL CENTRE

In the sentence content, if this is viewed not merely as a certain piece of information but as part of actual discourse, particular contential elements are functionally, namely for the purpose of discourse, more important than others. Such elements make up the contential centre of the sentence.

Sometimes such central elements are given prosodic prominence. This can help to avoid ambiguity as to what is the centre and what is the periphery in the content of the sentence. However, much oftener the distinction between the contential centre and the periphery is not formally marked<sup>2</sup>, resulting in the possibility of ambiguity with regard to the contential centre.

<sup>2</sup> I think I am right in stating this because emphatic speech would not be 'emphatic' if it were more common than nonemphatic.

Consider the following joke:

(15) *Teacher* — "If your brother has five apples and you take two from him what will be the result?"  
*Johnny* — "He will beat me up."

For the teacher, the material aspect of the situation reflected in her sentence is insignificant. In place of apples there could be books, coins and what not. The same is true with regard to animate objects of the situation. What actually matters to her (and this is what she tries to impress upon her pupils) is the numerical relation called subtraction between objects:  $5 - 2 = 3$ . This is the centre of sentence content as considered by the teacher. In the pupil's mind, the focus of the content of the sentence consists in other elements of the content, namely his brother's having something (here, apples) and his depriving him of part of his possession. As a result the teacher and the pupil arrive at a different understanding of "what will be the result."

Johnny's answer is contrary not only to the teacher's but also to the reader's expectation. Attuned to the situation by the word *Teacher*, which opens the anecdote and, being well aware, due to long schooling, of the sort of thing a teacher requires, the reader expects a different answer from Johnny. The unexpectedness and soundness of the boy's answer, together with the discrepancy between it and the general situation (school) produces a humorous effect.

Interestingly, a similar displacement in the ascertainment of the central can be a source of situational humour:

(16) *President Coolidge once visited the Emily Dickinson house in Amherst, and was shown the poetess' original manuscripts. He examined them casually and made a single comment: "Wrote with a pen, eh? I dictate!"*

#### TRANSPosed SENTENCES

Ambiguity of language units, when viewed closely, is a linguistic phenomenon of a much wider scope and diversity than is usually assumed. Linguists are well aware of the ambiguity of such units as homonyms or polysemantic

words but ambiguity is existent also in such seemingly unambiguous sentences as.

(17) *Teacher* — "I hope I didn't see you looking in Fred's book, Tommy"

as revealed by the end of the completing sentence of the anecdote:

*Tommy* — "I hope you didn't, either, sir."

Here (in the first sentence), the verb *hope*, being linked with the past-tense form of the syntactically dependent verb, acquires a specific connotation, namely that of unwillingness to openly admit the fact. The use of the verb *hope* is in contradiction to reality: the boy did look in Freddy's book and the teacher did notice it. However, for educational or other reasons, the teacher prefers to let the pupil know of his cognizance of the fact by implication, without pointing it out directly. Or the statement may be regarded as ironical. Whatever the interpretation, it is the non-correspondence of the use of the verb *hope* to the normal meaning of the verb<sup>3</sup> that is of importance for our discussion.

In contrast (and this is where the humorous effect arises) the pupil's 'echoing' sentence is a regular one and non-deviant from the common prevalent usage of the verb *hope*. The sentence is not burdened with any additional information outside that conveyed by the normal lexical and grammatical meanings of the words of the sentence.

Sentences of the exemplified and similar types have been noticed before, although, not necessarily in linguistics. They have been called by Ryle "systemically misleading sentences" and by Bar-Hillel "sentences in the transposed mode of speech". To use the latter's characterization, they are "sentences whose ordinary usage is non-standard (with respect to a certain sentence-class, to be determined on a pragmatic basis)."

While accepting and fully appreciating the distinction advanced, I think it would be worthwhile to establish the

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the definitions of the relevant meaning of the verb: "To expect with desire, or desire with expectation; to look forward to" (The Shorter Oxford Dictionary on Historical Principles. 3rd ed., rev. with addenda. Oxford, 1956); "a: To desire with expectation or belief in the possibility of obtaining; cherish hope of; b: desire, trust" (Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language. Springfield, Mass., 1966).

basis of distinction between ordinary and transposed sentences on other than pragmatic grounds. Prima facie the frequency index would appear to be of significance. However, frequency must be a function of another regularity inherent in the sentence. In addition, the frequency index must be a variable determined by the type of discourse. In particular types of discourse, such as the one represented in the literature under investigation, differences in frequency between transposed and ordinary sentences of the same supra-class may be appreciably blurred. In jocular speech, say in monologues by professional comics on the stage or TV, transposed sentences may even prevail. All this makes it necessary to search for a linguistic basis for the distinction. I assume that this can be found in the necessity, if one intends to produce a transposed sentence, of supplementing otherwise ordinary sentences with additional linguistic devices (cf. the role of intonation in 'A good fellow you are!', if ironical) or relying on extralinguistic facts for the purpose.

#### SENTENCES WITH IMPLICATION

Another important linguistic basis for the formation of jokes are sentences with implication. The implied idea can be ignored, overlooked or, most commonly, wrongly interpreted by a person perceiving the statement. This is usually revealed by what he says in reaction to the sentence with implication. The non-correspondence between the content of the stimulus sentence, implication considered, and that of the response sentence can be full of humour. The implied idea is made clear in the statement of clarification. The structure of this type of joke is often tripartite:

(18)\*

A. Statement with implication:

B. Response:

A. Clarification statement:

"Jim will be in hospital a long time."

"Why, have you seen the doctor?"

"No, the nurse."

The indispensable parts are the statement with implication and the clarification statement.

The semantic content of implication consists in the expounding of cause (the above example), purpose, or so forth:

(19) "Got a match, Tom?"

"No. But I got a lighter."

"How am I going to pick my teeth with a lighter?"

or in the positive/negative evaluation:

(20) *My fourteen-year-old grandson told me that his class was studying Churchill's History of the English-Speaking Peoples.*

"Some of us are going to write him a letter," he said.

"I'm sure Sir Winston will be pleased," I commented.

"Well, I don't know," he replied. "We're going to ask him not to write any more books."

In the last case the implication is in the verb of communication.

As a rule, the implied cause etc. is the one least or little expected. If all possible causes, etc. for a particular situation could be placed on the scale of commonness, the implied idea would be somewhere on the opposite side of the scale as compared to the usual, common. Cf. the examples cited above: cause (seeing the doctor and eliciting information from him and... seeing a pretty nurse), purpose (using a match for lighting purposes and... to pick teeth), etc. A wrong interpretation of implication can also be prompted by the situation:

(21) *A distinguished scientist, says Louis Sobol, who probably saw him, was observing the heavens through the huge telescope at the Mt. Wilson Observatory. Suddenly he announced, "It's going to rain." "What makes you think so?" asked his guide. "Because," said the astronomer, still peering through the telescope, "my corns hurt."*

A different use of implication for generating humour is presented by jokes based on the wrong interpretation of ordinary sentences, that is sentences not intended to carry implication. Erroneously taken to carry an implication, they are responded to accordingly. The discrepancy between the actual contents of the sentence and the contents incorrectly ascribed to it can be funny.

The principle of unexpectedness of the actual meaning of the sentence is often realized through the use of sentences which, through long social practice, have become customary means of expression, in particular situations, of particular ideas (cf. the sentence "Do you know what the time is?", commonly a hint as to the lateness of the hour, in the joke below). However, they may also be used, contrary to anticipation, in their direct sense:

(22) *The young man had been sitting in the drawing-room alone with her for a long time and it was getting late. Suddenly, the door opened and her father entered. He coughed a little, cleared his throat, and then said:*

"Do you know what the time is?"

*The young man arose hurriedly, stammered a few words and in a moment or so was gone.*

"Is your young friend an idiot or what?" asked the father of the girl, who stood looking into the mirror.

"Why?" queried the daughter, a trifle irritated.

"Well, I just asked him if he knew the time, because my watch has stopped, and he simply bolted."

In contradiction to the sentences in jokes (18), (19), (20) analysed above, where implication, although contentially different, is invariably available (implicational polysemy), two different sentences can be envisaged in (22): one carrying implication and the other, without it. Humour is based on the confusion of these two.

## PRESUPPOSITION

A phenomenon similar to implication is presupposition. I envisage it, in particular, in questions presupposing an answer, particular with regard to its contential nature. In this connection two types of questions should be distinguished.

Questions of one type are those reduced in or completely devoid of questionhood, that is, they are questions actually not intended to solicit information (consider, for instance, rhetorical or phatic questions). Such questions presuppose all important semantic parameters of the answer: the general referential directedness of sentence content and the very lexicosemantic contents of the answer.

For questions of the other type, the semantic parameters of the answer are determined in a more general way. Only



the general referential directedness of the sentence contents is presupposed by the question but not the lexicosemantic contents of the answer. Cf. (24).

In case the answer is not of the presupposed kind, the discrepancy between what is expected (and should conventionally be produced) and the actual answer can be a source of humour. This feature is shared by answers to both types of question. Here are examples:

(23) *A politician was invited to give a talk on Americanism to the pupils of the grammar school he had attended as a boy.*

*"When I see your smiling faces before me," he began in the accepted oratorical style, "it takes me back to my childhood. Why is it, my dear girls and boys, you are all so happy?"*

*He paused for the rhetorical effect, and instantly up went a grimy hand from the front row.*

*"Well, my lad, what is it?"*

*"The reason we're so happy," replied the boy, "is if you talk long enough we won't have a geography lesson this morning."*

(24) *"Jane," said a lady to her servant, "you have broken more than your wages amount to. What can be done to prevent this?"*

*"I really don't know, mum," said Jane, "unless you raise my wages."*

Linguistically, the possibility of contentially diverse answers is ensured by the referentially multiple nature of pronominal words heading questions.

#### QUOTATIONS IN ORAL COMMUNICATION

The two forms of the existence of language, oral and written, although capable of rendering basically the same content, each have some specific features which can be lost in the transformation "oral  $\Leftrightarrow$  written". One of these is the effective marking of citations elaborated in written form (by means of inverted commas, italics or otherwise), unattainable in oral form, at least to the degree of unambiguity inherent in written form. (Citation here covers not only quotation of utterances once actually produced but also the specific way of singling out words used as lexi-

con items, with the ellipsis of "the word(s)", e. g. 'Spell acknowledgement'). Many a joke is based on this inadequacy of oral speech, for instance:

(25) *An old gentleman sat on a seat in the park. It was a lovely day; the birds were singing, the spring flowers round about smelt fragrant and fresh, but there was a strong odour of paint in the air. The old gentleman looked round and, two seats away, espied a man slapping green paint on to a dilapidated-looking seat. A terrible thought leapt into his mind, and he looked down at the seat upon which he was sitting. Yes, it was wet and, what was more, his trousers were smothered in green. The old gentleman's anger was justifiable and, rushing up to the brush-wielder, he cried out excitedly:*

*"Why don't you put 'Wet Paint' on the seats?"*

*"Well, that's what I am er doin', ain't it?" retorted the painter of seats.*

The distinction between citation and direct use is purposely not observed in riddles of the type

(26) *What is that which occurs once in a minute, twice in a moment, and not once in a thousand years?*

(The letter M)

even in their written presentation.

#### LINGUISTIC RELATIVITY

Under this Whorfian name I brought together, in the present collection, jokes based on overcoming or at least calling attention to the discrepancy between the semantic conceptual contents of some linguistic units viewed as a way of presenting reality and the actual state of things. The point is that customary, commonly accepted ways, for the given linguistic community, of naming a phenomenon can in time become or be from the very start in contradiction, if taken literally, with the actual state of things. This contradiction of which speakers, at least those less sensitive to language, are usually unaware, can be brought to light by reshaping the semantic structure of the linguistic item so that the semantic structure of the *signifiant* is brought into correspondence with the essence of the *signifié*:

(27) *Impatient man to driver of overdue bus:*  
"Driver, how seldom does this bus run?"

Or the structure may remain unchanged while people are made to feel the absence of proper correspondence between the semantic structure of the linguistic unit and its actual signification in some other way as in the following joke:

(28) *One sweet young thing arrived at her first football game after the first half. "The score is nothing to nothing," she heard a fan say.*

"Oh, good," she cooed to her escort. "Then we haven't missed a thing."

Another type of joke brought under the same heading "Linguistic Relativity" utilizes the possibility of diverse linguistic presentation of one and the same situation, with stress laid on this or that aspect of the object as the speaker prefers to view it. About a bottle with only half of its volume filled with liquid one can say "half-empty" or "half-full" and both statements will be true to fact. Here, both expressions are current and therefore neither of them is novel and neither makes for this reason any appeal to the recipient.

In case one of the two possible interpretations is novel, fresh, witty and implies some attitude on the part of the speaker/writer counter to the generally accepted view, the statement is humorous:

(29) *Terrible Gale in the Channel — Continent Isolated.*

(*Headline in The Times*)

The "half-empty/full bottle" expressions, although referentially equivalent, can stimulate diverse reaction on the part of the hearer/listener in case their differentiating elements (here 'full' vs 'empty') are associated with the concepts 'negative' vs 'positive' or at least 'neutral'. This distinction is taken account of in statements intended to elicit a positive reaction on the part of the hearer/listener. When by such a linguistic act one tries to conceal the actual state of things which are far from being favourable, humorous effect can be achieved, e. g.:

(30) *The division commander received a report by radio from one of his unit commanders.*

"Sir, we are trapped — surrounded by enemy tanks."

"That's not correct," said the general. "Your force is not surrounded. You are just fighting in four different directions."

A particular subtype within the discussed class of jokes is that based on measuring time, distance, etc. in non-traditional, facetious units endowed with especial implications, e. g.:

(31) *"So you took that pippin home from the movie last night."*

"Yeh."

"How far does she live from the theater?"

"Oh, three soda-fountains and a candy-store."

## AGE DIFFERENTIATION

Children's speech is a rich fount of humour, at least for adults. At the same time it is the basis for fruitful and insightful observations on the nature of language and linguistic regularities for language students. "*Children are newcomers to the language*" (Hayakawa) and by slips they make, slips from our doctrinal, grown-up point of view, they help us to see things, things the feeling for which has been deadened by years of language practice<sup>4</sup>.

Following is an outline of traits of age differentiation in language competence and usage relevant for our discussion.

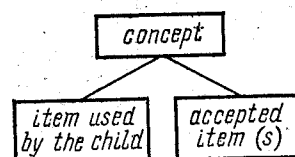
The distinction between the two levels, genotypical and phenotypical, in the theory of linguistics becomes particularly explicit in analogical formations so often coined by children. Quite legitimate on the genotypical level, they turn out to be unpermissible phenotypical formations. The level of linguistic competence acquired turns out to be inadequate for the production of particular idiomatic gram-

<sup>4</sup> Paradoxically, commonly unobservant with regard to their own speech (unless a prestige factor is at play), grown-ups filled with a desire to correct, do not fail to notice and ostracize peculiar features of children's speech which, in their opinion, need improvement. This situation is aptly reflected in the joke in which (32) the mother, having heard her child, much excited by what he saw, say "Oh, mother, a truck went by as big as a house", browbeats him with "Why do you exaggerate so terribly? I've told you twenty million times about that habit of yours, and it doesn't do a bit of good!"

matthcal forms, lexical units, etc., which are logically unpredictable, deviant from the prevalent pattern. Correct by themselves, such forms, units, etc. are not acceptable due to some whim of linguistic history or present-day usage in the linguistic community. In their place some other linguistic items, usually reflexes of once common regularities whose currency has been sanctioned and perpetuated by tradition, are used. See, for instance:

(33) *When the waitress asked how we'd like our steaks, I said, "Medium," my husband said, "Medium," and our seven-year-old son said trustingly, "Large."*

In this way a particular concept already available in the lexicon is given by a child a new linguistic way of expression drawn from the same lexicon in ignorance or, sometimes, in defiance of accepted usage. We have in this case a bilateral correspondence between the concept and the linguistic item for it. Represented grafically, the relation is as follows:



e. g. in (33)      large      (very)  
much and  
the like

Cognate to this are cases where a word or a phrase, through extension, is applied to a new object, the usage being unexpected and novel to the grown-up speakers of the language:

(34) *As I was roasting the beautiful turkey we were having for Christmas and calculating that we might have enough left over for Sunday dinner too, my nephew came into the kitchen to watch me.*

*"How many stoppers are we going to have today?" he asked.*

*"Stoppers?" I asked. "What do you mean?"*

*"You know, all those courses you have first, to stop people from eating so much turkey."*

Children reinterpret words in light of their experience, linguistic and extralinguistic. Doubtless such 'juvenile interpretation' is continually taking place, both when the child is perceiving and producing speech, similar to the personal interpretation carried out by every speaker. However, usually it is not explicit and we become aware of it only in cases when we are struck by its "wrongness", when reinterpretation is drastically in discrepancy with the actual signification of the lexicon item. Particularly funny (to the adult's mind) are reinterpretations of things and events far removed in terms and concepts from contemporary life as in

(35) *The youngest ones at Sunday school were told to draw their conceptions of the Flight into Egypt. One little girl turned in a picture of an airplane with three people in the back, all with haloes, and a fourth up in front without one. Perplexed about the fourth person, the teacher asked the little girl who it was.*

*"Oh," replied the youngster, "that's Pontius, the pilot."*

Children are also liable to wrongly interpret words' etymology and hence arrive at erroneous interpretation of word's meanings. This process can be illustrated by

(36) *Teacher — "What is an octopus?"*

*Small Boy — "It's an eight-sided cat."*

The much more concrete thinking inherent in children as compared to that of more sophisticated grown-ups can result in the literal interpretation of phraseological units. This serves as a basis for construing such jokes as

(37) *Lady — "Why, you naughty boy. I never heard such language since the day I was born."*

*Small Boy — "Yes, mum; I s'pose dere wuz a good deal of cussin' de day you wuz born."*

The gap between the literal meaning of a phraseological unit and the actual one is not drastic. The situation is different with phraseological fusions. As the meaning of a phraseological fusion is not the sum total of the information contained in its components and can be learned only from experience (similar to the way in which children usually acquire the knowledge of words' meanings), the child's interpretation of a phraseological fusion can disagree drastically with its actual meaning and therefore serve as a good linguistic basis for jokes:

(38) Visitor — "Why, no, Betty, I haven't been away. What made you think I had?"

Little Betty — "Why, my papa and mama both said that you and your wife had been at Loggerheads for two or three weeks."

The literal interpretation of a phraseological unit by a child can be revealed indirectly, i. e. not by its actual use, as in

(39) "Now, my little boys and girls," said a teacher, "I want you to be very still — so still that you can hear a pin drop."

For a minute all was still, and a little boy shrieked out:

"Let her drop!"

Also included among linguistically-based jokes are those in which the centre is a word or locution identical as far as its meaning is concerned in adults: and children's speech, but differing considerably in its referential application. The point is that grown-ups and children may use quite different yard-sticks to evaluate a thing's usefulness, luckiness, goodness, and so forth:

(40) "My sister is awfully lucky," said one little boy to another.

"Why?"

"She went to a party last night where they played a game in which the men either had to kiss a girl or pay a forfeit of a box of chocolates."

"Well, how was your sister lucky?"

"She came home with thirteen boxes of chocolates."

As children's speech may strikingly reveal, people (and youngsters are "people" too) using the same name for the same object can identify it on the basis of quite different features. Most unexpected bases of identification are found in children's speech. Hence numerous jokes centering around definitions made by children such as the following one:

(41) Teacher — "Alfred, you may spell the word 'neighbour'."

Alfred — "N-e-i-g-h-b-o-u-r."

Teacher — "That's right. Now, Tommy, can you tell me what a neighbour is?"

Tommy — "Yes, ma'am. It's a woman that borrows things."

Not aware of certain social taboos and conventions<sup>5</sup>, children can unconsciously infringe, in their speech, upon boundaries between the accepted and the non-accepted, the decent and the indecent, the conventional and the unconventional. Taboos in modern society are numerous. In this volume, only linguistically interesting anecdotes are included. In particular, they cover the following violations of accepted usage:

a. The application of low-ranked (on the stylistic scale), usually highly colloquial items to objects to which, by convention, they are not applied. See, for instance, the following joke:

(43) Father criticized the sermon, mother disliked the blunders of the organist, and the eldest daughter thought the choir's singing atrocious.

The subject had to be dropped when the small boy of the family, with the schoolboy's love of fair play, chipped in with remark:

"Dad, I think it was a good show for a penny."

b. The inclusion of words and locutions "borrowed" from various "adults" technical vocabularies into everyday speech, as in

(44) Three-year-old Nancy was a radio fan. Nancy listened with rapt attention to everything — music, speeches, and station announcements.

One night she knelt to say her "Now I lay me." At the end she paused a moment, and then said: "Tomorrow night at this time there will be another prayer."

The above process can also be regarded as a case of a more general one, namely the mixture of styles. Not yet

<sup>5</sup> Here is an illustration of a taboo in the province of speech content:

(42) The conductor came to the mother and her little boy on the street car.

"How old is your little boy, madam?" the conductor asked to determine whether the boy should pay a fare or not.

"Just four," the mother answered, truthfully.

"All right, madam," the conductor acknowledged.

The little boy looked quizzically at the conductor, and evidently felt that further information should be vouchsafed.

"And mother," he said solemnly, "is just thirty-one."

fully conscious of stylistic distinctions, children can use stylistically incompatible words indiscriminately:

(45) *A boy was asked by his history teacher to tell the story of Queen Elizabeth and Sir Walter Raleigh.*

*"Well," said the movie-nurtured modern boy, "the queen was hopping out of her taxi, and Sir Walter Raleigh spread his coat in front of her and said, "Step on it, baby."*

A discussion of age differentiation in language competence and performance as displayed and used in humorous literature of the examined type would be incomplete, I think, if we left out linguistic beliefs and attitudes characteristic of children. Like some of our ancestors not sophisticated in linguistic matters, children are apt to consider names as immanent properties of objects, and a number of jokes reflect this stage in children's thinking. The following example, it seems likely, is not altogether fictional:

(46) *"What is your new brother's name?"*

*Little Jane — "I don't know yet. We can't understand a word he says."*

#### PHONETICS

Differences in pronunciation observed in language performance can be diverse and form an intrinsic feature of the speech of every language user. However, not all such differences fall within the scope of linguistic theory. Linguistically (and "linguistically" here implies also "socially"), only those features of enunciation are significant which mark the individual's speech as characteristic of a particular language community and/or which can be interpreted as symptomatic of regional, social, professional or age variations.

One of the commonest assumptions of folk-linguistics is that only one's native language or dialect is "correct" and capable of fulfilling efficiently the role for which language is intended, whatever that may be. Naturally, this general attitude is extended into matters of pronunciation. Hence the assumption of the "goodness" of one's pronunciation as representative of the pronunciation of the speaker's language community.—The attitudes of speakers of a particular language towards themselves as users of this

language and to all others with alien speech are reflected in many ethnonyms (cf. *barbaric* going back ultimately to Greek *barbarikós*, from *bárbaros* "foreign, especially non-Greek speaking; rude" assumed to be originally used in reference to unintelligible speech) and often in their etymologizing (cf. the establishment of semantic and etymological connections between German *deutsch* — "German" and *deutlich* — "distinct (of speech)" in folk etymology, contrary to historical linguistic reality).—Although such an opinion now can often be considerably modified and assessments are devoid of extremities characteristic of the past, nevertheless features of pronunciation alien to one's pattern of speech can appear funny, at best, and, accordingly, can be ridiculed. (Naturally in jokes a generally humorous attitude towards pronunciation distinctions is reflected). Speakers of one regional variety of English, say American English, can perceive with a smile the peculiar phonetics of a speaker of another regional variety. The same can be observed in connection with territorial differences in pronunciation as well as in connection with distinctions between the literary standard speech and the vernacular. Unhappy stylizations of pronunciation imitating features of enunciation alien to the speaker or situationally inappropriate can also appear funny.

What has been mentioned above refers to differences in form, in this case, the way speech sounds. Differences in pronunciation can also entail the confusion of words or the emergence of word associations resulting from phonetic similarity. If, as a result of a semantic reinterpretation of the utterance, the projected situation is in discrepancy with the original one and the personages appear in a funny light, idiosyncracies in pronunciation may trigger a humorous effect.

#### LEXICON

It seems appropriate to begin the discussion of lexical means in the generation of humour by stressing one of the most general properties of the word, namely, the arbitrariness of appellation, the absence of a natural connection between things, properties, etc., and their linguistic designations. This fundamental property of human language serves as the basis for numerous jokes. Here is one of the possible ways in which this property is used.

When the actual meaning of a word is unknown to a person and he is unaware of the fact, the word can be handled by such a person in complete contradiction to its actual meaning and normal usage:

(47) *Father — "Why were you kept in at school?"*

*Son — "I didn't know where the Azores were."*

*Father — "Well, in the future just remember where you put things."*

### Multiplicity of Referential Connections.

Because of the highly abstract nature of man's language, words express concepts which can be referred to an infinite number of things, events, features, etc., giving rise to the possibility of ambiguity. In actual discourse the ambiguity is usually resolved or, rather, it does not arise, as the speakers have the same particular things, etc. in mind because of the commonality of the situation/environment they are in, their experience, etc. It is highly illuminating for the understanding of language as the most effective means of communication and of the way people use this tool, to observe how in the process of communication the scope of feasible referents is momentarily and imperceptibly narrowed to but one, how the communicants concentrate on that held in common, leaving outside the focus of their attention a host of other traits, insignificant for this particular act of discourse.

Ambiguity arises when communicants using the same words mean different things. In the joke quoted below a scholar and a schoolgirl associate "study" and "astronomy" with diverse and opposing referents.

(48) *A high-school girl, seated next to a famous astronomer at a dinner party, struck up a conversation with him by asking,*

*"What do you do in life?"*

*He replied, "I study astronomy."*

*"Dear me," said the girl "I finished astronomy last year."*

Generally, it is possible here to argue whether "study" and "astronomy" as used in the joke are each associated with one or two meanings. Of course, to study a subject at school is something different from scholarly study

carried out by a scientists. But the labelling of the fact is secondary in importance in comparison to the establishment of ambiguity. If we call this polysemy, the example could just as easily be placed among jokes based on this feature of a word's semantic structure. Here, however, is an example of indubitable multiplicity of referential connections:

(49) *An English bishop received the following note from the vicar of a village in his diocese:*

*"My Lord, I regret to inform you of the death of my wife. Can you possibly send me a substitute for the weekend?"*

Multiplicity of referential connections is particularly characteristic of pronouns because of their highly abstract nature. A great number of jokes are based on the referential ambiguity of pronouns. Here is one of the type:

(50) *A kindergarten teacher, wishing to test the general knowledge of her class, laid a 50-cent piece on her desk and asked,*

*"Can anyone tell me what this is?"*

*A small boy in the first row leaned forward examined the coin, and promptly answered: "Tails!"*

### Homonyms

Without dwelling at length on this rather well-known subject, I would like only to mention that apart from true homonyms, there are homonoids, in particular, homophonoids — words which can be taken, because of considerable phonetic similarity, for homonyms, as manifested by jokes like the following:

(51) *"This morning," said the teacher of an early Sunday school class, "the subject of the lesson is Ruth the gleaner. Who can tell me anything about Ruth?"*

*A small boy raised his hand.*

*"Well, Willie, what do you know about Ruth?" said the teacher encouragingly. And Willie piped out in a shrill little voice:*

*"He cleaned up sixty home runs in one season."*

In the above case, two different words are brought together on the basis of a wrong phonetic interpretation of one of them.

In the example below, two other different and etymologically unrelated words are brought together due to a false etymology.

(52) *After looking over his son's report card, father said:*

*"Bob, if you had a little more spunk, you'd stand better in your grades. And by the way, do you know what spunk is?"*

*"Sure, Dad. It's the past participle of spank."*

The two different processes connected with different facets of words and word relationships have a common result — the envisaging of homonyms where they are actually not available.

### Some Other Lexicological Notes

As the material under investigation seems to reveal, a word, not only as a vocabulary entry but also in its actual use, can signal in a single realization within one utterance more than one lexical meaning. It is hard to ascribe the feature 'primary' — 'secondary' to any of these meanings unless we agree to associate these characteristics with time, because the two meanings do not appear simultaneously. While one meaning (this can be given the conventional label 'primary') appears as soon as the word is used in the utterance and so linearly and/or chronologically comes first in the discourse, the other (conventionally, 'secondary') acquires its psycholinguistic reality only in "afterthought", as the result of a recursive mental movement to the original lexical unit. This move is prompted by relevant environmental or other associative stimuli. So the two meanings exist in duality. They are based on such oppositions as "abstract *vs* concrete", "proper *vs* common", "phraseological *vs* free". Here is an example to illustrate the point:

(53) *In an argument, the best weapon to hold is the tongue.*

Sometimes when the differentiating environment is not spatially separated, as in the above example, it is difficult to ascribe the feature 'primary'/'secondary' to either of the two meanings differentiated in accordance with the indexes "abstract *vs* concrete", "proper *vs* common", "phraseological *vs* free." Cf. for instance the following joke:

(54) *Being a taxi driver is one of the pleasantest of jobs... you're always running into nice people.*

It seems it would be correct to suppose that one of the two appears earlier but exactly which one is not easy to determine. Besides, with different people, depending on their previous experience, their frame of mind (cf. the significance of the degree to which a person's sense of humour has been developed), etc., the 'choice' of meaning may be a variable.

Some types of phraseological units are functionally equivalent to words and it is only natural that the way phraseological units are used in jokes is similar to that of words, polysemantic and homonymic. One of the common facetious uses of phraseological units is based on ambiguity. The point is that phraseological units have homonyms in the form of free syntactic combinations of identical surface structure. In case such a structure is used in speech ambiguity is available and this can be used in the traditional manner to produce humorous effect:

(55) *She — "You're the nicest boy that I have ever met."*

*He — "Tell it to the Marines."*

*She — "I have — to dozens of them."*

A phraseological unit, like a word, can be polysemantic, that is, a particular word combination can be endowed with more than one phraseological meaning. So in this case the phraseological meanings are sufficient to produce ambiguity without resorting to the nonphraseological ones as above:

(56) *Auto Salesman — "Yes, sir, this car is absolutely the very last word."*

*Customer — "Good I'll take it. My wife loves it."*

There are also some specific uses of units belonging to the phraseological stock of language such as the witty alteration of a phraseological unit (particularly characteristic of proverbs):

(57) *A friend who isn't in need is a friend indeed*

the use of a phraseological unit with an appeal to its literal meaning:

(58) He (at 11 P. M.) — "Did you know I could imitate any bird you can name?"

She — "No, I didn't. Can you imitate a homing pigeon?"

the implicational use of (part of) a phraseological unit:

(59) At Columbia, a warning bell sounds three minutes before the end of a classroom hour. Edman was lecturing on Santayana one afternoon when the warning bell sounded, and several students stirred in their seats.

"Just a moment, gentlemen," said Edman. "That was not the final bell: I wish to cast a few more pearls."

## SYNTAX

### Polysemy of Syntactic Constructions

Syntactic constructions whose components differ in their deep structural interpretation I assume to be polysemantic. Consider, for instance, the noun phrase *a beautiful singer*. The adjective *beautiful* is endowed here, due to a specific character of the derivational history of *singer*, with two such meanings. In one, the property of beauty is attributed to the object, in the other, to the object's activity. The structural polysemy of such an adjective forms the linguistic foundation of the following joke in which the misunderstanding arises because the interlocutors ascribe different structural interpretations to one and the same construction:

(60) "But you said she sang beautifully."

"No, I didn't."

"What did you say?"

"I said she was a beautiful singer."

### Homonymy of Syntactic Constructions

There are many syntactic constructions which, although identical in their surface structure, differ in the relations and/or syntactic functions of their components. The result is the ambiguity of such constructions in discourse. Elsewhere I have outlined certain types of ambiguous syntactic constructions. On the basis of that discussion the distinction between the following two types seems to be valid for present purposes. The two constructions in question are:

a. Syntactic constructions whose components differ as to syntactic function and/or their syntactic relations. Consider, for example, the noun group with componential structure  $N_3$ 's  $N_2$   $N_1$  in the anecdote given below. The group allows of two interpretations depending on the choice of connections within the group, namely *camel's (hair)(brush)* and *(camel's(hair)) brush*:

(61) "Papa, is this a camel's hair brush?"

"Yes, my child, that's a camel's hair brush."

"Golly, papa, it must take him a terribly long time to brush himself."

b. Syntactic constructions with diverse class/subclass nature of the components. Take for instance the following anecdote:

(62) "Daddy, what's a 'feebly'?"

"A 'feebly'?"

"Yes, Daddy."

"How is it used?"

"Why, here in this book it says, 'The man had a feebly growing down on his chin'."

in which the phrase *a feebly growing* is ambiguous since it allows of two structural interpretations, Det A N and Det N  $V_{mg}$ . However, this is only when the phrase is written. In oral speech, the nature of the juncture between *feebly* and *growing* prevents any misunderstanding.

Humour due to syntactic homonymy is common in advertisement columns. Trying to be brief, the editor or author can produce homonymic, if often only in print, sentences such as the following:

(63) "Wanted a smart woman who can wash, iron and milk cows"

or

(64) "For Sale, a piano, by a widowed lady with carved legs."

## STYLE AND COMPOSITION

Language is a system in which the redundance of items is inherent. However, in most cases redundance is not absolute. Since a linguistic item is a multifaceted phenome-



non, a particular item can be both redundant within one subsystem and at the same time functionally significant as part of another subsystem. Consider, for instance, verbs which denote the act or the process of dying (*die, depart, de cease, kick the bucket, croak*) or the different means for the expression of the plural of nouns. The former are redundant when viewed as designators of the said act or process, and the latter, as expressors of the grammatical meaning of plurality. At the same time, the respective series of items are not redundant stylistically.

Stylistic differentiation of linguistic units, at least in the province of the lexicon, is not formally expressed and is determined solely by usage. This fact has important consequences for the generation of humour. The absence of structural limitations on the use of a stylistically marked item in contrast with the usage conventionally established for it makes possible the transference of such a unit into an environment stylistically alien to it. The contrast between the actual situation and the situation associatively generated by the use of a stylistically alien item can have a comical effect, particularly if the two situations, actual and projected, are incompatible or radically disparate.

(65) "When Lot's wife looked back," said the Sunday-school teacher, "what happened to her?"

"She was transmuted into chloride of sodium," answered the boy with the goggles.

### Bon Mots

The bon mots included in the book are also linguistically based. Unlike an anecdote, which is in itself a piece of literature with a narrative, a plot, and fictional or anecdotal characters, bon mots are simply apt, witty sayings. That which usually precedes them is merely intended to show the reader/listener the situation in which the bon mot was produced so that he may fully appreciate it.

The aptness of a bon mot lies primarily in the novelty or unexpectedness of the saying. A bon mot violates the conventional mode of statement sanctified by linguistic tradition and, accordingly, shatters, as it were, our vision of reality patterned by traditional linguistic usages. The interpretation of reality offered by such a bon mot is true to life, if unconventionally expressed. This alloy of unex-

pectedness and aptness constitutes the essence of the bon mot.

One of the common ways of coining bon mots of the outlined type is what may be called *reversion*. If reversed, two items of a unit exchange positions. Cf. the following joke:

(66) *A scriptwriter was describing a scene to film director Mike Curtiz when Curtiz cut in to tell him how the scene should be played. The writer tried to go on, but Curtiz held up his hand.*

*"Please don't talk while I'm interrupting," he snapped.*

The unit within which reversion takes place can be a simple or complex sentence, a phrase, or a word. The items of such a unit, then, range from words to morphemes and even phonemes.

Reversion can involve more than a couple of items:

(67) *Paderewski, the famous pianist, once praised a young society man who was distinguished as a polo player for his clever playing.*

*The young man said it was different indeed from Paderewski's performance.*

*"Oh," answered Paderewski, "the difference between us is perfectly clear. You are a dear soul who plays polo, while I am a poor Pole who plays solo."*

Another type of bon mot is exemplified by the following joke:

(68) *"Call that a kind man," said an actor, speaking of an absent acquaintance; "a man who is away from his family and never sends them a farthing! Call that kindness!"*

*"Yes, unremitting kindness," Jerrold replied.*

Here, as in the above case, the bon mot appeals to the perceiver because of its unexpectedness and, at the same time, its soundness. The linguistic means of attaining this is, however, of a different sort. It is *confluence*. Two or more contentially distinct but homophonic linguistic items expressing completely unrelated ideas have come to be applicable or relevant to the same situation.

Still another type of bon mot is a "catching-up remark" centered around a linguistic unit extracted from a previous utterance/text and applied to an entirely different situation or interpreted in a different sense with reference

to the same situation. (In the latter case, it is possible that the unit is not actually present in the catching-up remark). 'Extracting' is perhaps not the best word for the process because the central unit of the catching-up remark is identical only phonetically to the linguistic unit in the previous utterance; in the catching-up remark the same form is endowed with a different semantic content. From this it is clear that such bon mots are based on the use of homonyms and polysemantic words. Here are examples:

(69) *Judge Ben B. Lindsey was lunching one day — it was a very hot day — when a politician paused beside his table. "Judge," said he, "I see you're drinking coffee. That's a heating drink. In this weather you want to drink iced drinks, Judge — sharp iced drinks. Did you ever try gin and ginger ale?"*

*"No," said the Judge, smiling, "but I have tried several fellows who have."*

(70) *A drunken Congressman said to Horace Greeley one day: "I am a self-made man."*

*"Then, sir," replied Greeley, "this fact relieves the Almighty of a great responsibility."*

Jokes and bon mots are not rigidly distinct from one another. A bon mot can be, and actually often is, the centre of a joke. (The same can be true of jokes and riddles, many of which are mutually convertible)<sup>6</sup>.

Linguistic means of humour vary widely and the foregoing discussion was only meant to serve as an attempt at a brief outline of some of these means.

The exploration of linguistic humour is rewarding to many scholarly ends. It seems extremely promising for the study of some aspects of the nature of humans particularly if viewed in their distinction from other species. Take for instance the study of the structure and semantics of language, this unique characteristic with which only humans are endowed. The exploration of the linguistic mechanism of humour enables the analyst to discover ma-

<sup>6</sup> Cf.: (71) a joke:  
*Teacher — Tommy, where was the Declaration of Independence signed?*  
*Tommy — At the bottom, I guess.*

(72) a riddle:  
*Where was the Declaration of Independence signed?*  
*(At the bottom)*

ny finer points of language structure and semantics overlooked in previous linguistic research and to give a new assessment to familiar linguistic facts. In particular the study of humour has brought to light the variety of linguistic means of production of ambiguity and necessitates it to reconsider the role of ambiguity in communication by means of language. Ambiguity is an important attribute of language. In some uses of language, it is as essential and indispensable as unambiguity in others.

Previously in this chapter I mentioned the possibility of different reactions of individuals to one and the same event. In particular the diversity of the reaction of film viewers towards what is being shown on the screen was noted. There are reasons for thinking that these and similar differences associated with humour indicate not so much distinct personal qualities of people as differences of cultures, namely the differences of cultures with regard to what is considered funny and whether (and, if yes, within what social conditions) one's personal humorous view may be made public.

There is another important and interesting point bearing, now, on human thought, prompted by the study of humour, which was raised by Chafe. He (in correspondence) suggested that the resolution of ambiguity in jokes (bringing the psychological aspect of the matter to the foreground he refers to what he, tentatively, calls "the 'destruction of expectation' phase") "seems usually to contain a way of looking at things that is unusual or bizarre. It assumes a world that is different from the way one normally assumes the world to be. [...] It also seems likely that this new, strange world should be one in which things are especially interesting — for one reason or another."

I would like to conclude with a paraphrase of Hubbard's remarks to the effect "Don't take life too seriously or you will never scramble out of it alive." In the same vein, I would like to propose: "Don't take humour too seriously or you risk losing the precious ability to enjoy it." Of course, this dictum itself certainly should not be taken too seriously either.

## Part 2

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# Jokes, Stories, Etc.

*The shortest distance between two people  
is a smile.*

*The best physicians are Dr Diet, Dr  
Quiet and Dr Merryman.*

(Translation of a Latin medical maxim)

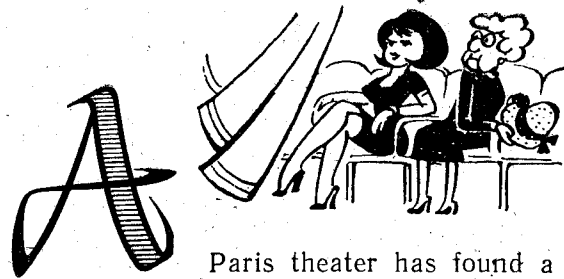
*Imagination was given to man to com-  
pensate him for what he is not; a sense  
of humour to console him for what he  
is. So keep smiling.*

*He who laughs lasts.*

### SECTION I

#### Language. Some Peculiar Uses, Misuses and Non-Uses

*The jokes under the above title amply attest to the fact that people do not only use language for communication. Indeed, they can do things (sometimes these look more like tricks) with words. The purpose of producing utterances in such cases is not merely to convey ideas, but also to attain some more palpable results, commonly beneficial, directly or indirectly, for the speaker. A delicate, flexible, and, at the same time, most powerful tool of interindividual relations in society —, such is language as it appears in jokes on the subsequent pages.*



● 1 Paris theater has found a means of making ladies remove their hats. Before the performance a strip appears on the screen curtain. "The management wishes to spare elderly ladies inconvenience. They are permitted to retain their hats." There follows a general stampede to remove hats.

● 2 A successful old lawyer tells the following story anent the beginning of his professional life:

"I had just installed myself in my office", he said, "had put in a phone and had preened myself for my first client who might come along when, through the glass of my door I saw a shadow. Yes, it was doubtless some one to see me. Picture me, then, grabbing the nice, shiny receiver of my new phone and plunging into an imaginary conversation. It ran something like this:

"'Yes, Mr. S., I was saying as the stranger entered the office, 'I'll attend to that corporation matter for you. Mr. J. had me on the phone this morning and wanted me to settle a damage suit, but I had to put him off, as I was too busy with other cases. But I'll manage to sandwich your case in between the others somehow. Yes. Yes. All right. Goodbye.'

"Being sure, then, that I had duly impressed my prospective client, I hung up the receiver and turned to him.

"'Excuse me, sir,' the man said 'but I'm from the telephone company. I've come to connect your instrument.'"

● 3 "Mama," said little Linda, "do all fairy tales begin with 'once upon a time'?"

"No, darling," said Mama grimly. "Sometimes they begin, 'My love, I will be detained at the office pretty late tonight.'"

● 4 Bloomingdale's department store was having its annual sale, and salesgirl Martha Lou Bouie had had a tough day. Many bargains were being offered, and customers were pushing, arguing, yelling.

A stout customer had just told Martha Lou that she wanted a purchase delivered to her home, and Martha Lou was writing down the address on the sales slip. She paused to glance at four customers who were having a tug of war over one bargain.

"It's a mad house, isn't it?" commented Martha.

"No," the pompous customer said sternly, "it's a private home."

● 5 "The cheek of that red cap! He glared at me as if I hadn't my pass."

"And what did you do?"

"I glared right back as if I had."

● 6 "What is your age?" asked the judge. "Remember you're under oath."

"Twenty-one years and some months," the woman answered.

"How many months?" the judge persisted.

"One hundred and eight."

● 7 A tramp ship with a heterogeneous passenger list stranded on an idyllic Polynesian islet.

Soon the little spot was a beehive of activity. The Germans were drilling the natives into an army. The Americans opened a general store and auto agency. The Australians started a race track; the French a restaurant. Two Scots were financing the whole show, and a couple of Englishmen were still standing around waiting to be introduced.

● 8 Jones was always trying to borrow money, and his friends had begun to avoid him.

One morning he tackled an acquaintance in the street before the latter had a chance to escape.

"I say, old man," began Jones, "I'm in a terrible fix. I want some money badly, and I haven't the slightest idea where on earth I'm going to get it from."

"Glad to hear it, my boy," returned the other promptly. "I was afraid that you might have an idea you could borrow it from me."

● 9

"Say something nice about her new hat!"



● 10

*Ethel (youngest daughter)* — "Oh, pa dear, what did Geo. — what did young Mr. Brown want?"

*Pa* — "Secret, my love. 'Wished to speak to me privately!"

*Ethel* — "Oh, pa, but do tell me — 'cause he was so very attentive to me before you came in — and then asked me to leave the room."

*Pa* — "Well, my dear" — (*in a whisper*) — "he'd left his purse at the office, and wanted to borrow eighteenpence to pay his train home!"

● 11

Coming home one Sunday afternoon with a string of trout, Robbie was suddenly confronted by the local minister. There was no way of escape, but the boy rose to the occasion. Going up to the minister, he said: "Minister, d'ye see what thae troots got for nabbin' worms on Sunday?"

● 12

The division commander unexpectedly stepped into the barracks. A trembling orderly sprang to attention, and in a thin voice said: "Good morning, sir."

The division commander eyed the private for an age-long second. And then he commented confidentially: "When I pass you in future I want a salute, not an inaccurate weather report!"

● 13

*The Oldest and the Shortest Drama in the World:* He — "Will you?" She — "Oh! I do not know!" (Which "know" meant that she said "yes.")

● 14

A young officer at the front wrote home to his father:

"Dear Father: Kindly send me \$ 50 at once; I lost another leg in a stiff engagement and am in the hospital without means."

The answer was:

"My Dear Son: As this is the fourth leg you have lost (according to your letters), you ought to be accustomed to it by this time. Try and wobble along on any other you may have left."

● 15

*Freshman (finishing a letter)* — "I'd send you that five I owe you, but I've already sealed the letter."

● 16

"Don't trouble yourself to stretch your mouth any wider," said a dentist to his patient, "I intend to stand outside to draw your tooth."

● 17

"It was so cold where we were," boasted the Arctic explorer, "that the candle froze and we couldn't blow it out."

"That's nothing," said his rival. "Where we were the words came out of our mouths in pieces of ice, and we had to fry them to see what we were talking about."

● 18

"May it please the court," said an American lawyer to a German justice of the peace before whom he was trying a case, "this is a case of great importance. While the American eagle, whose sleepless eye watches over the welfare of this mighty republic, and whose wings extend from the Alleghenies to the Rocky Chain of the West, was rejoicing in his pride of place —"

"Shtop dare! I say vat hass dis suit to do mit de eagles? Dis suit hass nutin' to do mit de vild bird. It vas yun sheep," exclaimed the judge.

"True, your honour, but my client has rights and —"  
"Your gliant hass no right to de eagle."

"Of course not, but the laws of language —"

"Vat I care for de laws of language, eh? I oonder-shtand de laws of de states und dot is enough for me. Talk aboutt de case alretty."

"Well, then, your honour, my client is charged with stealing a sheep and —"

"Dat vill do! Dat vill do! Ten dollars fine, und der court vill adjourn."

● 19

"Pat, here's a dollar I borrowed of ye last wake."

"Bedad, Mike, I'd forgot all about it."

"Och, why didn't ye say so?"

● 20

She — "How old do you think I am?"

He — "You don't look it."

● 21

Son — "Daddy dear, what is an actor?"

Daddy — "An actor?" My son, an actor is a man who can walk to the side of a stage, peer into the wings filled with theatrical props, dirt and dust, other actors, stage-hands, and say: 'What a lovely view there is from this window.'"

● 22

"I thought you were dead."

"What gave you that impression?"

"I heard a man speak well of you this morning."

● 23

Son. (*entering office*) — "Well, dad, I just ran up to say hullo."

Dad — "Too late, my boy. Your mother ran up to say hullo, and got all my change."

● 24

A lady's daily routine was rudely interrupted by army maneuvers. As her car approached a bridge that she crossed twice a day from and to her home she was halted by a sentry.

"You can't drive across the bridge, lady," he said firmly. "It has been just blown up."

The lady looked at the untouched bridge and at the sentry, shrugged her shoulders in despair and got out of

her car to mull over the situation. At this point another soldier walked into view.

"Officer," she inquired, "can you tell me one reason why I cannot drive my car over this bridge?"

"Lady," he answered soberly, "I can't tell you anything at all. I have been dead for three days."

● 25

It was a sleepy sort of day, the class was about half the usual size and the Prof. was calling the roll in a half-absent manner. To each name someone had answered "here" until the name Smith was called. Silence reigned supreme for a moment only to be broken by the Prof.'s voice.

"My word! Hasn't Mr. Smith any friends here?"

● 26

An American travelling in Scotland got into a conversation with a local farmer, and, in the course of the talk he remarked:

"I guess you haven't heard about the cattle salve we have in the United States. You simply cut off a cow's tail, rud the salve on the stump, and you'll have a new tail on the cow in a week's time."

"Hoot, mon, that's naething. Ye ocht tae see the embrocation we ha'e at the place I coom frame. Ye simply cut a coo's tail aff, rub the salve on the tail, an' in a week's time a new coo grows on the auld tail."

● 27

A customer sat down at a table in a smart restaurant and tied a napkin around his neck. The scandalized manager called a waiter and instructed him, "Try to make him understand, as tactfully as possible, that that's not done."

Said the thoughtful waiter to the customer: "Pardon me, sir. Shave or haircut, sir?"

● 28

During the critique held after field exercise the umpire told the unit commander, "There were two correct solutions of the problem. You've selected the third one."

● 29

He (*awkward dancer*) — "It was nice of you to give me this dance."

She (*sweetly*) — "Not at all — this is a charity ball."

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this dance."

*She (sweetly)* — "Not at all — this is a charity ball."

● 30

*Visitor* — "Do you like reciting, dear?"

*Child* — "Oh, no, I hate it, really, but Mummy makes me do it when she wants people to go."

● 31

A motorist speeding along a highway at 80 miles an hour was stopped by a policeman. "Was I driving too fast?" asked the motorist apologetically.

"Hell no," replied the policeman. "You were flying too low."

● 32

Two Scotsmen played sixteen holes of golf without saying a word to each other. On the seventeenth tee, McDougall broke the long silence. "I am one up," he announced.

The other looked at him with unmitigated disgust. "Chatterbox," he rasped.

● 33

The prim old lady was given the first glass of beer she ever had. After sipping it for a moment she looked up with a puzzled air.

"How odd!" she murmured. "It tastes just like the medicine my husband has been taking for the last twenty years."

● 34

*Author* — "Have you read my new book?"

*Friend* — "Yes."

*Author* — "What do you think of it?"

*Friend* — "Well, to be candid with you, I think the covers are too far apart."

● 35

Two men in a car went right past the traffic lights when they were red, and were stopped by a policeman.

"I'm sorry, officer," said the driver, thinking quickly. "I happen to be a doctor and I'm taking a patient to the asylum in a hurry."

The policeman was suspicious — but the passenger was just as quick. Looking up at the constable with a seraphic smile, he whispered: "Kiss me, darling!"

They got away with it!

● 36

Bobby had been to a birthday party, and, knowing his weakness, his mother looked him straight in the eye and said, "I hope you didn't ask for a second piece of cake?"

"No," replied Bobby. "I only asked Mrs. Smith for the recipe so you could make some like it and she gave me two more pieces just of her own accord."

● 37

A high-powered psychiatrist in New York was taking on a new patient. "I'm a very busy man," he explained, "and the first interview is always one-sided because the patient just tells me everything he wants me to know. Now if I can get that down and hear it at my own convenience it's a great help. So I use this tape recorder here. You sit right beside it, I switch on and I leave you, and you just go on talking until you've finished all you want to say. Is that clear?" The patient said it was and the machine was started. Five minutes later the psychiatrist was surprised to see the patient leaving the building so he went after him. "You've not said much into my tape recorder, have you?" he asked. "Well," the man replied, "you see I also am very, very busy, and you are not the only psychiatrist I've consulted. If you will go back to your surgery you will see, sitting next to your tape recorder and telling it everything I want to say, my little dictaphone!"

● 38

The man was suffering from a bronchial attack, and as a result of it he was unable to speak above a whisper. The illness was slight, but painful, and he decided to call at the residence of the doctor who had just moved to town.

The patient appeared one evening at the doctor's front door, rang the bell, and after a short wait stood facing the doctor's young and pretty wife.

"Is the doctor at home?" he asked in his bronchial whisper.

"No," the young wife whispered in reply. "Come right on in."

● 39

"You have an admirable cook, yet you are always growling about her to your friends."

"Do you suppose I want her lured away?"



● 40

"Did you pass your exam?"

"Well, it was like this — you see —"

"Shake! Neither did I."

● 41

*Prof.* — "Name two pronouns."

*Stude* — "Who, me?"

● 42

A British judge wriggled impatiently on the bench while a lanky, vulture-beaked barrister summed up for fully an hour and a half. Finally the judge dispatched a little note to the garrulous legal light. It read:

Patience Competition. Gold medal — me.

Honourable mention — Job.

The lawyer wound up his plea in a hurry.

● 43

A soldier asked another: "What do you do when somebody puts you questions about some secret matters?"

"I begin whispering him some crazy answers."

"Why whispering?"

"Because many people believe everything you tell them — if you whisper it."

● 44

Sergeant Millberry caught a soldier with a single button unfastened.

"Oh," he sneered. "Sunbathing, eh, private Smith?"

● 45

"Ah, THERE you are, officer — I was just explaining to Eric here how squirrels store their nuts for the winter."



● 46

"Herr Oberst, what do we do now? The Russians are attacking our position with many tanks. Should we retreat?"

"Retreat? You must be mad, Lieutenant Müller. We never retreat. We must advance in the direction from which we came."

● 47

Mr. McGlombie and his wife had always wanted a ride in a plane, but McGlombie turned white when he heard the tariff for a taxi-ride in the air. It was \$ 20. The amused pilot said, "I will make you a proposition, Mr. McGlombie. You and your wife get in and I will give you a ride for half an hour. If you don't say a single word while we are up, I will only charge you \$ 5."

Mr. McGlombie thought this was a fair proposal and he and his wife climbed into the plane. The pilot thereupon took them on the wildest half hour's ride that could possibly be imagined, looping the loop, riding upside down, and going through dizzying dives and tailspins. Finally he set his craft down on the ground.

"I've got to hand it to you, Mr. McGlombie," said the pilot. "It took guts to go through all that without uttering a sound."

"Aye," said McGlombie, mopping his brow with his handkerchief. "But ya'll never know how close I came to talkin' when the wife fell out."

● 48

"Sell your house yet?"

"We've decided not to after reading the agent's description. It seemed to be just the place we were looking for!"

● 49

"I've finished with that girl."

"Why?"

"She asked me if I danced."

"What's so insulting about that?"

"I was dancing with her when she asked me."

● 50

"Why did you tear the back part out of that new book?" asked the long-suffering wife of the absent-minded doctor.

"Excuse me, dear," said the famous surgeon, "the part you speak of was labelled 'Appendix' and I took it out without thinking."

● 51

"I didn't have no part in the fight, your honour," swore Rastus solemnly on the witness stand. "Just as soon as I seen there was trouble I started runnin' as fast as I could. Then I heard two shots ring out."

"Two shots?" interrupted the judge. "The last witness said there was only one shot fired."

"Oh, no, sir," insisted Rastus. "I counted two shots definitely — one when the bullet passed me and the other when I passed the bullet."

● 52

A lady who was a very uncertain driver stopped her car at traffic signals which were against her. As the green flashed on, her engine stalled, and when she had restarted it the colour was again red. This flurried her so much that when green returned she again stalled her engine and the cars behind began to hoot. While she was waiting for the green the third time the constable on duty stepped across and with a smile said: "Those are the only colours showing to-day, ma'am."

● 53

A Yankee passenger in an English train was beguiling his fellow passengers with tall stories and remarked, "We can start with a twenty-story apartment house this month, and have it finished by next."

This was too much for the burly Yorkshireman, who sat next to him. "Man, that's nowt," he said. "I've seen 'em in Yorkshire when I've been going to work just laying the foundation stone and when I've been coming home at neet they've been putting the folk out for back rent."

● 54

"Talk! Talk! Talk! This is the last time I'll take a woman fishing!"



● 55

"Are you positive," demanded counsel, "that the prisoner is the man who stole your car?"

"Well," answered the witness, "I was until you cross-examined me. Now I'm not sure whether I ever had a car at all."

● 56

"Is it possible to confide a secret to you?"

"Certainly. I will be as silent as the grave."

"Well, then, I have a pressing need for two bucks."

"Do not worry. It is as if I had heard nothing."

● 57

*Maid* — "I'm sorry, but she said to tell you that she is not at home."

*Mr. Jones* — "Oh, that's all right, just tell her that I'm glad I didn't come."

● 58

*The Girl (as they dance)* — "Isn't it a topping floor and a topping band?"

*Algy Pinhead* — "I was just going to say that. You really must leave me something to talk about."

● 59

*Film Star* — "Yes, I said I wanted a home with at least twelve children."

*Friend* — "My dear, what makes you say such foolish things?"

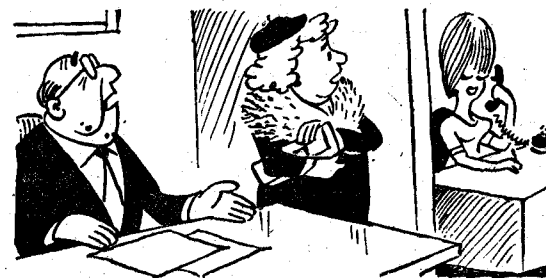
*Film Star* — "The publicity department."

● 60

"Mother," asked the little one, on the occasion of a number of guests being present at dinner, "will the dessert hurt me, or is there enough to go round?"

● 61

"I hired her because, somehow, she reminded me of you."



● 62

The plumber was a mild sort of man, but he could not get away from the fact that his assistant was terribly lazy.

For a long time he said nothing, but at last he could contain his exasperation no longer.

"Bill, you get on my nerves standing there with both hands in your pockets," he said. "For Heaven's sake, take one of them out."

● 63

An enthusiastic angler was telling some friends about a proposed fishing trip to a lake in Colorado which he had in contemplation.

"Are there any trout out there?" asked one friend.

"Thousands of 'em," replied the angler.

"Will they bite easily?" asked another friend.

"Will they? Why, they're absolutely vicious. A man has to hide behind a tree to bait his hook."

● 64

A man in North Carolina, accused of horse-stealing, was saved from conviction by the powerful plea of his lawyer. After his acquittal by the jury, the lawyer took him aside, and asked smilingly, "Honor bright, now, Bill, you did steal that horse, didn't you?"

"Now, look a-here, Judge," was the reply, "I allers did think I stole that horse. But since I hearn yore speech to the jury, I'll be doggoned if I ain't got my doubts about it."

● 65

A man received the following note from his actor son, who had joined a touring company:

"I have made a great success. Will you send me \$25 to pay the landlady? — Your devoted son, Algy."

"P. S.— Since writing this letter, I am ashamed to ask you, so I ran after the postman and tried to get it back. I pray it does not reach you."

The son was surprised when he received this reply: "Dear Algy, your prayer was answered. The letter did not reach me."

● 66

"An' what's more, I ain't 'ad a day's illness in me life!"

"Lor lumme, what on earth d'yer find to talk about?"

● 67

A Georgian in New York City was telling about the prowess of mosquitoes in his native state. One night a number of the insects got into his room in Georgia. He took a candle and went around burning them. He got them all except one big ferocious fellow that seemed to be the leader. He cornered that one and held the candle under it, but the skeeter just turned around and blew the candle out.

● 68

*Young Doctor* — "Why do you always ask your patients what they have for dinner?"

*Old Doctor* — "It's a most important question, for according to their menus I make out my bills."

● 69

Several days after his father died, little Johnny was stopped on the street by a neighbour.

"And what were your poor father's last words?" the neighbour asked.

"He didn't have any," Johnny answered. "Mama was with him to the very end."

● 70

"What foul?"



● 71

In Hollywood no script is considered worthy unless it has been rewritten at least six times. They even rewrite Shakespeare. Lincoln Barnett tells about a scenario writer

named Cyril who lay dying. On his deathbed he composed a poem and asked his closest pal to read it at his funeral. After his death the friend called another writer and said, "You gotta come and help me. Cyril gave me a poem to read at his grave, and frankly, it stinks. I want you to help me fix it up."

So the two friends completely rewrote the deceased's last words:

● 72

The preacher's evening discourse was dry and long, and the congregation gradually melted away. The sexton tiptoed up to the pulpit and slipped a note under one corner of Bible. It read:

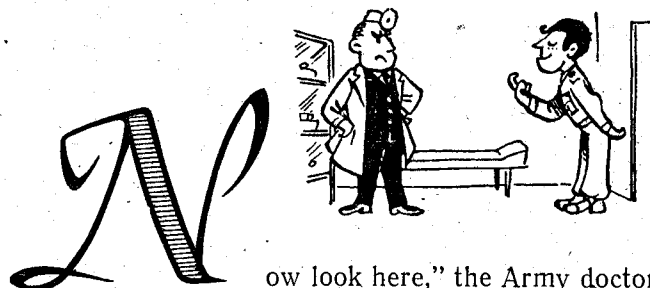
"When you are through, will you please turn off the lights, lock the door, and put the key under the mat?"

See also 105, 106, 132, 175, 177, 295, 345, 357—379, 402, 481, 779, 1263, 1283, 1388.

## SECTION II

### Semantics

*Although semantic phenomena are not confined to this part alone (many of them are treated, in accordance with tradition, as belonging to lexicology, grammar, and so on), I have considered it worthwhile to have a separate section on semantics containing jokes based on phenomena representative of this new and important linguistic discipline. The linguistic essence of some of these has been discussed in the introductory article. A few others have been designated by transparent, almost self-explanatory terms, and the reader, I hope, will have no difficulty in getting to the linguistic basis of the jokes placed in the sections Association of Contraposition or Incompatibility, Contradiction and the like.*



● 73 "Now look here," the Army doctor snapped at the recruit, "you know very well you wouldn't come to me in civilian life with a little thing like this."

"You're right. I wouldn't," replied the recruit. "I'd send for you."

● 74

What makes more noise than a pig in a sty?  
(sɪd oʊl)

● 75

"James, have you whispered to-day without permission?"

"Only wunst."

"Leroy, should James have said 'wunst'?"

"No'm, he should have said 'twict.'"

● 76

*Vicar* — "I'm glad to find you've turned over a new leaf, Muggles, and don't waste your money at the public-house."

*Muggles* — "Yes, sir, I have it in by the barrel now, and that do come cheaper!"

● 77

*Teacher (warning her pupils against catching cold)* — "I had a little brother seven-year-old, and one day he took his new sled out in the snow. He caught pneumonia, and three days later he died."

Silence for ten minutes.

*Voice from the Rear* — "Where's his sled?"

● 78

"Now, then, Johnny," said his teacher, "if your father gave you seven cents and your mother gave you six and your uncle gave you four more, what would you have?"

Johnny wrinkled up his forehead and went into silence for the space of several minutes.

"Come, come," said the teacher impatiently. "Surely you can solve a simple little problem like that."

"It ain't a simple problem at all," replied the boy, "I can't make up my mind whether I'd have an ice-cream soda or go to the movies."

● 79

The motor char-à-banc had its full complement of seaside visitors on board and it was careering along a country road. It was not an ordinary affair which takes you there and back without letting you know about the things passed en route. There was a sort of guide who told you what you were passing. At one spot he put the megaphone to his mouth and said:

"Gentlemen, we are now passing one of the oldest public-houses in England."

Chorus from all the gentlemen on board:

"Why?"

● 80

The professor was delivering the final lecture of the term. He dwelt with much emphasis on the fact that each student should devote all the intervening time preparing for the final examinations.

"The examination papers are now in the hands of the printer. Are there any questions to be asked?"

Silence prevailed. Suddenly a voice from the rear inquired:

"Who is the printer?"

● 81

"What's the matter, little boy?"

"Ma's gone and drowned all the kittens."

"Dear me! That's bad."

"Yep, she — hoo-hoo — promised me I could do it."

● 82

Which is correct — seven and five is eleven, or seven and five are eleven?

(Neither — seven and five are twelve)

● 83

A farmer who was a witness in a hog-stealing case seemed to be stretching a point or two in favour of the accused.

"Do you know the nature of an oath?" the prosecuting attorney roared.

"Sure."

"Do you know you are not to bear false witness against your neighbour?"

"I'm not bearin' false witness against him. I'm bearin' false witness for him."

● 84

*Inspector* — "Suppose I lent your father £ 100 in June, and he promised to pay me back £10 on the first of every month, how much would he owe me at the end of the year? Now think well before you answer."

*Pupil* — "£ 100, sir."

*Inspector* — "You're a very ignorant little girl. You don't know the most elementary rules of arithmetic!"

*Pupil* — "Ah, sir, but you don't know father!"

● 85

Two Cape Cod fishermen had an argument one day as to which was the better mathematician. Finally the captain of the fishing smack proposed the following problem for them as a test:

If a fishing crew caught 500 pounds of cod and brought their catch to port and sold it for six cents a pound, how much would they receive for the fish?

The two old fellows got to work, but neither seemed able to master the intricacies of the deal in fish, and they were unable to arrive at an answer.

● 86

"If you are good, Willie, I'll give you this bright new penny."

"Haven't you got a dirty old nickel?"

● 87

*Mother (at dinner)* — "Peggy, darling, you should not scratch your nose with your spoon."

*Peggy* — "Oh, mother — ought I have used a fork?"

● 88

*Eng. Prof.* — "Mr. Brown, correct this sentence: 'Girls is naturally better looking than boys.'"

*Brown* — "Girls is artificially better looking than boys."

● 89

*Teacher* — "How many fingers have you?"

*Bobbie* — "Ten."

*Teacher* — "Well, if four were missing, what would you have then?"

*Bobbie* — "No music — lessons."

● 90

*Amateur Gardener (to goat-fancying neighbour)* — "Hi, madam. One of your confounded pets has got into my garden, and is eating my bedding-plants!"

*Neighbour* — "Good gracious! I trust they are not poisonous!"

● 91

"What the deuce do you mean by telling Mary that I am a fool?"

"Heavens! I'm sorry — was it a secret?"

● 92

"I wish," said an anxious mother to her careless son, "I wish you would pay a little attention to your arithmetic."

"Well, I do," was the reply; "I pay as little attention to it as possible."

● 93

*Teacher (giving a lesson on fractions.)* — "Here, children, is a piece of meat. If I cut it in two, what shall I have?"

*Class* — "Halves!"

*Teacher* — "And if I cut it again in two, what do I get?"

*Class* — "Quarters!"

*Teacher* — "And if I again do the same?"

*Class* — "Eighths!"

*Teacher* — "And if I continue in the same way?"

*Class (a duet)* — "Sixteenths!"

*Teacher* — "Good! And if we cut our pieces once more in two, what then shall we have?"

*Tommy (after a long silence)* — "Please, miss, mince-meat!"

● 94

*Perkinson* — "Did you hear about Willard Elkins, the bank cashier, stealing fifty thousand and running away with his best friend's wife?"

*Simpson* — "Good heavens! Who'll teach his Sunday-school class tomorrow?"

● 95

*Lucy (to her elder sister who has just been relating a thrilling episode in the life of William Tell)* — "And was the little boy allowed to eat the apple afterwards?"

See also 482, 1270, 1275, 1280.

### Transposed Sentences

● 96

*He (after a quarrel, bitterly)* — "I was a fool when I married you!"

*She (quietly, about to leave the room)* — "Yes; but I thought you would improve!"

● 97

*Judge* — "How could you swindle people who trusted in you?"

*Prisoner* — "But, Judge, people who don't trust you cannot be swindled."

● 98

"How many times have I told you to fall in for these formations on time, private Smith?"

"I don't know, sergeant. I thought you were keeping the score."

● 99

"If the Dean doesn't take back what he said to me this morning, I am going to leave college."

"What did he say?"

"He told me to leave college."

● 100

"Now, Mr. Blank," said a temperance advocate to a candidate for municipal honours, "I want to ask you a question. Do you ever take alcoholic drinks?"

"Before I answer the question," responded the wary candidate, "I want to know whether it is put as an inquiry or as an invitation!"

● 101

*Boss* — "You are twenty minutes late again. Don't you know what time we start work at this office?"

*New Employee* — "No, sir, they're always at it when I get here."

● 102

*Professor* — "You can't sleep in my class."

*Student* — "If you didn't talk so loud I could."

● 103

Pat and Mike enlisted in the British Army. After their first drill the captain, thinking the circumstances opportune for a little lecture on patriotism, demanded, eloquently: "Soldiers, why should a man die for his king and country?" This struck Pat as a proper question. Turning to Mike, he said: "Faith, Moike, the captain is roight! Whoi?"

● 104

Oliver was careless about his personal effects. When his mother saw clothing scattered about on the chair and floor, she inquired: "Who didn't hang up his clothes when he went to bed?"

A muffled voice from under the covers murmured: "Adam."

● 105

It was reported to the Dean that one of the students was in the habit of absorbing more liquor than was good for him. The Dean determined to do his duty and look into the matter.

Meeting the young man under suspicion in the yard after breakfast one day the Dean marched up to him and demanded, "Young man, do you drink?"

"Why, why, why," stammered the young man, "why Dean, not so early in the morning, thank you."

● 106

*Fisherman* — "I tell you it was that long. I never saw such a fish!"

*Friend* — "I believe you."

See also 30, 130.

## Sentences with Implication

### ● 107

*She* — "You remind me of the ocean."

*He* — "Wild, romantic and restless?"

*She* — "No, you just make me sick."

### ● 108

"Harry, if I were to die, could you marry again?"

"That question is hardly fair, my dear."

"Why not?"

"Because if I were to say 'Yes', you wouldn't like it, and to say 'Never again' wouldn't sound nice."

a

### ● 109

"Look here, now, Archie," said a father to his little son, who was naughty, "if you don't say your prayers you won't go to heaven."

"I don't want to go to heaven," sobbed the boy; "I want to go with you and mother."

b

"There ought to be a special place in Heaven for ministers' wives."

"Perhaps you're right," responded the minister's wife, "but I would much rather go with my husband."

### ● 110

A lady seated herself in a train, containing a solitary travelling salesman.

After a while the traveller said, politely: "Excuse me, miss, but —"

"If you speak or annoy me, I'll pull the train cord," snapped the girl.

Whenever he attempted to speak, the girl threatened to give the alarm.

At last the train slowed up at a station and the traveller rose to his feet.

"I don't care whether you like it or not," he said, "but I want that torn bag with strawberries you've been sitting on for the last six miles."

### ● 111

*Judge (sternly)* — "The next person who interrupts the proceeding will be sent home."

*Prisoner* — "Hooray!"

### ● 112

"Can you drive with one arm?"

"Sure."

"Okay, have an apple."

### ● 113

*Next-door Neighbour's Little Boy* — "Father says could you lend him your victrola, for tonight?"

*Victrola Enthusiast* — "Have you a party on?"

*Little Boy* — "Oh, no; Father only wants to go to bed."

### ● 114

"My wooden leg is giving me a lot of pain," sighed the patient. "How can a wooden leg give you pain?" the doctor asked. The patient explained, "My wife hit me over the head with it."

### ● 115

*He* — "Miss Jones, I do wish you wouldn't call me Mr. Thompson."

*She (ingratiatingly)* — "What may I call you then?"

*He* — "Well, my right name is Robinson."

### ● 116

Extract from a Wall Street broker's petty cash book:

April 1. Advertisement for pretty sec-	
retary	\$ 1.60
3. Violets	.75
4. Candy	1.25
8. Secretary's salary	30.00
10. Flowers	3.00
11. Candy for wife	7.50
15. Secretary's salary	40.00
18. Handbag	12.50
19. Candy for wife	3.00
22. Gloria's salary	60.00
24. Theatre and dinner, Gloria	
and self	55.00
25. Chocolates for wife	.90



- |                                      |         |
|--------------------------------------|---------|
| 28. Fur coat for wife                | 1800.00 |
| 29. Advertisement for male secretary | 1.60    |

● 117

Ferguson was driving his girl through the park one hot summer night when they passed a pop-corn stand. "Yum," said the girl. "That pop-corn smells good."

"Wait a minute," said Ferguson generously, "and I will drive up closer so you can get a better whiff of it."

● 118

*Lodger* — "Madam, this morning when I bathed I found only a nail-brush in the bathroom. I can't wash my back with a nail-brush."

*Landlady* — "Well, you've a tongue in your 'ead, 'aven't you?"

*Lodger* — "Yes, but I'm no swan."

● 119

*Judge Gruff* — "Aren't you ashamed to be seen here in court so often?"

*Prisoner* — "Why no, your honour; I always thought it was a very respectable place."

● 120

The bore had outstayed his welcome and at the end of a fortnight his host thought of a sure way of getting rid of him.

"Don't you think your wife and family must be getting tired of being-separated from you?" he asked of the unwanted visitor.

"It never occurred to me," replied the latter; "but now you put it so nicely, I will wire for them to come down and join us."

● 121

*Visitor* — "My good man, you keep your pigs much too near the house."

*Cottager* — "That's just what the doctor said, mum. But I don't see how it's agoin' to hurt 'em!"

● 122

Rex Stout, bewhiskered creator of the detective *Nero Wolf* was a passenger aboard a crowded Madison Avenue bus one day. An aggressive little man battled his way to Stout's side and, unable to reach a strap, forthwith clutched a strand of the author's beard in a grip of iron. Stout spluttered indignantly for a full block and finally demanded, "will you kindly take your paws away from my beard?"

"What's the matter, mister?" said the little man. "Are you getting off?"



● 123

The control tower at a large air base received a message; "Cadet Jones to tower. My fuel gauge shows empty. What will I do?"

The operations officer, envisioning the plane about to make a forced landing, rushed to the mike, shouting:

"Take it easy, cadet Jones! Don't get excited! Where are you?"

The cadet calmly replied: "I'm sitting in my plane on the flight line. I haven't taken off yet."

● 124

A man was at a theatre. He was sitting behind two women whose continuous chatter became more than he could bear.

Leaning forward, he tapped one of them on the shoulder. "Pardon me, madam," he said, "but I can't hear."

"You're not supposed to — this is a private conversation," she hit back.

● 125

"What is your chief worry?"

"Money."

"Oh, I didn't know you had any!"

"I haven't."

● 126

*Mistress* — "Be careful not to drop those china dishes, Norah."

*Maid* — "Don't worry, mum. If they did fall they're too light to hurt my feet."

● 127

Jones came home one evening and found his young wife sobbing. "What's the matter, darling?" he asked anxiously.

Amidst the sobs, she explained that the cat had eaten all the cakes she had made that morning.

"Never mind, old dear," he said kindly. "I shall get you another cat to-morrow."

● 128

"Matilda, when you wait on the table tonight, don't display any jewelry before my guests, please."

"Oh, I'm not afraid, ma'am."

● 129

He was so proud of his play as a golfer that he wanted to show off. So he invited his mother-in-law along to watch him.

As he started off for the first tee, he said to his opponent:

"I'm particularly anxious to make a terrific drive. That's my wife's mother standing over there."

"Sorry, old man," said the other, "but you can't expect to hit her at two hundred yards."

● 130

It seems the gate broke down between heaven and hell. St. Peter appeared at the broken part of the gate and called out to the devil, "Hey Satan. It's your chance to fix in this time."

"Sorry," replied the boss of the land beyond the Styx. "My men are too busy to worry about fixing a mere gate."

"Well, then," scowled St. Peter, "I'll have to sue you for breaking our agreement."

"Oh, yeah," yeah'd the devil, "where are you going to get a lawyer?"

● 131

*Prison Chaplain (to prisoner about to be discharged)* —

"Now, my man, try to remember what I said in my sermon last Sunday and make up your mind never to return to this place."

*Prisoner (deeply moved)* — "No man who ever heard you preach would want to come back here."

● 132

"But," protested the vacationist, "your advertisement states that the hotel is only five minutes from the station. It took me nearly an hour to reach here."

"Ah," said the boarding-house keeper, "you've been walking. We don't cater to pedestrians."

● 133

*Customer* — "Why do you charge extra for each of my cuffs?"

*Manager of Laundry* — "Because you make pencil notes on them."

*Customer* — "Why should that make such a difference?"

*Manager* — "The girls waste so much time trying to make them out."

● 134

In western Georgia a jury convened to inquire into a case of suicide. After through the evidence, the twelve men retired, and, after deliberating, returned with the following verdict:

"The Jury are all of one mind — temporarily insane."

● 135

*Lady (at party)* — "Where is that pretty maid who was passing out cocktails a while ago?"

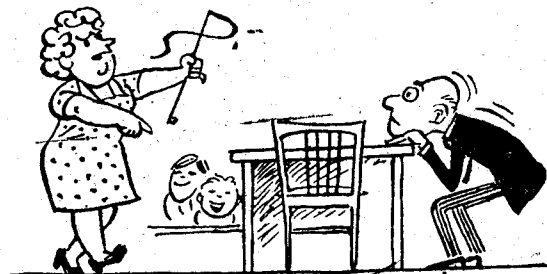
*Hostess* — "Oh, are you looking for a drink?"

*Lady* — "No, I'm looking for my husband."

● 136

*Stepmother (entering village school with whip)* — "My boy tells me you broke your cane across his back yesterday?"

*Schoolmaster (turning pale)* — "Well, I — I may have struck harder than I intended, but —"  
*Stepmother* — "I thought I'd make you a present of this whip. You'll find it'll last longer and do him more good!"



● 137  
*Departing Traveller (to the boy in buttons)* — "Run upstairs boy, as quick as lightning, and see if my umbrella is in room 502. I think I left it in the corner by the wash-stand."

*Boy in Buttons (some minutes later)* — "Quite right, sir, it's exactly where you said it was."

● 138  
 He had got a job as collector for a gas company.  
 "Take this master key and go round and empty all the coin-boxes; get all the pennies and shillings," said the manager.

Three weeks later he walked into the office. "Can I have another key? I've lost t'other one."

"Certainly," replied the manager. "But where have you been all this time? The cashier has stopped late every Friday night, expecting you to come for your wages."

"Great guns!" exclaimed the collector, beaming broadly. "Do I get wages as well?"

● 139  
*Ambitious Author* — "Hurrray! Five dollars for my latest story, 'The Call of the Lure!'"

*Fast Friend* — "Who from?"

*Ambitious Author* — "The express company. They lost it."

● 140  
 The decrepit old car drove up to the toll-bridge.  
 "Fifty cents," cried the gateman.  
 "Sold," replied the driver.

● 141  
 The control tower on an air base heard a message, "Coming in on one engine," it said. The tower did the necessary for a likely crackup. Runways were cleared. Crash crews were alerted. Other planes were kept aloft! The pilot with but one engine was cleared to land. He did — in a one-engine fighter.

● 142  
 "Poor Old Jim! 'E's so near-sighted 'e's working 'imself to death."

"Wot's 'is near-sight got to do with it?"

"Well, 'e can't see when the boss ain't looking, so 'e 'as to keep on shovelling all the time!"

● 143  
*The Poet* — "Dash it — I can't find that sonnet anywhere. Emily must have thrown it into the fire."  
*His Wife* — "Don't be absurd, Peter. The child can't read."

● 144  
 Montgomery Epstein was downtown with his wife and four little children when he decided to take a taxicab home. Approaching a cab driver, he demanded, "How much will you charge to drive us to the Bronx?"

"I figure \$2 apiece for you and your wife," said the driver. "I'll take the four kids along for nothing."

Montgomery Epstein turned to his children and said, "Jump in kids, and have a nice ride home. Mamma and I will take the subway."

● 145  
 Charles Lamb was in the habit of wearing a white cravat, and in consequence was sometimes taken for a clergyman. Once at a dinner table, among a large number of guests, his white cravat caused such a mistake to be made, and he was called on to "say grace." Looking up and down the table, he asked, in his inimitable lisping manner:

"Is there no cl-cl-clergyman present?"

"No, sir," answered a guest.

"Then," said Lamb, bowing his head, "let us thank God."

● 146

*Mistress (to new maid)* — "Now, Norah, I always take my bath at 9 every morning."

"Sall right, mam, it won't interfere with me a bit. I'm never ready fer mine b'fore 10."

● 147

A customer who wore a tight-fitting coat with a ratty-looking fur collar stamped into a village A & P and told the startled clerk, "I would like to buy your entire stock of eggs, tomatoes, and overripe fruit."

"Gee willikins," said the clerk, "you must be going to see that old ham play Julius Caesar at the Opera House tonight."

"I," said the customer, "am the old ham."

● 148

A certain firm had the following legend printed on its salary receipt forms:

"Your salary is your personal business, and should not be disclosed to any one."

The new employee, in signing the receipt added: "I won't mention it to anybody. I'm just as much ashamed of it as you are."

● 149

*Papa (severely)* — "Did you ask Mamma if you could have that apple?"

*Three-Year-Old (eating the apple)* — "Yes, I did."

*Papa* — "Be careful now; I'll ask Mamma, and if she says you didn't ask her, I'll whip you for telling a falsehood. Did you ask Mamma?"

*Three-Year-Old* — "Truly, papa, I asked her" (a pause). "She said I couldn't have it."

● 150

A tramp went to a farmhouse, and sitting down in the yard began to eat the grass.

The farmer's wife saw him and said:

"Poor man, you must indeed be hungry. Come around to the back."

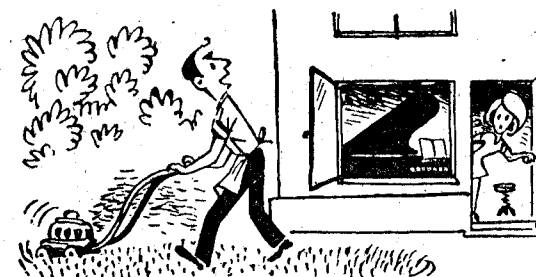
The tramp beamed and winked at the servant-girl.

"There," said the housewife when he reached the backyard, "try that grass: you will find it much longer."

● 151

*Young Lady* — "John, how long shall you be, as I want to practise?"

*Gallant Young Gardener* — "Oh, goo yeouw on, Miss Amy — goo yeouw on! I sha'n't mind yar noise!"



● 152

Two taciturn Maine farmers had known each other all their lives, but their conversations were usually restricted to "Mornin'" or "Nice day." One afternoon, however, the first farmer grew a bit more loquacious. "Hi, Luke," he asked, "what did you give your horse when he had the colic?"

"Turpentine," said Luke.

"Thanks," said his friend.

Two weeks later they met again. "Didn't you tell me, Luke, that you gave your horse turpentine when he had the colic?"

"Yup," said Luke.

"Well, I gave mine turpentine and he died."

"So did mine," said Luke.

● 153

"Allo, Bill! I 'avn't seen you for weeks —." Bill's pal stopped suddenly. "But wot's wrong, man? You're looking mighty seedy. Been ill, eh?" he asked.

Bill passed a horny hand across his brow.

"No," Bill sighed, "I ain't been ill. It's work wot's doing for me — work from seven in the morning till six at night, and only one hour off. Think of it, mate!"

"Well, well!" replied the other. "And 'ow long 'ave you been there?"

"I ain't been there yet," retorted Bill. "I begin tomorrow," he added gloomily.

● 154

An old New Hampshire storekeeper was breathing his last, and a sorrowful family surrounded his bed of pain. "Is Ma here?" he asked wearily. "Yes, Zeke," she replied. "And my oldest son?" "Yes." "And the other five boys?" "Yes." "And the four girls?" "Yes, Zeke." The failing patriarch struggled to a sitting position. "What's the big idea?" he shouted. "Who's tending the store?"

● 155

Lewis Young was accepting congratulations on the birth of a baby daughter. "It's a wonderful baby," he declared. "6. 11 the doctor said."

One friend looked a little surprised. "Isn't that rather tall for an infant?" he asked.

● 156

"Yes, I came face to face with a lion once. To make matters worse, I was alone and weaponless..."

"Goodness! What did you do?"

"What could I do? First I tried looking straight into his eyeballs, but he kept crawling up on me. Then I thought of plunging my arm down his throat, grabbing him by the tail and turning him inside out, but I decided it would be too dangerous. Yet, he kept creeping up on me; I had to think fast..."

"How did you get away?"

• "I just left him and passed on to the other cages."

● 157

When a little boy arrived home from school his mother asked him if he had been a good boy.

He replied: "Sure I was good in school today! How much trouble can you get into standing in a corner?"

● 158

*Judge* — "You are charged with throwing your mother-in-law out of the window."

*Jones* — "I done it without thinking, sir."

*Judge* — "Yes, but don't you see how dangerous it might have been for anyone passing at the time?"

See also 38, 52, 161, 367, 369, 459, 465, 690, 714, 1181, 1260.

Presupposition

● 159

A very agitated lady got her doctor on the telephone. "Come quick," she cried. "My ten-year-old boy just swallowed a fountain pen." The doctor remained calm. "I will get over as soon as I can," he said, "but there are several patients in the office now and you may not see me for three or four hours."

"Three or four hours," echoed the lady. "What will I do in the meantime?"

"I am afraid you will have to use a pencil," said the doctor.

● 160

"Just think, children," said the missionary, "in Africa there are six million square miles where little boys and girls have no Sunday school. Now, what should we all strive to save money for?"

"To go to Africa!" cried a chorus of cheery voices.

● 161

The rector had invited the village boys to the rectory for a strawberry tea. After they had finished he, seeking to point the moral, said: "Now, boys, wasn't that nicer than breaking into my garden and helping yourselves?"

"Oh, yes," chorused the boys.

"And why was it nicer?" he asked a chubby-faced boy.

"Because, sir," was the reply, "we shouldn't have had any sugar and cream with them."

● 162

*Mistress* — "I can see a spider-web in the corner, *Ethell*. To what do you attribute that?"

*Maid* — "To a spider, Ma'am."

● 163

*Subscriber* — "Is it ever permissible for a young woman to ask a man she has never met to call at her home?"

*Editor* — "Yes, if she asks him to call for the-laundry."

● 164

"Jimmie," said his mother, severely, "there were two pieces of cake in the pantry this morning and now there is only one. How is that?"

"I don't know," replied Jimmie, regretfully. "It must have been so dark I didn't see the other piece."

● 165

*Mistress* — "Can you explain why it is, Mary, that every time I come into this kitchen I find you reading?"

*New Maid* — "It must be those rubber heels of yours, mum."

● 166

*Frosh* — "Professor, I can't go to class to-day."

*Prof.* — "Why?"

*Frosh* — "I don't feel well."

*Prof.* — "Where don't you feel well?"

*Frosh* — "In class."

● 167

A society woman came up to Michael Arlen and gushed about how she wanted to be a writer. What, she wanted to know, was the best way to start writing?

"From left to right," the author answered brusquely.

● 168

*Prof.* — "Before we begin the examinations, are there any questions?"

*Frosh* — "What's the name of this course?"

● 169

How many months have 28 days?

(All of them)

● 170

"Did you go to the doctor the other day, John?"

"Yes, I did."

"And did he find out what you had?"

"Very nearly."

"What do you mean, very nearly?"

"Well, I had \$3.40 — and he charged me \$3.00!"

● 171

In a New York restaurant, the artist James Montgomery Flagg saw Beatrice Lillie sitting at a nearby table. With her was a most attractive young woman, so attractive that in fact Flagg decided he could use her as a model. When the beauty left the table for a few minutes, Flagg scribbled a note to Miss Lillie: "Who is that marvellous, gorgeous creature?" he pleaded. The waiter immediately brought back Beatrice's brief reply: "Me!"

● 172

*Employee* — "Sir, can you let me off tomorrow afternoon to go Christmas shopping with my wife?"

*Employer* — "Certainly not! We are too busy!"

*Employee (much relieved)* — "Thank you, sir, you are very kind!"

● 173

"When water becomes ice," said the professor, "what is the greatest change that takes place?"

"The price, sir."

● 174

"Darling, you would be a marvellous dancer but for two things."

"What are they, sweetheart?"

"Your feet."

● 175

"You've already had leave, Ferguson, to see your wife off on a journey — for your mother-in-law's funeral — for your little girl's measles — your boy's christening — what is it now?"

"I'm going to get married, sir."

● 176

"Have you anything to say before I pass sentence on you?"

"Yes, your honour, I should like you to have your lunch first."

● 177

The man on the bridge addressed the solitary fisherman.

"Any luck?" he asked.

"Any luck!" was the answer. "Why, I got forty pike out of here yesterday."

"Do you know who I am?"

"No," said the fisherman.

"I'm the chief magistrate here and all this estate is mine."

"And do you know who I am?" asked the fisherman quickly.

"No."

"I'm the biggest liar in Virginia."

● 178

*Teacher* — "What are the products of the West Indies?"

*Boy* — "I don't know."

Teacher — "Come, come! Where do you get sugar from?"  
Boy — "We borrow it from the next-door neighbour."

● 179

Judge — "What induced you to strike your wife?"  
Defendant — "Well, she had her back to me. The frying-pan was handy, and the back door was open, so I thought I'd take a chance."

● 180

Mother — "Now do you know where bad little girls go?"  
Daughter — "Yes, they go most everywhere."

● 181

Temperance Lecturer — "Here's an argument drawn from nature. If I lead a donkey up to a pail of water and a pail of beer, which will he drink?"  
Unconverted — "The water."  
Lecturer — "Right. Why?"  
Unconverted — "Because he's an ass."

● 182

Professor's wife (rushing in) — "Goodness! Our little Molly has been drinking all the ink in the ink-bottle. What shall we do?"  
Professor (absent-mindedly) — "I'll have to write with a pencil, my dear."

See also 74, 75, 78, 80, 93, 115, 116, 215, 224, 276, 406, 456, 460, 464, 470—473, 478, 491, 510, 512, 551, 562, 581, 605, 651, 688, 1050, 1271, 1278, 1282, 1283, 1285, 1286, 1292, 1307, 1310, 1326, 1412.

#### Quotations in Oral Communication

● 183

Two little girls were comparing progress in catechism study. "I've got to original sin," said one. "How far have you got?"

"Me? Oh, I'm way beyond redemption," said the other.

● 184

Two sailors were battling the breeze on a ship in the Atlantic. The first one said: "Yes, I'm quite a literary man. Why I've contributed to the Atlantic Monthly!" The second sailor leaning over the rail remarked: "That's nothing. I've been contributing to the Atlantic daily."

84

● 185

What can always be found between town and country?  
(pue)

● 186

A schoolboy of adolescent age spotted a volume in a second-hand bookshop which took his fancy — it was entitled 'How to Hug.' He looked at the fly leaf and saw it was only 2s.6d. He paid and hastened home to the privacy of his bedroom where on opening his treasure he found he had bought volume five of an out-of-date encyclopaedia.

● 187

Father (reading *The Times*) — "As far as I can see the Empire is going to the dogs. It is really."  
Empty-headed Son — "That's quite right. I've noticed it myself for a long time. They give a much better show at the Alhambra or the Coliseum nowadays."

● 188

A dictionary is the only place where success comes before work.

● 189

A girl went to stay with an aunt in the country. The aunt was honorary secretary of the local branch of the Conservative Women's Association and owing to recent indisposition she was behindhand in the distribution of the monthly magazine *The Conservative Woman*. The niece promised to help, and hearing her going out soon after, the aunt flung up a bedroom window and called below to her. "Don't forget there are five Conservative Women waiting to be delivered on the hall table!"

● 190

"My youngest boy is troubled with halitosis."  
"Too bad. How did he get it?"  
"He hasn't got it. He just can't spell it."

● 191

A gentleman wishing to settle a point or two on art approached the information desk of a certain public library.

"Where," he asked, "shall I find something on Correggio and his 'Flight Into Egypt'?"

"Everything about aviation in Room 121," responded the clerk.

See also 41, 1321.

85

Association of Identity, Belonging, etc.

● 192

A clergyman, lecturing on Palestine, remarked concerning one very rugged locality:

"The roads up these mountains are too steep and rocky for even a donkey to climb, therefore I did not attempt the ascent."

● 193

The lawyer for the defence was cross-examining a witness in a robbery case.

"When did the robbery take place?" demanded the counsel in a bullying tone.

"I think—" began the witness, but the lawyer interrupted him.

"We don't care what you think, sir. We want to know what you know."

"Then if you don't want to know what I think," said the witness quietly, "I may as well leave the box. I can't talk without thinking — I'm not a lawyer."

● 194

A college freshman was being severely criticized by his professor.

"Your last paper was very difficult to read," said the professor.

"Your work should be so written that even the most ignorant will be able to understand it."

"Yes, sir," said the student. "What part didn't you get?"

● 195

"The Streatham Women's Society will hold its annual Christmas Cale at Wilson's Bar on Saturday next. This is your chance to get rid of everything that is not worth keeping. Don't forget to bring your husbands."

● 196

The Duke of Marlborough had an emu given to him. It was sent to Blenheim, and great interest was taken in the chances of its capacity for procreation in that country.

Eventually it laid an egg. The Duke and Duchess were away from home, so a telegram was sent to the latter by the agent to apprise her of the event. It was in these terms:

"Emu has laid an egg; in the absence of your grace have put goose to sit on it."

● 197

A lawyer acquaintance just out of college was pleading his first case. The nasty railroad company had killed twenty-four of his farmer client's hogs. The young lawyer was trying to impress the jury with the magnitude of the injury.

"Imagine twenty-four hogs, gentleman! Twenty-four! Twice the number there are in the jury box."

● 198

Prof.— "A fool can ask more questions than a wise man can answer."

Stude — "No wonder so many of us flunk in our exams!"

● 199

Farmer's Wife (to little rustic, her protégé) — "Well, Sam, your master and I are going up to London for the cattle show."

Cow Boy — "Oh, I'm sure I hope yeou'll take the first prize, 'm — that I dew!"



● 200

"Robert," said the teacher, to drive home the lesson which was on charity and kindness, "if I saw a man beating a donkey and stopped him from doing so, what virtue would I be showing?"

"Brotherly love," said Bobby.

● 201

Uncle John came to stay, and before he left he gave his nephew five dollars. "Now be careful with that money, Tomm," he said. "Remember the saying; 'A fool and his money are soon parted.'"



"Yes, Uncle," replied Tommy, "but I want to thank you for parting with it, just the same."

● 202

"Repeat the words the defendant used," said the lawyer. "I'd rather not. They were not fit words to tell a gentleman."

"Then," said the attorney, "whisper them to the judge."

● 203

Wife — "I hope you talked plainly to him."

Husband — "I did indeed. I told him he was a fool, a perfect fool!"

Wife (approvingly) — "Dear John! How exactly like you!"

● 204

Tourist — "You have an unusually large acreage of corn under cultivation. Don't the crows annoy you a good deal?"

Farmer — "Oh, not to any extent."

Tourist — "That's singular, considering you have no scarecrows."

Farmer — "Oh, well, you see, I'm out here a good part of the time myself."

● 205

"Why didn't you deliver that message as instructed?" a man asked his servant.

"I did the best I could, sir."

"The best you could! Why, if I had known I was going to send a donkey, I would have done myself."

● 206

Two lawyers before a judge got into a wrangle. At last of them losing control over his emotions, exclaimed to his opponent: "Sir, you are the biggest fool that I have ever had the misfortune to set eyes on."

"Order, order," said the judge gravely. "You seem to forget that I am in the room."

● 207

"I have made a will leaving my brains to the hospital and just got an acknowledgement from the authorities."

"Were they pleased?"

"They wrote that every little thing helps."

● 208

At the Paris conference a reporter asked a hurrying diplomat what he thought about a certain international problem. "Don't bother me now," snapped the diplomat. "I must make a speech. This is no time to think."

88

● 209

Husband (during a quarrel) — "You talk like an idiot."

Wife — "I've got to talk so you can understand me."

● 210

"I shall now illustrate what I have in mind," said the professor as he erased the board.

● 211

Having enjoyed the previous summer at a farm in the country, John Jones wrote to the farmer and asked if he might have the same accommodation for the coming August. "But," he added in his letter, "I wish you'd move that pig-pen out back of the house. It was right under my windows last year and was most obnoxious."

Shortly Mr. Jones received the farmer's reply assuring him of the same accommodations, and adding by way of explanation: "As to that there pig-pen, don't let that worry you. We ain't had no hogs on this farm since you went away last year."

● 212

New Curate — "What did you think of the sermon on Sunday, Mrs. Jones?"

Parishioner — "Very good indeed, sir. So instructive. We really didn't know what sin was till you came here."

● 213

Wife's Mother (to gardening son-in-law) — "I hope you're being careful when you dig up a worm, Richard. Remember it can feel and think just as well as you can."

● 214

"My husband got angry last night and told me to go to the devil".

"What are you going to do about that?"

"I'm going straight home to mother."

See also 1102.

### Subject and Object Attribution

● 215

She — "I've been asked to get married lots of times."

He — "Who asked you?"

She — "Mother and Father."

89

● 216

Young Angus had been out for the evening with his best girl. When he arrived home he found his father still sitting up. The old man looked up and shook his head.

"Hae ye been got wi' you lassie again?" he asked.

"Aye, dad," replied young Angus. "Why do ye look sae worried?"

"I was just wonderin' how much the evening cost."

"No more than half a croon, dad."

"Aye? That was no sae much."

"It was a' she had," said Angus.

● 217

"These trousers may be useful to you," said the kind old lady. "All they need is a little mending."

"That's all right, mum," said the tramp. "I'll call back in half an hour."

● 218

"Give me a kiss, darling."

"No, no. My mother is against kissing."

"But, my dear, I don't want to kiss your mother."

● 219

*Patient* — "Do you extract teeth painlessly?"

*Dentist* — "Not always — the other day I nearly dislocated my wrist."

See also 134, 459, 861, 1422.

### Association of Contraposition

● 220

I am a politician, and my other habits are good.

● 221

"My boy, when you grow up I want you to be a gentleman."

"I don't want to be a gentleman, pop — I wanna be like you."

● 222

*Lawyer* — "Well, if you want my honest opinion —"

*Client* — "No, no. I want your professional advice."

● 223

*Teacher* — "Now, Robert, what are you doing — learning something?"

*Robert* — "No, sir; I'm listening to you."

● 224

In case of an accident, what is better than presence of mind?

(*absence of body*)

● 225

After a difference of opinion with the judge, the lawyer turned on his heel and showed his back.

"Are you trying to show your contempt for the court?" the judge demanded.

"No, indeed," was the attorney's reply. "I'm trying to conceal it."

● 226

*Husband (testily, after losing badly at bridge)* — "You might have guessed I had no heart, partner."

*Wife (sweetly)* — "Quite; but I thought you had a brain, darling."

### Equivalence

● 227

"Now, Jack dear, if I do all the cooking for a month, what will I get?"

"You get my life insurance and your freedom."

● 228

"But darling, we can't live on love."

"Sure we can. Your father loves you, doesn't he?"

● 229

*Sympathetic Friend (to the Bride)*: "Well, my dear, I'm sure your mother will miss you sadly after your having been with her so long!"

● 230

"My wife used to play the piano a lot, but since the children came she doesn't have time."

"Children are a comfort, aren't they?"

● 231

There was a king who thought that he could paint very well. His pictures were bad, but the people to whom he

showed them were afraid of the king. They all said that they liked his pictures very much.

One day the king showed his pictures to a great painter who lived in this country and asked, "I want to know what you think of my pictures. Do you like them? Am I a good painter, or not?"

The painter looked at the king's pictures and said: "My king, I think that your pictures are bad, and that you will never be a good painter."

The king was very angry and sent the painter to prison.

After two years the king wanted to see the painter again.

"I was very angry with you," he said, "because you did not like my pictures. Now forget all about it. You are a free man again, and I am your friend."

For many hours the king talked with the painter and even invited him to dinner. After dinner the king showed his pictures to the painter and asked, "Well, how do you like them now?"

The painter did not answer. He turned to a soldier, who was standing near him and said, "Take me back to prison."

● 232

He — "I don't know what's the matter. I never danced so poorly before."

She — "Oh, then you have danced before?"

● 233

A sailor's enlistment in the navy expired. A friend glibly asked him what he thought of the sea.

"Just this much," he said. "I'm going to put an oar over my shoulder and start walking inland — and I'm going to keep on walking and walking and walking until someone stops me and asks, 'What's that thing you've got over your shoulder?' Then I'm going to settle right down there until I die."

● 234

"What's wrong, Henry?" asked his wife.

"My razor," boomed the voice within the bathroom. "It doesn't cut at all."

"Don't be silly. Your beard can't be tougher than linoleum."

● 235

"I think it's time we got our daughter married and settled down, Eugene. She will be twenty-eight next week, you know."

"Oh, don't hurry, dear. Better wait till the right sort of man comes along."

"But why wait? I didn't!"

● 236

Stranger — "I've come here to make an honest living."

Native — "Well, there's not much competition."

See also 130, 175, 176, 337, 357, 371, 388, 824, 1129, 1140, 1150, 1154, 1155, 1258, 1291.

### Incompatibility, Contradiction

● 237

An American newspaper, giving the biography of a United States millionaire, stated that "he was born without a cent in his pocket."

● 238

Mother, tucking her little son into bed: "Now, honey, if you need anything during the night, just call Mother, and Daddy will come."

● 239

"What's the matter up at Tom's house?"

"They're taking 'im away in the ambulance for beatin' 'is missus."

● 240

It was a deathbed scene, but the director was not satisfied with the hero's acting.

"Come on!" he cried. "Put more life in your dying."

● 241

At the draft board a prospective soldier was asked, "Who were your father and mother before they were married?"

"I didn't have a father and a mother before they were married," was the reply.

● 242

Caroline — "Has your daughter's second marriage been a success?"

Victoria — "Oh yes, quite. She's discovered, without effort, that she made a huge mistake in divorcing her first husband."

● 243

A chorus girl introduced her young man to another chorus girl, with the result that he transferred his affections. The aggrieved girl gave her rival a piece of her mind in a letter, which read:

"You Heartless Creature: You know very well we had been going about together for six months. Wait till I lay my hands on you, you good-fornothing, bleached blonde. I'll scratch out your eyes, pull out your hair, your teeth, and throw acid on you. Yours truly, C — N —"

"P. S.— Please excuse pencil."

● 244

*Voice on Phone* — "John Smith is sick and can't attend classes to-day. He requested me to notify you."

*Professor* — "All right. Who is this speaking?"

*Voice* — "This is my roommate."

● 245

From a selection of application forms for insurance cited in the *British Medical Journal*:

Mother died in infancy.

Father went to bed feeling well, and the next morning woke up dead.

Grandfather died suddenly at the age of 103. Up to this time he bade fair to reach a ripe old age.

Applicant does not know anything about maternal posterity, except that they died at an advanced age.

Applicant does not know cause of mother's death, but states that she fully recovered from her last illness.

Applicant has never been fatally sick.

Father died suddenly; nothing serious.

Applicant's brother, who was an infant, died when he was a mere child.

Grandfather died from gunshot wound, caused by an arrow shot by an Indian.

Mother's last illness was caused from chronic rheumatism, but she was cured before death.

● 246

*She (tenderly)* — "And are mine the only lips you have kissed?"

*He* — "Yes, and they are the sweetest of all."

● 247

*She* — "I'm sorry to disappoint you, but the fact is, last night I became engaged to Ernest."

*He (knowing her)* — "Well, how about next week?"

● 248

*Her Intimate Friend* — "So you're really obedient to Jack?"

*Jack's Wife* — "Oh yes; he says, 'Do just as you please, dear,' and I do — always!"

● 249

"I am very optimistic about the future of business."

"Then why do you look so worried?"

"I'm not certain my optimism is justified."

● 250

He dropped around to a girl's house, and as he ran the steps he was confronted by her little brother.

"Hi, Billy."

"Hi," said the brat.

"Is your sister expecting me?"

"Yeah."

"How do you know?"

"She's gone out."

● 251

"How do you like your new publicity agent?" asked the film star's friend.

"Oh, he's wonderful," she cried, beaming with enthusiasm. "We've been robbed twice, our house has been burned, our car has been wrecked, and I have had my life threatened by an anonymous enemy since we employed him."

● 252

*Ruth* — "I, too, had an ideal once."

*Rose* — "How did you come to lose it?"

*Ruth* — "I married it."

● 253

"That new office manager speaks very highly of us, Ella. I heard him say we were perfect nonentities!"

● 254

An old farmer made his wife keep a cash account. Each week he would go over it, growling and grumbling. On one such occasion he delivered himself on the following:

"Look here, Sarah, mustard plasters, fifty cents; three teeth extracted, two dollars! There's two dollars and a half

in one week spent for your own pleasure. Do you think I'm made of money?"

● 255

The lonely stranger entered a restaurant in New York.

"May I take your order?" the sprightly waitress inquired.

"Yes," he replied. "Two eggs and a kind word."

The waitress brought the eggs and was moving away when the stranger stooped her.

"What about the kind word?" he said.

The waitress leaned over and whispered, "Don't eat the eggs."

● 256

The Scotsman had lost a pound note. Sadly he entered the advertisement office of the local newspaper and handed in the notice he wanted inserted in the "Lost and Found" column.

The clerk read: "Lost, a note. Sentimental value."

● 257

Harris — "And your brother, who was trying so hard to get a government job, what is he doing now?"

Brown — "Nothing. He got the job."

See also 157, 172, 365, 429, 447, 490, 666, 885, 1096, 1212, 1284.

Negation

● 258

What does a man love more than life,  
Hate more than death or mortal strife;  
That which contented men desire,  
The poor have, the rich require,  
The miser spends, the spendthrift saves,  
And all men carry to their graves?

(Nothing)

● 259

Reporter — "Madam, you may recollect that we printed yesterday your denial of having retracted the contradiction of your original statement. Would you care to have us say that you were misquoted in regard to it?"

● 260

They were trying an Irishman, charged with a petty offense, in an Oklahoma town, when the judge asked: "Have you any one in court who will vouch for your good character?"

"Yis, your honour," quickly responded the Celt, "there's the sheriff there."

Whereupon the sheriff evinced signs of great amazement.

"Why, your honour," declared he, "I don't even know the man."

"Observe, your honour," said the Irishman, triumphantly, "observe that I've lived in the country for over twelve years an' the sheriff doesn't know me yit! Ain't that a character for ye?"

● 261

Why is a man who is always complaining the easiest man to satisfy?

(Because nothing satisfies him)

● 262

Nurse — "What church do you belong to?"

Patient — "None."

Nurse — "Well, what church do you go to when you do go?"

Patient — "If you must know, the church which I stay away from most of the time when I don't go is the Baptist."

● 263

"So you're not going to Paris, this year?"

"No — it's London we're not going to this year; it was Paris we didn't go to last year!"

● 264

"Didn't I meet you in Toledo?"

"No, I never was in Toledo."

"Neither was I. It must have been two other fellows."

● 265

"Smith certainly is a foxy fellow. He's drawn up his will in such a way that the lawyers can't get more out of it than his own heirs."

"How's that?"

"Why, he left half his fortune to one of the best lawyers in the country, provided he saw to it that the other half went to Smith's children intact."

● 266

The lecturer in English was taking his students through *The Merchant of Venice*. At the speech beginning 'the quality of mercy is not strained,' a question was asked, about the word 'strained'; was it used in the sense that a muscle was strained or in the sense that tea was strained through a strainer? The lecturer was baffled. He looked intently at his text. Then suddenly his face relaxed and he replied in triumph, 'But it says it is NOT strained — so, the question doesn't arise!'

● 267

"How do you like this picture?" the artist asked his visitor.

"H'm — it might be worse".

"Oh!" said the artist, disappointedly. "I'm sorry to hear you say that. Won't you withdraw that statement?"

"Very well," said the visitor, "it couldn't be worse!"

● 268

*Teacher (in history lesson)* — "In the olden days men were often put in prison without any proper reason; but to-day we never think of punishing people for things they have not done."

*Bad Boy (sulkily)* — "Then why was I caned yesterday 'cause I didn't do my 'ome work?"

● 269

*Hiker in a Small Devonshire Café* — "A cup of tea without cream, please."

*Waitress* — "Sorry. We've run out of cream. Would you mind having it without milk?"

● 270

*Father* — "When I was a boy I thought nothing of a ten mile walk."

*Son* — "Well, I don't think so much of it, myself."

● 271

*Johnny* — "Papa, would you be glad if I saved a dollar for you?"

*Papa* — "Naturally, my son."

*Johnny* — "Well, I have saved one for you. You said that if I brought a good mark this week, you would give me a dollar, and I haven't brought you."

### The Verbs *Do* and *Work*

● 272

A master of a ship called out, "Who is below?"

A boy answered,

"Will, sir."

"What are you doing?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Is Tom there?"

"Yes," said Tom.

"What are you doing?"

"Helping Will, sir."

● 273

Those who try to do something, and fail, are to be preferred to those who try to do nothing, and succeed.

● 274

Fourteen-year-old Henry, who tended my garden last summer, is the world's slowest-moving creature. In desperation one day I exclaimed, "Henry, is there anything you can do fast?"

"Yes, 'm," he drawled, "I get tired fast."

(Mrs. J. B.)

● 275

A notice was put up on the door of an office: "If You Haven't Anything to Do, Don't Do it Here!"

● 276

*Mistress (to butler)* — "Why is it, John, every time I come home I find you sleeping?"

"Well, ma'am, it's this way: I don't like to be a-doing nothing."

● 277

It happened in Greece during its invasion by German fascists during WWII. A gestapo agent heard an old man talking to a friend. "You may say all you please against nazi soldiers," he declared, "but personally I'd rather work for ten German servicemen than one Greek."

The elated agent stopped and asked the old man his occupation.

"I'm a grave-digger," was the reply.

Etc.

● 278

*Judge (to amateur yegg)* — "So they caught you with this bundle of silverware. Whom did you plunder?"

*Yegg* — "Two fraternity-houses, your honour."

*Judge (to sergeant)* — "Call up the downtown hotels and distribute this stuff."

● 279

*College Lad (arrested for speeding)* — "But, your honour, I am a college boy."

*Judge* — "Ignorance doesn't excuse anybody!"

● 280

The other day two friends had lunch. One has been married less than a year, the other over twenty-five years. Said the younger, "I got home the other night, and my wife wanted to go to the movie. Well, I was tired, and I told her I didn't want to go out again. I said, 'I spend my day earning a living for this family. I work hard, and when I come home I expect to relax. I don't want to go out again. I think that's only reasonable.'"

The veteran looked at him wearily. "How was the show?" he asked.

● 281

*Mistress* — "I shall be very lonely, Bridget, if you leave me."

*Bridget* — "Don't worry, mum. I'll not go until ye have a houseful of company."

● 282

*"Never saw such a crowd at our church before."*

*"New minister?"*

*"No; it was burned down last night."*

● 283

*"Why is Miss Jones wearing black?"*

*"She is in mourning for her husband."*

*"Why, she never had a husband!"*

*"No, that is why she mourns."*

● 284

From a church bulletin: "Our mixed chorus sang last Sunday in a regional broadcast from Minneapolis. It was nice to hear them and realize they were nearly a thousand miles away."

● 285

Persons are prohibited from gathering flowers from any but their own graves.

(Notice in a cemetery)

● 286

A teacher was making a strenuous effort to get good attendance in her room. Looking over her class one morning, she saw that all except one were in their places.

"This is fine," she exclaimed, "all here except Jimmie Jones; and let us hope that it is something serious which keeps him away."

● 287

"Darling, I have to go to New York on business," said the young married man. "It will only take about three or four days and I hope you won't miss me too much while I'm gone, but —"

"I won't," answered his young wife, positively, "because I'm going with you."

"I wish you could, dear, but it won't be convenient this time. What would you want to go for, anyhow? I'm going to be too busy to be with you, and —"

"I have to go. I need clothes."

"But, darling — you can get all the clothes you want right here on Adams Street."

"Thank you. That's all I wanted."

● 288

A modest girl never pursues a man. Nor does a mousetrap pursue a mouse.

● 289

*Pilot (calling back to airport by radio)* — "I'm lost!"

*Airfield Operator* — "Quick, tell me your location!"

● 290

A general who believed he was a great strategist startled his staff officers by admitting that once he had been wrong in his decision.

"You wrong, sir?" exclaimed one of his listeners.

"Yes," replied the infallible general. "Once I thought I was wrong when I wasn't."

● 291

*Willy* — "Did you like the second act of the play?"

*Nilly* — "I didn't see it. The program said, 'Second Act, Two Years Later', and I couldn't wait."

● 292

An expert on security matters commented: "A secret may be best kept sometimes by keeping the secret of its being secret."

● 293

*The New Governess* — "What are the comparative and superlative of *bad*, Berty?"

*Berty (the doctor's son)* — "Bad — worse — dead."

● 294

*Teacher* — "Didn't Jimmy Green help you do this sum?"

*Willie* — "No'm."

*Teacher* — "Are you sure he didn't help you?"

*Willie* — "No'm, he didn't help me; he did it all."

● 295

The children were in the midst of a free-for-all. "Richard, who started this?" asked the father as he came into the room.

"Well, it all started when David hit me back."

● 296

A man dropped in to pay a friend an unexpected visit, and was amazed to find him playing chess with his dog. The man watched in silence for a minute, then burst out with "That's the most incredible dog I ever saw in my life!" "Oh, he isn't so smart," was the answer. "I've beaten him three games out of four!"

● 297

At one of the American Universities a player in the University team was suspended shortly before an important match for slackness in his academic work. With the consent of the authorities he was set to coach with a professor so that he might be got up to standard in time. On the day of the match he was allowed to play. As the undergraduate concerned was a particularly dense fellow many people wondered how the professor had been able to pass him out. When asked, the professor replied: "I put two ques-

tions to him. First, what was the colour of blue vitriol? He said 'Green', which was wrong. Then I asked him what was the object of the study of biology and he said he didn't know, which was right. So he scored half marks and a pass."

● 298

*Mistress* — "Nora, I saw a policeman in the park to-day kiss a baby. I hope you will remember my objection to such things."

*Nora* — "Sure, ma'am, no policeman would ever think iv kissin' yer baby whin I'm around."

● 299

*Mrs. Jones* — "Good morning, Doctor. I'm so terribly upset to hear of the death of Mrs. Spinks. It was so sad, and to think you were treating her for asthma and then for her to go and die of heart disease!"

*Doctor (with determination)* — "Mrs. Jones, when I treat a patient for asthma, that patient dies of asthma."

● 300

*Medical Officer* — "And what's the matter with you, my lad?"

*Recruit* — "I find it difficult to breathe, sir."

*Medical Officer* — "Right! Excused breathing for seven days."

● 301

A browbeating lawyer was demanding that a witness answer a certain question either in the negative or affirmative.

"I cannot do it," said the witness. "There are some questions that cannot be answered by a 'yes' or a 'no', as any one knows."

"I defy you to give an example to the court", thundered the lawyer.

The retort came like a flash: "Are you still beating your wife?"

● 302

Halfway down a steep winding hill near Egton, North Yorkshire, we stopped our car to ask an old woman at her gate if the hill was dangerous. "Not 'ere it isn't", she told us. "It's down at bottom where they all kill their-selves."

(Florence Hopper)



● 303

*Soph* A new barber nicked a customer badly in giving him a shave. Hoping to restore the man's feeling of well-being, he asked solicitously, "Do you want your head wrapped in a hot towel?"

"No, thanks", said the customer. "I'll carry it home under my arm."

● 304

A young seaman asked an old sea wolf — "Do such ships like ours often sink?"

"No — not often. Only once", was the reply.

● 305

"When we are married I must have three servants."

"You shall have twenty, dear, but not all at once."

● 306

"Can you name an animal that has eyes and cannot see; legs and cannot walk, but can jump as high as the Empire State Building?" asked the life of the party.

Everybody racked his brains during a period of deep silence, and racked in vain. Finally, they gave it up and demanded the solution.

"The answer", he said, "is a wooden horse. It has eyes and cannot see, and legs and cannot walk."

"Yes", the company agreed. "But how does it jump as high as the Empire State Building?"

"The Empire State Building," the humourist explained, "can't jump."

● 307

"Have you ever been offered work?"

"Only once. Apart from that, I've met with nothing but kindness."

● 308

*Employee* — "I have been here 10 years doing three men's work for one man's pay. Now I want a raise".

*Employer (slightly Scotch)* — "I can't give you a raise but if you'll tell me who the other two men are I'll discharge them".

● 309

The company commander asked the company clerk: "Where do you keep your papers?"

"In a strong box, sir".

"Is it reliable?"

"Yes, it is. You can't open it with any key."

"How do you open it then?"

"With a nail", was the reply.

● 310

"One drink always makes me dizzy".

"Really?"

"Yes — and it's usually the eighth."

● 311

*Soph* — "But I don't think I deserve an absolute zero."

*Prof.* — "Neither do I, but it is the lowest mark that I am allowed to give."

● 312

*Advice to Persons about to Marry:* Don't.

● 313

The prison visitor was going round the cells, and was asking rather fatuous questions. "Was it your love of drink that brought you here?" she asked a prisoner.

"Lor', no, miss", replied the man, "you can't get nothin' here!"

● 314

*Miss Beekley* — "I'm so glad I'm not an heiress, Mr. Soper. I should never know whether my suitors were attracted by myself or my money".

*Mr. Soper* — "Oh, Miss Beekley, your mirror should leave you in no doubt on that score!"

● 315

What was the largest island in the world before Australia was discovered?

(Australia)

● 316

*Willie* — "I'll bet we have something at our house you don't have. We have a new baby."

*Bobbie* — "Aw, gee; we have more than that at our house. We have a new Daddy".

● 317

*Charwoman (to neighbour with whom she is having a spat)* — "What I say is, there is ladies an' ladies — an' you ain't neither".

● 318

*She* — "I just saw Dot walking down the street with her new evening gown under her arm."

*He* — "Don't tell me the styles have come to that!"

● 319

Of all kindnesses, lending books is the one which meets with the least return.

● 320

The farmer had watched the motorist working on his secondhand car for about an hour.

"What are you looking at?" asked the motorist. "Is this the first motor-car you ever saw?"

"No", was the dry reply, "but it's very much like it."

● 321

The first mate of a cargo boat on a long slow voyage felt the strain so much that one day he took to drink and was drunk. The Captain was a very conscientious man. Although his first mate had never before behaved like this he could not overlook the occurrence and he made an entry in the ship's log, "Today the first mate was drunk." When the first mate discovered this he expostulated with the Captain but could not persuade him to alter or erase the entry. "It's the truth," said the Captain. A few days later the first mate was making the entries in the ship's log and he wrote, "Today the Captain was sober."

● 322

*First Plebe* — "I got in trouble with the prof. this morning."

*Second Plebe* — "How come?"

*First Plebe* — "He said that all questions could be answered by yes or no, and asked if any one could give him one that couldn't. I asked him if he had stopped swearing".

● 323

*Little Boy* — "Was that policeman ever a little baby?"

*Mother* — "Why, yes, of course".

*Boy* — "Oh, mummy, I should love to see a baby policeman".

● 324

*Helen* — "What kind of husband would you advise me to get?"

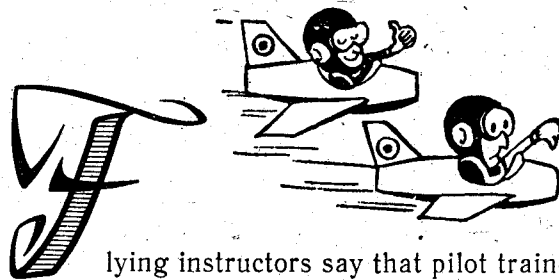
*Hazel* — "You get a single man and let the husbands alone".

Also 1209, 1269.

## SECTION III

### Linguistic Relativity

*Naming or describing one and the same object, situation or whatever in different ways, depending on how the speaker prefers to view it, often turns out to be pragmatically significant because this feature of linguistic utterance can make the addressee view the object, etc. as the speaker intends him to. Through new renditions we are sometimes led to see the original motivation of a word or phrase obscured by long usage. Although jokes in this part vary considerably with regard to the nature of linguistic items involved and the mechanism of linguistic relativity, they all display an untraditional use of language and, through this, the speaker's personality.*



● 325 lying instructors say that pilot trainees are divided into optimists and pessimists when reporting the amount of fuel during flights. Optimists report that their fuel tank is half full while pessimists say it's half empty.

● 326 Little Willie, aged six, was walking in the Zoo with his father. Suddenly, he noticed a zebra.  
"Daddy," he cried, "are zebras yellow animals with black stripes or black animals with yellow stripes?"

● 327 Napoleon was one day searching for a book in his library, and at last discovered it on a shelf somewhat above his reach. Marshal Moncey, one of the tallest men in the army, stepped forward, saying: "Permit me, sire; I am higher than your majesty".  
"You are longer, marshal", said the emperor, with a frown.

● 328  
*She* — "I want a lip-stick."  
*Clerk* — "What size, please?"  
*She* — "Three rides and a house party."

● 329  
"How often did you jump with parachute?" a paratrooper was asked by the inspector.  
"One time, sir," replied the man.  
"But your record shows 24 jumps?"  
"It's partially correct, sir. I jumped myself only once. All the other times I was kicked out of the plane."

● 330  
"My laundry sends back my shirts with different buttons sewed on to them."  
"You don't know when you are well off. My laundry sends back my buttons with different shirts sewed on them."

● 331 Some infantry-school cadets had to undertake some orientation flights during their aviation training period. A number of unfortunate aviators had to resort to extensive use of the infamous "burp bag." Before such a flight when the instructor had finished describing some of the more difficult acrobatic manoeuvres, there came a sick voice from the back of the room, "How many bags does tha take?"

● 332 An old lady, passing near the troop barracks early in the morning, asked an officer.  
"What are those men doing?"  
"Oh, they are soldiers going through their setting-up exercises (the Army daily dozen)."  
"Humph," observed the old lady, "Looks more to me like setting-down exercises."

● 333  
*Sergeant* — "Did you shave this morning, Smith?"  
*Rookie* — "Yes, sir."  
*Sergeant* — "Well, next time stand closer to the razor."

● 334  
"I was put on report for sleeping on watch," a seaman complained to his shipmate: "But really I wasn't. I was only resting my eyes."

● 335 The inspector was paying a hurried visit to a slightly overcrowded school.  
"Any abnormal children in your class?" he inquired of one harassed-looking teacher.  
"Yes," she replied, with knitted brow, "two of them have good manners."

● 336 They arrived at the fifth inning.  
"What's the score, Jim?" he asked a fan.  
"Nothing to nothing," was the reply.  
"Oh, goodly!" she exclaimed. "We haven't missed a thing!"

● 337  
*Guest* — "Do you know the lady over there?"  
*Hotel Manager* — "Certainly. She is a film star, but just now I do not know her name."

"Does she come to this hotel often?"

"Yes, every honeymoon."

● 338

Little Willie came home in a sad state. He had a black eye and numerous scratches and contusions, and his clothes were a sight. His mother was horrified at the spectacle presented by her darling. There were tears in her eyes as she addressed him rebukingly:

"Oh, Willie, Willie! How often have I told you not to play with that naughty Peck boy!"

Little Willie regarded his mother with an expression of deepest disgust.

"Say, ma," he objected, "do I look as if I had been playing with anybody?"

● 339

At a college examination a professor asked: "Does the question embarrass you?"

"Not at all, sir," replied the student; "not at all. It is quite clear. It is the answer that bothers me!"

● 340

A military policeman reported to the provost-marshal about the escape of a prisoner.

"Got away, has he?" the provost-marshal roared. "Did you guard all the exits?"

"Yes, sir. But we think he must have left by one of the entrances."

● 341

A poor man knocked at the door of a house, asking for some bread or some money.

"Madam, can you give me anything?"

"My good man," said the lady, "I have no money at all, but if there is anything to sew or mend, I can do it for you."

"Madam, if you cannot give me anything and if you are kind enough to do something for me, here is a button. Please, sew a pair of trousers on it."

● 342

*Young Hopeful* — "Father, what is a traitor in politics?"  
*Veteran Politician* — "A traitor is a man who leaves our party and goes over to the other one."

*Young Hopeful* — "Well, then, what is a man who leaves his party and comes over to yours?"

*Veteran Politician* — "A convert, my son."

● 343

"What's the matter, little boy?" said the kindhearted man.

"Are you lost?"

"No," was the manful answer; "I ain't lost; I'm here. But I'd like to know where father and mother have wandered to."

● 344

"Sergeant, you say Private MacCoy is a reckless driver?"

"Yes, sir. When the road turns the same way he does, it's purely coincidental."

● 345

We know a gentleman who, after a medical examination, was told by the doctor that he was in a pretty bad way. "Too little blood in your alcohol stream."

● 346

A man hurried into a quicklunch restaurant and said:

"Give me a ham sandwich."

"Yes, sir," said the waiter, reaching for the sandwich;

"will you eat it or take it with you?"

"Both," was the unexpected but obvious reply.

● 347

A motorist, charged with driving over a crossing without due caution, explained, "I always hurry through to get out of the way of reckless drivers."

● 348

A little boy who slept with his big brother complained to his mother one morning about the discomforts of his bed.

"It's an awful hard bed, mum, and, what's more Bob takes up quite a half of it."

"Well," replied the mother, "why shouldn't Bob have a half?"

"But, mum," added the youngster, "he always takes the middle half."

● 349

"How long have you been learning to skate?"

"Oh, about a dozen sittings."

● 350

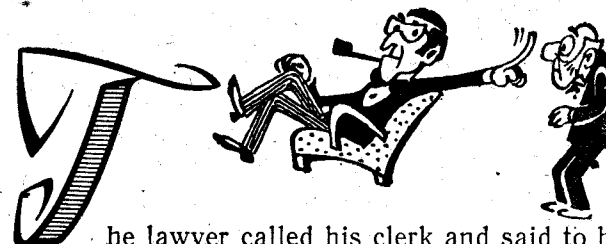
A little girl was describing her first experience in an elevator. "We got into a little room," she said, "and the upstairs came down."

See also 46, 345.

#### SECTION IV

### Socio- and Psycholinguistics The Power of Words

*Language is a powerful social and psychological tool. A word may kill or heal, it can make one happy or miserable. Mastery of the standard language is a necessary prerequisite for one's social promotion. Many linguistic items, particularly words and phrases, are diversified along sociolinguistic parameters and their usage/nonusage and particular choices among them depend on the speaker's pragmatic ends, the social context of the speech event, and the social relationship between the speaker and the addressee. The jokes collected in this part serve as illustrations of various socio- and psycholinguistic concepts.*



● 351 he lawyer called his clerk and said to him. "Smith, you have been employed by me for five years. To mark my appreciation of this you will henceforth be addressed as Mr. Smith."

● 352

Motorist — "Aren't you the fellow who sold me this car two weeks ago?"

Salesman — "Yes, sir."

Motorist — "Well, tell me about it again. I get so discouraged."

● 353

"Is the doctor treating her for nervousness?"

"Oh, dear, no. She's rich enough to have psychoneurosis."

● 354

"I'd like you to come right over," a man phoned an undertaker, "and supervise the burial of my poor, departed wife."

"Your wife!" gasped the undertaker. "Didn't I bury her two years ago?"

"You don't understand," said the man. "You see, I married again."

"Oh," said the undertaker, "Congratulations!"

● 355

A doctor was trying to check an epidemic in a village. Visiting a family, he asked:

"Are you taking precautions to prevent spread of contagion?"

"Yes, doctor," replied the head of the family. "We've even bought a sanitary cup and we all drink from it."

● 356

Father — "Did you take that letter to Mr. Jenkins?"

Sonny — "Yes, father; but I don't know what good it is to write to old Jenkins. He's blind."

Father — "Blind! I never knew that. It must be some sudden affliction that has recently overtaken him. How did you find it out?"

Sonny — "Well, he asked me twice where my hat was when I was in his office and it was on my head all the time."

● 357

When a diplomat says "yes," he means "perhaps."

When a diplomat says "perhaps," he means "no"; and when a diplomat says "no," he is no diplomat.

When a woman says "no," she means "perhaps."

When she says "perhaps," she means "yes."

When she says "yes," she lacks refinement.

● 358

Sergt. Bully — "Now, you blighter, do your bloomin' boot-lace up at once."

Recruit (*married and absent-minded*) "All right, darling."

● 359

"Speak to the jury, sir — the men sitting behind you on the benches."

The witness at once turned round, and, making an awkward bow, said, with great gravity of manner:

"Good morning, gentlemen!"

● 360

Dr. Johnson, the lexicographer, was once assailed by a fishwoman with foul epithets. Whereupon he turned upon her, and berated her terribly.

He called her a noun, an adverb, an interjection, an adjective, and thus like, until she waxed as mad as a hornet.

● 361

"It's been a wonderful evening!"



● 362

Mark Twain happened to look at the house opposite his own into which a family he did not know had recently moved. Then he saw something which made him rush across the street and exclaim to the people on the verandah: "My name is Twain. My wife and I fully intended to call upon you and pay our respects but we have not been able to do so. I beg your pardon for intruding in this abrupt manner but I ought to tell you that your house is on fire."

● 363

A firm of lawyers rang up a stock-broker, and the following conversation took place: "Good morning, are you Mr. Denman?"

"Yes, who is this?"

"This is Hullet, Crafrig, Studge, Minardy, Glowle, and Scarrow."

"Oh, good morning, good morning, good morning, good morning, good morning, good morning."

● 364

A clergyman was addressing a small audience of boys at a Mission Hall one night, and before very long they were all touched to tears by his eloquence, all save one. This one became an object of concern to the ecclesiastic. The lad's sang-froid was complete and perfect.

"Why do you not cry like the others, my boy?" asked the clergyman, reproachfully. "Tell me why?"

"Oh, sir," replied the delinquent, "I belong to the next parish!"

● 365

Governor Hunt of Wyoming tells this story on himself. He visited the State Penitentiary one day, and when the prisoners assembled for the evening meal, the warden unexpectedly asked him to make a few remarks. Without thinking he began, "Fellow citizens." Their smiles reminded him that all of them had lost their citizenship when convicted. He tried again. "Fellow convicts." This was worse. As a last resort, he explained hastily, "Well, men, I don't know what to call you, but I am certainly glad to see so many of you here."

● 366

The judge in a West German court addresses an American soldier (from Chicago). "Do you admit that you've shot the barkeeper, the cashier, two customers and looted the cash box?" "Yes, I admit it," says the soldier, "but I'm not guilty."

"And who is guilty?"

"The barkeeper — he told me to be at home."

● 367

Teacher — "Tommy, your hands are very dirty. What would you say if I came to school with dirty hands?"

Tommy — "I'd be too polite to mention it."

● 368

The New Curate — "Superb day, isn't it?"

Giles — "Ay?"

Curate — "Superb day."

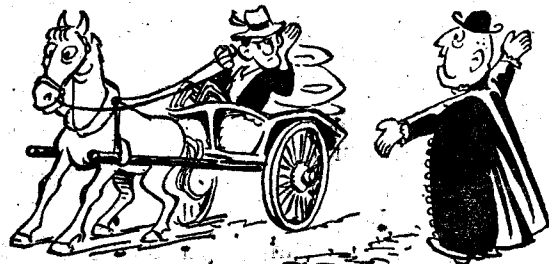
Giles — "Ay?"

Curate — "Er — a — superb — day!"

Giles — "Whoa, Dobbin!" (Pulls up). "Ay?"

Curate — "I only remarked — er — it was a superb day."

Giles — "D — ! Gw'on, Dobbin!"



● 369

"Jim," said Brown, "what did you call your mother-in-law after you got married?"

"Well, I'll tell you," replied Jones, "for the first year I addressed her as 'Say,' and after that we called her 'Grandmal'."

● 370

Little Greta came into the kitchen whilst mother was talking to the milkman. She just stood and stared.

Mother — "Well, Greta what do you say to the gentleman who brings you your nice milk every day?"

Greta (shaking hands) — "I am very glad to meet you. And how is your cow?"

● 371

A fiery tempered Southern business man wrote the following letter:

"Sir, my stenographer, being a lady, cannot type what I think of you. I, being a gentleman, cannot think it. You, being neither, will understand what I mean."

● 372

When P. T. Barnum, later of circus fame, was running his famous museum in New York, he discovered that persons were paying admission and staying for hours. The place soon became so crowded each day that others could not get in. Barnum wondered how he could empty the museum without offending his patrons, so that the turnover would be greater. Finally, he hit upon a plan. He had a sign made which he placed over a door leading to an exit into a rear street. It worked, for people soon began to follow the sign to see what new curiosity awaited them. The sign read: TO THE EGRESS.

● 373

Voice (over telephone) — "Hello. Hello. This is Judge Babington Peterson McFeatherson the Third. Will you please tell my son, Cravenwood Rutherford McFeatherson the Fourth, that I would like to speak to him."

Frosh — "Hey, Mac, your old man wants to speak to you."

● 374

Two office boys were discussing business. "Have you got a good job?" asked one.

"Yes," came the prompt reply. "I can get to the office any time I choose before nine, and leave just when I please after six."

● 375

In a small restaurant we lunched at, there was a notice on the wall: "Please do not insult our waitresses by tipping them." But on our table was a small white box, with a slit across the top, labelled: "Insults."

(M. Major)

● 376

The little man was pushing his barrow through the crowded city market.

"Coming through," he called merrily. No one moved.

"Gangway," he shouted. A few men moved aside.

"Watch your nylons," he warned. The women scattered like chaff in the wind.

● 377

*Mrs. Mannerly (to her little daughter, who has just returned from tea with friends)* — "I hope you said 'No, thank you' oftener than 'Yes, thank you.'"

*Mabel* — "Yes, I did. I hadn't been eating more'n half an hour before they began saying, 'Don't you think you've eaten enough?' 'Aren't you afraid you'll make yourself ill?' I said: 'No, thank you,' every time."

● 378

*Conductor* — "Can't you see the sign 'No Smoking?'"

*Sailor* — "Sure, mate, that's plain enough. But there are so many dippy signs here. Looka there, one says, 'Wear Nemo Corsets'. So I ain't paying attention to any of them."

*See also* 7, 10, 12, 13, 20, 22, 23, 27, 30, 36, 117, 243, 406, 450, 564, 693, 1015, 1266, 1267, 1308, 1375.

SECTION V

Language Differentiation

*Language, if viewed in the entirety of its speech realizations, is not as orderly and uniform as it might appear from some linguistic descriptions of it. The amount of diversity in languages is enormous, variation in linguistic performance being conditioned by a large number of factors, beginning with the non-identity of the referential world, actual and/or conceived, with which particular groups within a linguistic community may associate themselves and ending with a particular speaker's personal idiosyncracies, in which his background, social and otherwise, his experience (including linguistic) and even peculiarities of his speech organs can find reflection. The three sections into which jokes in this part are divided are connected with three major types of language diversity, namely, age differentiation, professional differentiation and social differentiation.*



## Age Differentiation



● 379 Willie was invited to a party, where, of course, refreshments were bountifully served.

"Won't you have something more, Willie?" the hostess said.

"No, thank you," replied Willie, with an expression of great satisfaction. "I'm full."

"Well, then," smiled the hostess, "put some fruit and cakes in your pockets to eat on the way home."

"No, thank you," came the rather startling response of Willie, "they're full, too."

● 380

My small daughter had been warned to be on her best behavior, so I was upset when she asked my caller her age.

"Oh, I'm just as old as your mother," was the tactful reply, and I relaxed — a little too soon.

After a short pause, spent in a quick appraisal of my portly guest, my daughter commented in her most grown-up manner, "You're large for your age, aren't you?"

(Eleanor Kammer)

● 381

*Little Girl (who has been allowed to stay up with stuffy grown-ups)* — "May I go to bed, mummie? I'm tired of this night life."

● 382

Willie's younger sister called to her mother in sudden alarm. When the mother came to the window to learn the trouble, the little girl cried:

"Mama, quick! Willie's takin' off his clothes. He'll soon be barefoot all over."

● 383

*Green* — "You must be keen on the talkies, old boy, to go twice a week."

120

*Howarth* — "It's not that exactly. You see, if I don't go regularly I can't understand what my children are saying."

● 384

*Jimmy* — "If a boy is a lad and he has a stepfather, is the boy a stepladder?"

● 385

"Papa, has Mr. Smith's eyes got feet?"

"Why do you ask such a question, my boy?"

"Because I heard mother say that at a party the other evening, Mr. Shith's eyes followed her all around the room."

● 386

*Visitor* — "What was your mummie's name before she was married?"

*Young Innocence* — "I think it must have been 'Savoy.' That's the name on our towels."

● 387

A youngster went into the parlour to see a visitor who was with his father.

"Well, my little man," said his father's friend, "what are you looking at me for?"

"Why," replied the boy, "daddy told me that you were a self-made man, and I want to see what you look like."

"Quite right," said the gratified guest, although ugly and fat. "I am a self-made man."

"But what did you make yourself like that for?" asked the boy.

● 388

Little Jane, whose grandmother was visiting her family, was going to bed when her mother called:

"Don't forget, dear, to include grandma in your prayers tonight, that god should bless her and let her live to be very, very old."

"Oh, she's old enough," replied Jane. "I'd rather pray that god would make her young."

● 389

*Teacher* — "Johnny, who was Anne Boleyn,"

*Johnny* — "Anne Boleyn was a flat-iron."

*Teacher* — "What on earth do you mean?"

121

*Johnny* — "Well, it says here in the history book 'Henry, having disposed of Catherine, pressed his suit with Anne Boleyn.'"

● 390

The pastor was examining one of the younger classes, and asked the question: "What are the sins of omission?" After a little silence one young lady offered:

"Please, sir, they're sins we ought to have committed, and haven't."

● 391

"Nurse! Nurse! Bobby's out of bed, and running about in his bananas!"



● 392

*Teacher* — "Who can tell me what the former ruler of Russia was called?"

*Class (in unison)* — "Tsar."

*Teacher* — "Correct; and what was his wife called?"

*Class* — "Tsarina."

*Teacher* — "What were the tsar's children called?"

There was a pause, and then a timid voice in the rear piped up: "Tsardines!"

● 393

A village pastor stopped a little nine-year-old girl in the street one day and said, "Well, well, Mary, I hear God has just sent you two little twin brothers."

"Yes, he did," said little Mary. "And he knows where the money's coming from too. Daddy said so."

● 394

*Mother* — "Who ever taught you to use that dreadful word?"

*Tommy* — "Santa Claus; mama."

*Mother* — "Santa Claus?"

*Tommy* — "Yes, mama, when he fell over a chair in my bedroom on Christmas eve."

● 395

"Mamma, I've got stomach ache," said the six-year-old Nellie.

"That's because your stomach is empty. You would feel better if you had something in it. You have been without your lunch."

That afternoon Uncle John called, and in conversation complained of a severe headache.

"That's because it's empty," said Nellie. "You would feel better if you had something in it."

● 396

"Mother," said Johnny, "is it correct to say you 'water a horse' when he's thirsty?"

"Yes, quite correct."

"Then (*picking up a saucer*), I'm going to milk the cat."

● 397

Dorothy, the little daughter of a tire salesman, had seen triplets for the first time.

"Oh, mother," she cried on returning home, "what do you think I saw to-day?"

"I can't imagine, dear. What?"

"A lady that had twins — and a spare."

● 398

*Teacher* — "Johnny, would you like to go to heaven?"

*Johnny* — "Yes, but mother told me to come right home after school."

● 399

The lawyer was sitting at his desk, so absorbed in his work that he did not hear the door as it was pushed gently open, nor see the curly head that was thrust into his office. A little sob attracted his notice, and turning, he saw a face that was streaked with tears and told plainly that feelings had been hurt.

"Well, my little man, did you want to see me?"

"Are you a lawyer?"

"Yes. What do you want?"

"I want" — and there was a resolute ring in his voice — "I want a divorce from my papa and mamma."

● 400

Teacher — "What does *unaware* mean?"

Susie — "It's the last thing you take off at night."

● 401

Johnny had been the guest of honour at a party the day before, and his friend was regarding him enviously.

"How was it? Have a good time?" he asked.

"Did I?" was the emphatic answer. "I ain't hungry yet!"

● 402

A Washington society leader hosted a big luncheon to help launch a new Red Cross drive. One of the high dignitaries in attendance patted the hostess' little daughter on the head and said, "Aren't we a big help to our dear mother. What is our task for to-day?" "Our task for to-day," snapped the little daughter, "is to see that none of you bozos try to get away with any of the silver."

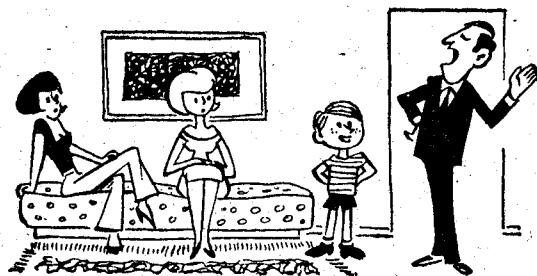
● 403

"Why, what are you crying so for, sonny?" asked Dad of his four-year-old heir.

"I heard you say you were going to get a new baby and I suppose that means you'll trade me in on it," he sobbed.

● 404

Brown (in the middle of tall shooting story) — "Hardly had I taken aim at the lion on my right, when I heard a rustle in the jungle grass, and perceived an enormous tiger approaching on my left. I now found myself on the horns of a dilemma!"



Interested Little Boy — "Oh, and which did you shoot first — the lion, or the tiger, or the d'lemma?"

● 405

"You must be pretty strong," said Willie, aged six, to the pretty young widow who had come to call on his mother.

"Strong? What makes you think so?"

"Daddy said you can wrap any man in town around your little finger."

● 406

Mother (to small son who is going to a party) — "Now, dear, what are you going to do when you've had enough to eat?"

Little Tommy — "Come home."

● 407

The teacher had been telling her pupils about the animals. "Now," she said, "name some things that are very dangerous to get near to, and have horns."

Tom — "Motor cars."

● 408

They were entertaining at dinner. Suddenly a child's voice was heard from the floor above, "Mother!"

"What is it, Archie?" she asked.

"There's only clean towels in the bathroom. Shall I start one?"

● 409

Teacher — "Willie, how do you define ignorance?"

Willie — "It's when you don't know something and somebody finds it out."

● 410

Teacher — "Johnny, can you tell me what a hypocrite is?"

Johnny — "Yes'm; it's a boy who comes to school these days with a smile on his face."

See also 60, 350, 370, 500, 553, 868, 872, 1191, 1192, 1345.

### Professional Differentiation

● 411

Young Wife — "Now, Bill, I want you to go around to the minister and arrange for having the baby christened."

Bill (shipyard worker) — "You mean to say you are going

to let somebody hit that little thing over the head with a bottle?"

● 412

*Pam* — "Hasn't Harvey ever married?"

*Beryl* — "No, and I don't think he intends to, because he's studying for a bachelor's degree."

● 413

An optimistic Kansas farmer, on seeing some clouds floating by, remarked:

"Well I guess we are going to have some rain."

"Aw!" said his pessimistic neighbour, an exrailroad man, "those are just empties coming back from Illinois."

● 414

*Judge (in dentist chair)* — "Do you swear that you will pull the tooth, the whole tooth, and nothing but the tooth?"

● 415

*Doctor (after removing his barber's appendix)* — "And now, my dear sir, how about a little liver or thyroid operation? And your tonsils need trimming terribly."

● 416

One hears a great deal about the absent-minded professors, but none more absent-minded than the dentist who said soothingly as he applied the pliers to his automobile:

"Now, this is going to hurt just a little."

See also 50, 1016, 1044, 1046, 1048, 1051, 1055—1056, 1058, 1059, 1067—1072.

### Social Differentiation

● 417

Sir Edward Carson once had to tackle a witness who was arrayed in a most gorgeous suit of clothes.

"You are a commercial traveller, I believe?" asked sir Edward.

"I ham," came the reply.

"Then, sir, you are the best dressed ham I have ever seen," said Carson.

● 418

*Teacher (to new boy)* — "What's your name, my little fellow?"

*New Boy* — "Erbert 'Arris."

*Teacher* — "Always say 'sir,' please, when you are speaking to a master. It's more polite."

*New Boy (apologetically)* — "Sir 'Erbert 'Arris."

● 419

A rookie encountered a second lieutenant. "Morning," he exclaimed pleasantly. The outraged officer launched an angry lecture on military courtesy and saluting.

"Goodness," said the rookie, "if I'd known you was agoin' to carry on like o'that, I wouldn't have spoken to you at all."

● 420

*Lady Highly (to Mrs. Woreprofit)* — "Yes, we are having a big dinner and a dance next Wednesday. You see, my daughter Joan is coming out."

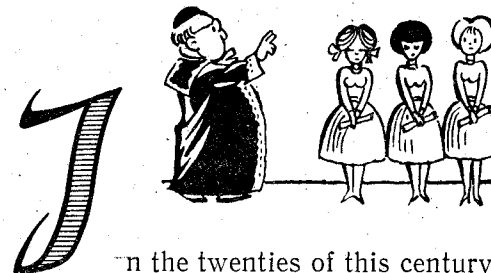
*Mrs. Woreprofit* — "I don't blame yer, makin' a fuss of the pore gal; by the way, what was she hin for?"

See also 59, 1023, 1190, 1193.

## SECTION VI

### Phonetics

*The jokes in this part of the volume, together with those to which reference is made at the end of the part, display the basic humour-evoking phonetic facts, namely an unusual, and for this reason "funny-appearing" pronunciation, the phonetically conditioned confusion of words and, also the phonetically conditioned emergence of word associations. The basic linguistic phenomenon with which most jokes of the discussed type are associated is variation in pronunciation — regional, professional, individual and otherwise. In other words, variation may belong to the linguistic competence of the speaker or to the idiosyncracies of his linguistic performance. The comparative paucity of jokes of the type exemplified below seems to indicate that linguistic humour is primarily derived from experiences of language intercourse within a given linguistic community rather than from intercommunal communication.*



● 421

In the twenties of this century it became usual in certain circles to pronounce the vowel 'O' as if it were 'U', and as this was most marked in those who had been to the older university it was known as the Oxford accent. A certain bishop who did this was giving prizes away at a Girl's High School Speech Day in the far north of England. The girls were rather puzzled when they heard him talk about the way in which they should model their lives but their burst of laughter took him aback when, dealing with leisure occupation he said, "In your spare time, girls, see that each one of you cultivates a hubby."

● 422

A party at the Zoological Gardens stood puzzled before a bird.

"It's a heagle," said one.

"It's not," said another, "it's a howl."

They appealed to a by-stander.

"Both wrong," he said shortly, "it's a nawk!"

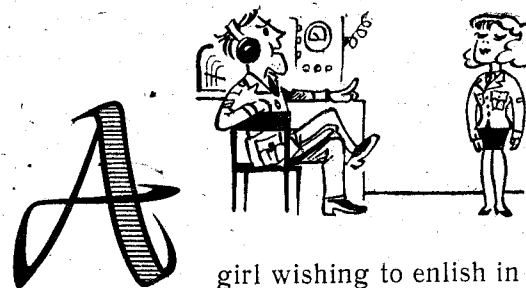
*See also 417, 869, 811, 882, 884, 901, 913, 916, 923, 943, 961, 1028, 1029, 1068, 1074, 1149, 1190, 1193, 1208, 1211, 1213, 1226, 1230, 1327, 1345, 1387, 1389, 1392, 1393, 1403, 1409.*

## SECTION VII

### Lexicon

*The material collected in this part is associated with basic word phenomena as distinguished, in particular, in a course on English lexicology (cf. sections on synonymy and antonymy, etymology, etc.). Two groups of jokes, namely those based on polysemy and homonymy, are larger than the rest, a reflection of the significant role they play in lexically based humour. The opening section and the one immediately following it are similar in that the material contained in them is associated with two fundamental properties of the word as linguistic sign, that is, its arbitrary nature and its highly abstract character. The former property accounts for the inaccessibility of the meaning of a word if only the respective succession of sounds is known, the latter, for the multitude of referents which can be designated by any one word.*

### What's in a Name?



● 423 girl wishing to enlist in the WAC to be trained as radio operator was asked: "Do you know Morse?"

"No," she replied. "But I'd like to meet him!"

● 424

Mrs. Robinson was an extremely careful mother and had repeatedly cautioned her six-year-old daughter against handling any object that might contain germs. One day the little girl came in and said:

"Mother, I am never going to play with my puppy any more, because he has germs on him."

"Oh, no!" replied her mother. "There are no germs on your puppy."

"Yes, there are," insisted the child. "I saw one hop."

● 425

In the early days of World War I the Officer in charge of a British post deep in the heart of Africa received a wireless message from his chief:

"War declared. Arrest all enemies in your district."

A few days later the chief received this communication:

"Have arrested seven Germans, three Belgians, four Spaniards, five Frenchmen, a couple of Swedes, an Argentinian, and an American. Please inform me with whom we are at war."

● 426

A witness was asked to tell what he found on the premises.

"Naught but barren nothingness, as Shakespeare says," testified the witness.

"Never mind what Shakespeare says!" commanded the court. "If he knows anything about this case he can be summoned!"

● 427

*Bill* — "Well, what did she say when you proposed to her?"

*Jim* — "I didn't propose. Before I got a chance she told me she loved Emerson, Longfellow and Poe, and what chance did I have with a girl who is in love with three other fellows."

● 428

*Freshman* — "Is he dumb? He can't even tell Galsworthy from gallstone."

*Another Frosh* — "And who was gallstone?"

● 429

Mrs. Miller found a note in her husband's coat pocket that read "Jezebel Johnson, Gramercy 7—9999." "You've been holding out on me," she accused her husband. "Exactly who is Jezebel Johnson?"

"Stop jumping to conclusions," said Mr. Miller. "Jezebel Johnson is the name of a race horse. Somebody gave me a tip on her yesterday. The phone number belongs to the bookie who placed my bet for me."

Two days later Mrs. Miller was waiting for her husband when he came home. "You'll be interested to know," she said grimly, "that your race horse called you up a few moments ago."

● 430

Mr. Becker's face lit up as he recognized the man who was walking ahead of him down the subway stairs. He clapped the man so heartily on the back that the man nearly collapsed, and cried, "Goldberg, I hardly recognized you. Why, you've gained thirty pounds since I saw you last, and you've had your nose fixed, and I swear you are about two feet taller." The man looked at him angrily. "I beg your pardon," he said in icy tones, "but I do not happen to be Goldberg."

"Aha," said Mr. Becker. "You've even changed your name."

● 431

*School Superintendent (cross-questioning the terrified class)* — "And now I want you boys to tell me who wrote 'Hamlet.'"

*Frightened Boy* — "P-p-please, sir, it — it wasn't me."

That same evening the superintendent was talking to his host, the squire of the village. The superintendent said:

"Most amusing thing happened to-day. I was questioning the class over at the school, and I asked a boy who wrote 'Hamlet'. He answered tearfully, 'P-p-please, sir, it wasn't me.'"

After loud and prolonged laughter, the squire said:

"That's pretty good, and I suppose the little rascal had done it all the time!"

● 432

An elderly man of convivial habits, but also bookish, was haled before the bar of justice in a small country town.

"Ye're charged with bein' drunk and disorderly," snapped the magistrate. "Have ye anything to say why sentence should not be pronounced?"

"Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn," began the prisoner, in a flight of oratory. "I am not so debased as Poe, so profligate as Byron, as ungrateful as Keats, so intemperate as Burns, so timid as Tennyson, so vulgar as Shakespeare, so —"

"That'll do," interrupted the magistrate. "Seven days. And, Officer, take down that list of names he mentioned and round 'em up. I think they're as bad as he is."

● 433

An itinerant musician was stranded in a village one Sunday morning, and as he was playing his cornet in the street, he was approached by the clergyman of the parish, who said, "Do you know the Fourth Commandment, my good man?"

"No," he replied, "but if you will just whistle it over, I'll do my best."

● 434

It is an interesting thought that if the Lords Cardigan and Sandwich had each borne the other's name we might today have been wearing sandwiches and eating cardigans!

● 435

"Tommy, didn't I tell you not to play with your tin soldiers on Sunday?"

"Yes, mummie, but it doesn't matter as I call them the Salvation Army."

● 436

*1st lady* — "My husband wired me from Paris on my birthday asking whether he should buy me a Rembrandt or a Titian. Now which would you have?"

*2nd lady* — "Well, as far as that goes, any of those French cars are pretty good."

See also 360, 391, 404.

### Multiplicity of Referential Connections

● 437

A gentleman was much surprised when the good-looking young lady greeted him by saying, "Good evening." He could not remember ever having seen her before.

She evidently realized that she had made a mistake, for she apologized, and explained:

"Oh, I'm so sorry. When I first saw you I thought you were the father of two of my children."

She walked on while the man stared after her. She did not realize, of course, that he was unaware of the fact that she was a school teacher.

● 438

*Judge* — "You stole eggs from this man's store. Have you any excuse?"

*Accused* — "Yes, I took them by mistake."

*Judge* — "How is that?"

*Accused* — "I thought they were fresh."

● 439

Old Mose received an anonymous letter one day which contained a single sentence: "If you don't stop stealing my chickens, I'm gonna cut out your gizzard." Mose was so bothered that he consulted the local constable, who laughed, and said, "Well, all you've got to do is stop stealing the chickens." "You don't seem to understand," said Mose. "Dis letter am unanimous. Whose chickens is I supposed to stop stealin'?"

● 440

"You say that I am the first model you ever kissed?"

"Yes."

"And how many models have you had before me?"

"Four. An apple, two oranges, and a vase of flowers."

● 441

A man caught a boy in his garden stealing apples, and handed him to the police.

As it was the boy's first offence, the judge let him off, but told him never to yield to such temptation again, adding: "You have flown from the evil one."

"So I did, sir," replied the boy, "but he caught me before I got over the fence!"

● 442

One of Picasso's greatest creations is "Guernica", inspired by the bombing of the little Basque port of Guernica by nazi bombers in 1937. His most powerfully angry work, it expresses the horrors of the massacre in apocalyptic images.

During the German occupation of Paris in the early 1940s, a German officer to whom he gave a postcard reproduction of "Guernica" asked him: "Did you do this?"

"No," Picasso replied, "you did." (Peter Avis)

● 443

The owner of a large business concern bought a number of signs reading, "Do It Now," and had them hung around the office, hoping to inspire his people with promptness and energy in their work. In his private office one day soon afterward a friend asked him how the scheme affected the staff. "Well, not just the way I thought it would," answered the proprietor. "The cashier skipped with thirty thousand dollars, the head book-keeper eloped with the private secretary, three clerks asked for an increase of salary, and the office boy lit out to become a bandit."

● 444

"I painted something for last year's academy."

"Was it hung?"

"Yes, near the entrance where everybody could see it."

"Congratulations! What was it?"

"A board saying, 'Keep to the left!'"

● 445

When Napoleon III made a triumphal entry into Bordeaux soon after the coup d'état, it was arranged that from an arch of flowers under which he was to pass an imperial crown should hang, surmounted by the words "He well deserves it." But the wind blew away the crown, and when the emperor passed under the arch, to the great joy of



the Republicans only a rope with a noose at the end of it dangled there, with "He well deserves it" standing out in bold relief above it!

● 446

*Lawyer* — "You say you saw the man stabbed in the hay-field with a fork. What kind of a fork?"

*Witness* — "Well, did you ever see a tuning-fork or an oyster-fork in a hay-field?"

● 447

A woman was testifying in behalf of her son, "that he had worked on a farm ever since he was born." The lawyer, who cross-examined her, said:

"You assert that your son worked on a farm ever since he was born?"

"I do."

"What did he do the first year?"

"He milked!"

● 448

*Newsboy* — "Great mystery! Fifty victims! Paper, mister?"

*Passer-by* — "Here, boy, I'll take one." (*After reading a moment*). "Say, boy, there's nothing of the kind in this paper. Where is it?"

*Newsboy* — "That's the mystery, guv'nor. You're the fifty-first victim."

● 449

"Why did you throw the pot of geraniums at the plaintiff?"

"Because of an advertisement, your honour."

"What advertisement?"

"Say it with flowers."

● 450

A friend asked George Jessel, "How's your Ma?" "Terrible," said George. "She's got chronic frontal sinusitis." "Good Lord, where did she get that?" "From Reader's Digest. She read about it last month."

● 451

*Manager* — "The lady 'olds the lump of sugar between 'er lips, and the lion will take it between 'is teeth. Now, I offer a thousand pounds to any member of the audience who will perform this trick!"

*Voice (from the crowd)* — "Righto, 'guv'nor, I'm on. Just take that there lion away!"

● 452

An American decided to take advantage of the nuclear war psychosis in his country to keep trespassers away from his estate. He displayed warning signs everywhere.

"Danger! Exposed Personnel Risk Radiation." These signs had a great effect. Visitors kept far away from the place. Some time later a team of radiological experts arrived with Geiger counters which showed a complete absence of any radiation.

"What do you mean by these signs?" the man was asked.

"Sun radiation, of course. You'll get sunburnt if you walk stripped in this area."

● 453

"What would I get," inquired the man who had just insured his property against fire, "if this building should burn down tonight?" "I would say," replied the insurance-agent, "about ten years."

● 454

*Mrs. Littleton* — "This magazine looks rather the worse for wear."

*Mrs. Neartown* — "Yes, it's the one I sometimes lend to the servant on Sundays."

*Mrs. Littleton* — "Doesn't she get tired of always reading the same one?"

*Mrs. Neartown* — "Oh, no. You see, it's the same book, but it's always a different servant."

● 455

A barber got converted one Sunday, so he thought it his duty to speak to all who came into his shop in future about religion. Now, the barber was a very fluent speaker on most topics, but when it came to religion he hardly knew how to begin. One morning a Mr. Jones came to be shaved. The barber began to shave him. All at once he said:

"Mr. Jones."

Mr. Jones looked up, and was so startled that he got the brush in his mouth.

"Mr. Jones," repeated the barber; but still he could get no further with his speech. The barber then walked up to the strap which was hung on the wall, and began to rub the razor backwards and forwards on it.

"Mr. Jones," said he. "Mr. Jones, are you prepared to die?"

It is said that Mr. Jones jumped out of the window.

● 456

"Well, Tommy, how are you getting on at school?"

"First-rate. I ain't doing so well as some of the other boys, though I can stand on my head; but I have to put my feet against the wall. I want to do it without the wall at all!"



● 457

"Have you any explanation for wandering about at this time of the night?" asked the policeman.

"Look here," replied the man, "if I had an explanation I'd have gone home to my wife long ago."

● 458

"What did you have at the first saloon you shopped?" asked a lawyer of a witness in an assault and battery case.

"What did we have? Four glasses of beer, sir."

"What next?"

"Two glasses of whisky."

"Next?"

"One glass of brandy."

"Next?"

"A fight".

● 459

A man in the pit at the theatre was annoyed by continual conversation in the row behind.

"Excuse me," he said, "but we can't hear a word that's being said."

"Oh," replied the talkative one, indignantly. "And is it any business of yours what I'm telling my wife?"

● 460

*Businessman (who had got on in life)* — "Yes, when I first came to New York I had only a dollar in my pocket with which to make a start."

*Interviewer* — "How did you invest that dollar?"

*Businessman* — "Used it to pay for a telegram home for more money."

● 461

"Mamma, do pigs have babies?"

"Why of course, my dear."

"Someone told me they had little pigs."

● 462

"I can't imagine," said an indignant lady to an alienist, "why my family has insisted upon dragging me to see you. What's wrong with loving pancakes?"

"Nothing at all," agreed the alienist, rather surprised. "I like pancakes myself."

"Goody, goody," said the lady. "You must come up to my house and let me show you my collection. I've got trunks and trunks full of them."

● 463

"Is it true that you are a suitor for my daughter's hand?" asked a matchmaking mother.

"Yes, but I didn't," replied the wag.

"Didn't what?"

"Suit her."

● 464

Joe Hopplins was bragging about his deeds of valour to his friends at home. "Telling about my war experiences I shall, of course, mention that operation when some other doughboys and me made five enemy tanks run."

"How did you manage that brave deed, Joe?"

"Oh, it was very simple. We ran and they ran after us."

● 465

*Bride's father to groom* — "My boy, you're the second happiest man in the world."

● 466

On Finnegan's first day as a regular on the police force, the lieutenant told him, "Finnegan, I'm giving you an

easy beat to start with — just from the station house to that red light and back." Finnegan disappeared for two days. "Where the devil were you?" roared the lieutenant. "Didn't I tell you your beat was just from here to that red light?" "You did," agreed Finnegan, "but that red light was on the back of a truck."

● 467

*Prof.* — "Can you tell me anything about the great chemists of the 17th century?"

*Stude* — "They are all dead, sir."

● 468

At an evening party, a self-made business man was chatting with a pretty young woman.

"You know, I sometimes feel ashamed of my failure to keep abreast of modern science," he said. "Take the electric light, for example. I must confess I haven't the least idea how it works."

The pretty young thing gave him a patronizing smile.

"Why, it's very simple, really," she replied. "You just turn a switch and the light comes on. That's all there is to it."

● 469

The tramp, brought into court charged with vagrancy, replied to the magistrate's questioning.

"My God! I ain't had no chance to git a damn' job."

"Here! Here! What kind of language is that to use in a court room!" exclaimed the bailiff, springing to his feet. "For one thing you used a double negative, and besides that you're old enough to know that 'ain't' is incorrect."

● 470

*Preceptor (after a lecture)* — "Now, what are the principal things that are obtained from the earth?"

*Pupil (and "disciple of Izaak Walton")* — "Worms, sir!"

● 471

Somebody asked a college professor how science helped business, and he replied, "What would the suspender business amount to without the law of gravitation?"

● 472

*Teacher* — "What do we get from sheep?"

*Boy* — "Wool."

*Teacher* — "And what do we make from wool?"

*Boy* — "I don't know."

*Teacher* — "Well, what is your coat made of?"

*Boy* — "My coat was made from father's old coat".

● 473

A psychiatrist board was testing the mentality of a soldier.

"Private Dean, do you ever hear voices without being able to tell who is speaking or where the voices come from?"

"Yes, sir."

"And when does this occur?"

"When I answer the telephone."

● 474

An advertising agency was having a long and tedious consultation with its latest customers, a distillery combine. At last the agency men were cheered by one of the clients saying, "Have you sampled our products? This one's our best Scotch. Has anyone a corkscrew?"

Fourteen pairs of eyes sparkled. Six corkscrews were produced.

The distillery man selected one, expertly removed the cork from the bottle and said authoritatively: "The proper way to sample liquor is to wet your finger with a couple of drops, then place the finger on the underside of the tongue."

● 475

"Darling," she said, "when we are married you'll have a woman in the house who really knows how to cook."

"Well," said darling, "that's pleasant news. I didn't know that you were expert in the cooking line."

"I'm not," she replied, "but when we are married mother is coming to live with us."

● 476

*Sandy* — "I want a cheap coat hanger."

*Assistant* — "Yes, sir, twopence."

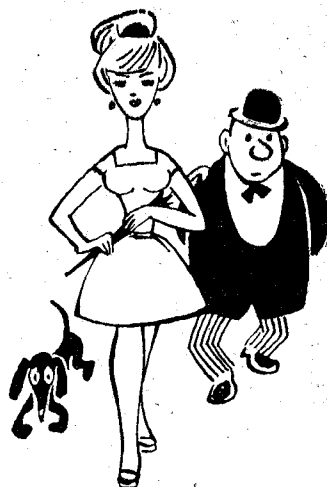
*Sandy* — "Twopence! Is there nothing cheaper?"

*Assistant* — "Yes, sir, a nail."

● 477

"That's Mrs. Fitz-Jones. You never see her without her husband and her Dachshund."

"Well, they make a very good pair."



● 478

The parents of a bright little boy were having him "show off" to a visitor.

"I suppose he has learned his letters?" said the visitor.

"Oh, yes."

"What is the first letter of the alphabet, Bobby?" the visitor inquired.

"A," said Bobby.

"Very good; and what comes after A?"

"All the rest of them," was Bobby's reply.

● 479

*Father* — "That young man of yours stays very late. Doesn't he know how to say good night?"

*Daughter* — "Oh, yes, Dad, better than any other boy I ever knew."

● 480

*Professor* — "Time is money: how do you prove it?"

*Student* — "Well, if you give twenty-five cents to a couple of people, that is a quarter to two."

● 481

The Lord Chancellor said he had heard of a man who lost his way when motoring in the country-side. On seeing a labourer at work on the roadside he pulled up and called to him: "I say, can you tell me where I am?"

After a pause the man replied, "Why, I reckon you be a sittin' in your car."

142

"The perfect Parliamentary answer," commented the Lord Chancellor: "brief, truthful, and adding nothing to what was already known."

● 482

"I knew an artist once who painted a cobweb on the ceiling so realistically that the maid spent hours trying to get it down."

"Sorry, dear, I just don't believe it."

"Why not? Artists have been known to do such things."

"Yes, but not maids!"

● 483

*First Salesman* — "Any business?"

*Second Salesman* — "Well — yes. The wife gave me some orders this morning."

● 484

"You say your son plays the piano like Paderewski?"

"Yes. He uses both hands."

● 485

A man came up, in his curiosity, to the bell-ringer of an Irish church in a rundown neighbourhood. "Can you tell me, my man, why the bell is ringing?"

"Yis, Oi kin that," returned the Irishman promptly. "It's because I'm a-pullin' of the rope, sor."

● 486

The maid had been to the pictures, and on her return her employer asked, "Did you enjoy it?"

"Oh, yes," said she. "It was lovely, Mum!"

"And what was the picture?"

The maid thought for a moment, then said: "I don't know, Mum... I went with my young man!"

● 487

It is said that Rosina Wheeler, wife of the first Lord Lytton, scored off Mrs. Disraeli on one occasion with remarkably dry humour. At dinner the conversation had turned on Dean Swift, and when the ladies retired, Mrs. Disraeli said: "Who is this Dean Swift, Rosina? Can I ask him to my parties?"

"Hardly so, my dear."

"Why not, Rosina?"

"Well, some years ago he did a thing which effectually prevented him from ever appearing in society again."

143

"Good gracious," exclaimed Mrs. Disraeli, "whatever was that?"

"He died."

● 488

"Did you have any luck hunting tigers in India?"

"Marvellous luck. Didn't come across a single tiger."

● 489

*Mistress* — "Now, Matilda, I want you to show us what you can do tonight. We have a few very special friends coming for a musical evening."

*Maid* — "Well, ma'am, I ain't done no singin' to speak of for years, but if you-all insists upon it, you can put me down for 'The Holy City.'"

● 490

The pompous judge glared sternly over his spectacles at the tattered prisoner who had been dragged before the bar of justice on a charge of vagrancy.

"Have you ever earned a dollar in your life?" he asked in scorn.

"Yes, your honor," was the response. "I voted for you at the last election."

● 491

"You know Fatty Johnson, the butcher. What do you suppose he weighs?"

"I don't know, what does he weigh?"

"Meat."

● 492

"Do you know, I started in life as a barefooted boy?"

"Well, I wasn't born with shoes on."

● 493

The sergeant was trying to train an awkward squad of rookies on the unit drill ground.

"Shun! About turn!" he roared. Then, as he viewed the hopeless mix-up, he went on, "As you were!"

Most of the rookies shuffled into the last position, but Williams stood still, looking vacantly ahead.

"I 'eard, sarge," replied Williams unhappily, "but 'ow were I?"

● 494

*Policeman (calling up precinct)* — "A man has been robbed down here, and I've got one of them."

*Chief* — "Which one have you?"

*Policeman* — "The man that was robbed."

● 495

An Episcopal clergyman was being shaved by a barber who was addicted to occasional sprees. There was an unmistakable odour of whisky around the barber's face; and the razor suddenly cut the parson's face decidedly.

"You see, that comes from taking too much drink," said the clergyman.

"You right," agreed the barber. "Drink makes skin tender."

● 496

The blacksmith was instructing a novice in the way to treat a horseshoe.

"I'll bring the shoe from the fire and lay it on the anvil. When I nod my head you hit it with this hammer."

The apprentice did exactly as he was told, but he'll never hit a blacksmith again!

● 497

The judge with his cane at the prisoner before him. "There's a great rogue at the end of this stick."

The prisoner smirked, "At which end, Your Honour?"

● 498

A boastful Englishman was holding forth on the merits of his watch to friends in New York City. At last one of the Americans decided he could stand it no longer.

"That's nothing," he interrupted. "I dropped my watch into the Hudson a year ago, and it's been running ever since."

The Englishman looked taken aback.

"What!" he exclaimed, "the same watch?"

"No," he replied, "the Hudson."

● 499

A manufacturer said they were running about fifty-fifty — an order in the morning, a cancellation in the afternoon.

*See also* 44, 59, 74, 78, 93, 115, 159—168, 170, 171, 173, 174, 179, 180, 182, 185, 210, 215, 242, 276, 387, 406, 502, 503, 509, 512, 533, 551, 576, 581, 605, 651, 682, 688, 750, 770, 816, 871, 885, 1044, 1050, 1106, 1119, 1270, 1271, 1278, 1279, 1281—1283, 1285, 1286, 1288, 1290—1293, 1310, 1326, 1385, 1412.

## Polysemy

● 500

"Papa, what kind of a robber is a page?"

"A what?"

"It says here that two pages held up the bride's train."

● 501

*Small Boy* — "I say, dad, teacher said this morning that the law of gravity kept us on the earth. Is that right?"

*Father* — "Yes, my boy, that is correct."

*Small Boy* — "Well, how did we get on before that law passed?"

● 502

*Teacher* — "Tell me something about oysters, Johnny."

*Johnny* — "They are very lazy. They are always found in beds."

● 503

The dizzy blonde snuggled up to her escort. "How about giving me a diamond bracelet?" she breathed into his ear.

"My dear," replied her companion slowly, "extenuating circumstances coerce me to preclude you from such a bauble of extravagance."

"I don't get it," said the girl.

"That's just what I said," was the reply.

● 504

"Any big men born round here?" a tourist asked in a condescending tone.

"No," responded the native. "Best we can do is babies. Different in the city, I suppose."

● 505

On holiday from school, I had been making the rounds of London business houses one day vainly looking for a summer job. Finally I decided to tackle just one more establishment, and really sell myself. I proceeded to enact the part of a live wire — oozed confidence and vitality, talked fast and assuredly, then searched my mind for a final punch line. "In short," I concluded, "do you have an opening for an enterprising young man?"

"Yes, young man, I have," said the manager wearily, "and close it gently as you go out!"

(Paul C. Amis)

● 506

*Betty* — "Oh, Archibald, you're too slow."

*Archie* — "I'm afraid I don't grasp you."

*Betty* — "Yes, that's just it."

● 507

Apparently some doctors take life very easily.

● 508

How can you make a tall man short?

Borrow ten dollars of him.

● 509

A clergyman was preaching on the subject of future punishment. "Yes, my brethren," said he, "there is a hell, but —" (*drawing out his watch and looking at it*) "we shall not go into that just now."

● 510

While waiting in line at the space flight station ticket window, a man asks for a seat in a spaceship on the flight to the moon.

"Sorry, sir," the attendant says, "but all passenger flights have been cancelled for the next few days."

"Oh," said the man. "How come?"

"Well, the moon is full right now."

● 511

"Have you heard my last speech?" asked a political harranguer of a wit.

"I sincerely hope so," was the reply.

● 512

Little six-year-old Harry was asked by his Sunday-school teacher:

"And, Harry, what are you going to give your darling little brother for Christmas this year?"

"I dunno," said Harry; "I gave him the measles last year."

● 513

An American who was taken to Lord's by his English host asked him to explain what 'Gentlemen v Players' on the fixture list meant.

"Actually," said the Londoner, "it's our way of saying Amateurs v Professionals."

When they were leaving the American noticed the sign 'Gentlemen' at various points round the ground. "Tell me," he said, "what do the professionals do?"

● 514

"I hope you are not afraid of microbes," apologized the paying teller as he cashed the schoolteacher's check with soiled currency.

"Don't worry," said the young lady, "a microbe couldn't live on my salary."

● 515

It was the first day of a new term, and the teacher asked a small girl in her class — a new pupil — what her father's name was.

"Daddy," replied the child.

"Yes, I know," said the teacher. "But what does your mother call him?"

"She doesn't call him anything," was the quick answer. "She likes him."

● 516

The schoolmistress was giving her class of young pupils a test on a recent natural history lesson.

"Now, Bobby Jones," she said, "tell me where the elephant is found."

The boy hesitated for a moment; then his face lit up.

"The elephant, teacher," he said. "is such a large animal that it is scarcely ever lost."

● 517

Sam — "Mamma bought me a pair of gloves yesterday."

Auntie — "Really! What are they? Kids?"

Sam — "No, they're men's."

● 518

"I was sorry to hear ye were in a free-for-all fight, Patrick."

"Free for all, ye're sayin'? Maybe free for some, but not for me. Faith, an' it's ten dollars an' costs it cost me at court."

● 519

*Sergeant (to cavalry recruit)* — "You have improved your riding lately."

*Recruit (looking up at a horse)* — "On the contrary, I would say that I've fallen of quite a bit."

● 520

"Here, boy," said the man to the boy who was helping him drive a bunch of cattle, "hold this bull a minute, will you?"

"No," answered the boy, "I don't mind bein' a director in this company, but I'm darned if I want to be a stockholder."

● 521

When the Earl of Bradford was brought before the Lord Chancellor to be examined on the application for a statute of lunacy against him, the question was asked him from the woosack.

"How many feet has a sheep?"

"Does your lordship," answered Lord Bradford, "mean a live sheep, or a dead sheep?"

"Is it not the same thing?" said the Chancellor.

"No, my lord," returned Lord Bradford. "There is much difference; a live sheep may have four legs, a dead sheep has only two; the two forelegs are shoulders, but there are only two legs of mutton!"

● 522

An Englishman on a visit to the West decided to go horse-back riding. The cowboy who was to attend him asked: "Do you prefer an English saddle or a Western?"

"What's the difference?" he asked.

"The Western saddle has a horn," replied the attendant.

"I don't think I'll need the horn," said the Englishman. "I don't intend to ride in heavy traffic."

● 523

The ardent swain, picking a bouquet of wildflowers for his loved one, was disconcerted to find himself, suddenly, in the same field with a large bull of unfriendly appearance which, gazing at him steadily, pawed the ground in a threatening manner. The young man spying a farmer on the other side of a fairly distant fence, shouted, "Hey, mister is that bull safe?" The farmer surveyed the situation with critical eye, spat to one side and called back, "He's safe as anything." He spat again, and added, "Can't say the same about you, though."

● 524

The pupil was asked to paraphrase the sentence: "He was bent on seeing her."

He wrote: "The sight of her doubled him up."

● 525

"There's nothing like cheerfulness. I admire anyone who sings at his work."

"How you must love a mosquito!"

● 526

The new maid was full of her own importance. She had worked on the Continent and felt superior to the other servants.

One day she was telling "below stairs" some of her experiences.

"How do the foreign dishes compare to English ones?" asked one of her audience.

"Oh," replied the maid, airily, "they break just the same."

● 527

"I had a fall last night which rendered me unconscious for several hours."

"You don't mean it? Where did you fall?"

"I fell asleep."

● 528

A little man was ushered into the witness-box. After the usual preliminaries, the magistrate told him to tell the court what happened.

The man began in rambling narrative and finally ended up with:

"And then my wife hit me on the head with an oak leaf."

"Well, that couldn't have hurt you, surely," said the magistrate.

"Oh, couldn't it?" replied the little man, with feeling. "It was the oak leaf from the centre of the dining-room table."

● 529

*Professor* — "You missed my class yesterday, didn't you?"  
*Unsubdued Student* — "Not in the least, sir, not in the least."

● 530

During a lecture on gunnery the sergeant instructor described some mysteries of exterior ballistics to a group of green trainees.

"When the gun is fired the projectile doesn't fly along

a straight line over the ground but describes a curved trajectory because of the gravitation of the Earth."

One of the trainees asked a question: "And what happens if the projectile flies over sea?"

"Such things do not concern the Army," answered the sergeant, obviously puzzled. "It's naval gunnery."

● 531

"Pa, what branches did you take when you went to school?"

"I never went to high school, son, but when I attended the little log school-house they used mostly hickory and beech and willow."

● 532

"Hello, Bill, I hear you have a new youngster at your house," said his employer.

The new father glanced around the office apprehensively. "For Heaven's sake, you can't hear him 'way up here, can you?"

● 533

A Scottish minister was on his usual rounds when he came across one of his old friends. "And how has the world been treating you, Jock?" asked the minister.

"Very seldom!" replied Jock sadly.

● 534

The young lady went into a photographer's studio and, producing a small snap of her boy friend in the Marine uniform, said, "I want this enlarged."

"Certainly, Miss," said the assistant, "and would you like it mounted?"

"Oh, yes, please," said the young lady, "he'll look nice on a horse."

● 535

A flying cadet was asked: "How is your flying training? One of those trial- and error things?"

"Just the opposite. First came the error, then the trial."

● 536

"Hello!" exclaimed Jenkins, as he met his friend Jones. "You're looking a bit off colour. Anything wrong?"

"I'm afraid there is," replied Jones. "I've had to give up drinking, smoking, and gambling."



"Well, I must say that's all to your credit," commended Jenkins.

"Oh, no, it isn't!" snapped Jones. "It's due to my lack of credit."

● 537

"What, your son is an undertaker? I thought you said he was a doctor?"

"No, I said he followed the medical profession."

● 538

After a terrible explosion at an ammunition plant an investigation was initiated. "What caused that explosion?" asked the investigator.

"One of the men of this powder mill struck a match."

"Struck, a match," exclaimed the amazed investigator. "I'd think that would be the last thing on earth he'd do."

"It was, sir," said the eyewitness.

● 539

A retired colonel had been advised by his doctor that if he did not give up whisky it would shorten his life.

"Think so?" asked the colonel.

"I am sure of it, colonel. If you stop drinking I am sure it will prolong your days."

"Come to think of it, I believe you are right about that, Doctor," said the colonel. "I went twenty-four hours without a drink six months ago, and I never put in such a long in my life."

● 540

*Frosh* — "I woke up last night with the feeling that my watch was gone, so I got up and looked for it."

*Soph* — "Well, was it gone?"

*Frosh* — "No, it was going."

● 541

*Teacher* — "What is the meaning of the word matrimony?"

*Willie* — "Father says it isn't a word, it's a sentence."

● 542

A girl was to visit her serviceman brother at a military hospital. While stopping at the desk of the officer of the day for directions to the patient's ward she asked: "Would you kindly tell me where the powder room is."

"Miss," the corpsman on duty replied with dignity, "this is a hospital, not an arsenal!"

● 543

*Sunday-School Teacher (to pupil)* — "Now, my little man, can you explain the cause of Adam's fall?"

*Little Man (emphatically)* — "Yes, sir; 'cause he hadn't any ashes to throw on the sidewalk."

● 544

An elderly lady of very prim and severe aspect was seated next a young couple, who were discussing the merits of their motor cars.

"What colour is your body?" asked the young man of the girl at his side, meaning of course, the body of her motor-car.

"Oh, mine is pink. What is yours?"

"Mine," replied the man, "is brown."

This was too much for the old lady. Rising from the table, she exclaimed:

"When young people come to asking each other the colour of their bodies at a dinner-party, it is time I left the room."

● 545

Two camera addicts were draped over a bar in Paris, one telling the other of an experience he had had that morning.

In the Bois de Boulogne he had noticed an old crone huddled beneath a bundle of rags. Hungry and homeless, she told him the heart-breaking story of her life. Once a countess, and beautiful she had been the toast of the Continent. But step by step she had lost everything and was now a wretched old woman with nothing to live for.

"The poor thing," said the other photographer. What did you give her?"

"Well, it was sunny," said the first photographer, "so I gave her f/11 at 1/100."

● 546

a

"Did your watch stop when it hit the floor?"

"Sure, did you think it would go on through?"

b

*Mary* — "Please, madam, I've knocked the marble clock off the side-board."

*Madam* — "Has it stopped?"

Mary — "No, madam, it's gone straight through to the basement."

● 547

A lawyer was arguing a complicated case, and looked up authorities back to Julius Caesar. At the end of an hour and a half, in the most intricate part of his plea, he was pained to see what looked like inattention. It was as he had feared. The judge was unable to appreciate the nice points of his argument.

"Your honour," he said, "I beg your pardon; but do you follow me?"

"I have so far," answered the judge, shifting wearily about in his chair, "but I'll say frankly that if I thought I could find my way back, I'd quit right here."

● 548

"Does your wife support you?"

"No, but she holds me up every pay-day."

● 549

Old Gent — "Is it a board school you go to, my dear?"

Child — "No, sir. I believe it be a brick one!"

● 550

"I don't like the way the fish are biting!"



● 551

"My brother is working with 5000 men under him."

"Where?"

"Mowing lawns in a cemetery."

● 552

Boss — "Simpkins, you've been drinking again. Now once and for all let me tell you that I'll do all the drinking that's done around here."

Simpkins — "You can't, sir. It would kill you in a week."

● 553

Kitty — "Is you wound sore, Mr. Pup?"

Mr. Pup — "Wound! What wound?"

Kitty — "Why, sister said she cut you at the dinner last night!"

● 554

While a judge was trying a case he was disturbed by a young man in the rear of the room lifting chairs and looking under things.

"Young man," said the judge, "what's all the noise about?"

"Your honour," replied the young man, "I've lost my overcoat, and I'm trying to find it."

"Well," said the judge, "people often lose whole suits in here without making all that disturbance."

● 555

"Isn't Doctor Blank your throat doctor?"

"I thought he was until he sent me his bill. He's a skin specialist."

● 556

"It is hard, indeed," said the melancholy gentleman, "to lose one's relatives."

"Hard?" snorted the gentleman of wealth. "Hard? It is impossible!"

● 557

Magistrate — "What is the man charged with?"

Constable — "He is a camera fiend of the worst kind, sir."

Magistrate — "But he shouldn't have been arrested just because he has a mania for taking pictures."

Constable — "It isn't that, sir — he takes the cameras."

● 558

The weather forecaster hadn't been right in three months, and his resignation caused little surprise. His alibi, however, pleased the city council. "I can't stand this town any longer," read his note. "The climate doesn't agree with me."

● 559

*Teacher* — "Well, how stupid you are, to be sure! Can't multiply eighty-eight by twenty-five! I'll wager that Charles can do it in less than no time."

*Abused Pupil* — "I shouldn't be surprised. They say that fools multiply very rapidly these days."

● 560

*Committee*: body that keeps minutes and wastes hours.

● 561

*Captain* — "What are you scratching your head for, private Honeywell?"

*Draftee* — "Guess ah got 'rithmetic bugs."

*Captain* — "What are arithmetic bugs?"

*Draftee* — "Cooties."

*Captain* — "Why do you call them arithmetic bugs?"

*Draftee* — "Because they add to mah misery, subtract from mah pleasure, divide mah attenshun, and multiply like the dickens."

● 562

*First Freshman in Math Exam* — "How far are you from the correct answer?"

*Second Freshman in Math Exam* — "Two seats".

● 563

Don't jump to conclusions — you might get a nasty fall.

● 564

One morning I left my husband in our hotel room and went shopping. When I returned I got out of the elevator at the wrong floor. Stopping at the door of what I assumed to be our room I knocked and said softly, "Honey! Oh, honey!"

There was no response, so I knocked again. "Honey," I called. "Honey, it's me. Let me in, honey." At this, an exasperated male voice said, "Madam, this is a bath-room — not a beehive!"

(Hilda Seeney)

● 565

There lives one ham actor who is still burning at a Chicago critic's notice of his performance as King Richard the Third. "Mr. So-and-so played the king as if he were afraid someone else might play the ace."

● 566

An Irishman was asked if his horse was timid. "Not at all," said he, "he frequently spends the night by himself in a dark stable."

● 567

"Why is a clock like a vain, pretty young lady?"

"I fail to see any resemblance. Why?"

"Because it's all face and figure, has no head to speak of, is very hard to stop after it is wound up, and has a striking way of calling attention to itself every hour of the day."

● 568

*He (in telephone booth)* — "I want a box for two."

*Voice (at the other end)* — "Sorry, but we don't have boxes for two."

*He* — "But aren't you the box office of the theater?"

*Voice* — "No, we are the undertakers."

● 569

"What model is his car?"

"It's not a model; it's a horrible example."

● 570

A fellow in our office told us recently of a household incident of which he had been an innocent but perplexed spectator. Our friend had called a Venetian-blind repairman to come pick up a faulty blind, and the next morning, while the family was seated at the breakfast table, the doorbell rang. Our friend's wife went to the door, and the man outside said, "I'm here for the Venetian blind." Excusing herself in a preoccupied way, the wife went to the kitchen, fished a dollar from the food money, pressed it into the repairman's hand, then gently closed the door, and returned to the table. "Somebody collecting," she explained, pouring the coffee.

(Caskie Stinnett in *Speaking of Holiday*)

● 571

"I've just been having a tussle with the dentist."

"Which beat?"

"It ended in a draw."

● 572

A countryman started off to the city on a train. There was a sheriff across the aisle and a man in handcuffs.

"What's wrong with him?" he asked.

"Bugs," said the sheriff, pointing to the prisoner's head. "He's crazy."

"Bugs in his head and his hand handcuffed," said the man. "No wonder he's crazy!"

● 573

*Booking Clerk (at small village station)* — "You'll have to change twice before you get to York."

*Villager (unused to travelling)* — "Goodness me! And I've only brought the clothes I be standing up in!"

● 574

The successful man was lecturing to an admiring audience.

"I must say," he concluded, "that I owe everything I have to my wife."

"Hey," shouted a tradesman at the back of the hall, "you're not forgetting my bill, are yer?"

● 575

"I see there is a plan to tax the barbers \$1 each annually, won't it work a hardship on them?"

"They can easily scrape up the money."

● 576

A patient complained to the doctor that his hair was coming out.

"Won't you give me something to keep it in?" he begged.

"Take this," the doctor said kindly, and he handed the patient a pill box.

● 577

*First Kangaroo* — "Annabelle, where's the baby?"

*Second Kangaroo* — "My goodness, I've had my pocket picked."

● 578

*Tourist* — "Was that one of your prominent citizens? I noticed you were very respectful and attentive to him."

*Garage Man* — "Yes, he's one of our early settlers."

"Early settler? Why he's quite a young man yet."

"True enough. I mean he pays his bills the first of every month."

● 579

On the first night of a new production, Oscar Hammerstein was heard to observe that a play is like a cigar.

"How's that?" asked a friend.

"Well," was the ex-cigarmaker's explanation, "if it's good, everybody wants a box, if it's bad, no amount of puffing will make it draw."

● 580

*Proctor (exceedingly angry)* — "So you confess that this unfortunate Freshman was carried to this frog pond and drenched? Now what part did you take in this disgraceful affair?"

*Sophomore (meekly)* — "The right leg, sir."

● 581

*Professor* — "If you were in Africa and saw a lion coming, what steps would you take?"

*Student* — "The longest steps I could!"

● 582

"Cup o' tea, weak," said a customer at a London coffee stall. When the decoction was brought to him he eyed it critically.

"Well, what's wrong with it? You said weak, didn't you?"

"Weak, yes," was the reply, "but not 'elpless."

● 583

"Statistics show that the eyesight of boys is superior to that of girls."

"Yen! I know. I fell for a girl last summer who can't see me at all."

● 584

*Jane* — "How old are you?"

*Joan* — "I've just turned twenty-three."

*Jane* — "Oh, I see — thirty-two."

● 585

*Patron* — "Do you serve fish here?"

*Waiter* — "Certainly, we cater to everyone."

● 586

*Recruit* — "Shall I mark time with my feet, sir?"

*Lieutenant (sarcastically)* — "My dear fellow, did you ever hear of marking time with your hands?"

*Recruit* — "Yes, sir! Clocks do it."

● 587

"I got a real kick of kissing Jane, last night."

"Any more than usual?"

"Yea, the old man caught me."

● 588

"What is your brother in college?"

"A half back."

"I mean in studies."

"Oh, in studies he's away back."

● 589

What is that which has eyes yet never sees?

(A potato)

● 590

"Don't you find writing a thankless job?"

"On the contrary, everything I write is returned to me with thanks."

● 591

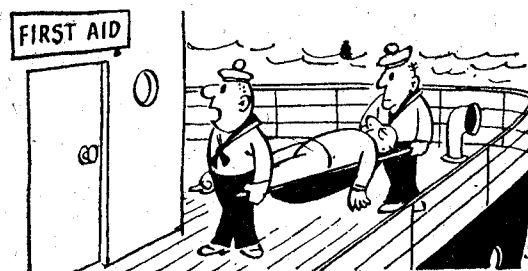
At one time J. M. Barrie attended a rehearsal accompanied by a friend, at which a lively discussion arose between two of the actresses as to the possession of the center of the stage during a certain scene. While the manager poured oil upon the troubled waters, Barrie sat carelessly swinging his feet from the rail of an adjoining box. Finally the friend, who was an exceedingly temperamental fellow, could stand it no longer.

"Good Lord, Barrie!" he exclaimed earnestly, "this will ruin your play! Why don't you settle matters yourself? You could if you only would."

Barrie shook his head gravely, but with a merry twinkle in his eye. "No," he replied, "the Lord made only one man who could ever manage the sun and the moon, and you remember even he let the stars alone."

● 592

"This can't be it, he's a second-class passenger."



● 593

Caller — "I wonder if I can see your mother, little boy. Is she engaged?"

Willie — "Engaged! She's married."

● 594

Teacher — "Johnny, why does Missouri stand at the head in mule-raising in the United States?"

Johnny — "Because the other end is dangerous."

● 595

He (dejectedly) — "You've played the deuce with my heart."

She (archly) — "Well, didn't you play the knave?"

● 596

Commercial Traveller (entering a city office) — "I have come about an attachment I have for your typewriter."

Clerk — "Well, I'm sorry she is out, and, what's more, she and I are engaged."

● 597

"You are suffering from brain fag and ennui," announced the specialist. "You should take more interest in your business."

"I would like to," replied the patient.

"Then why don't you?" demanded the specialist.

"The law won't let me," replied the patient. "I'm a pawnbroker."

● 598

Applicant for Room — "What are your terms for students?"

Landlady (in college town) — "Bums, loafers, dead beats and wonderful promisers."

● 599

"By the way, Bishop," said a lady admirer, "why do you always address your congregation as 'Brethren' and never mention women in your sermons?"

"Surely, my dear lady, the one embraces the other?"

"Oh, Bishop — but not in church!"

● 600

Teacher — "What was the Tower of Babel?"

Student — "Wasn't that where Solomon kept his 500 wives?"

● 601

"Weren't you upset when the bank went smash?"

"No, I only lost my balance."

● 602

*Author* — "I once got ten dollars a word."

*Editor* — "Hmm! How was that?"

*Author* — "I talked back to the judge."

● 603

*Visitor (to butler who is showing him through the picture gallery)* — "That's a fine portrait! Is it an old master?"

*Butler* — "No, that's the old missus."

● 604

*Hostess* — "I sometimes wonder if there is anything vainer than you authors about the things you write."

*Author* — "There is, madam; our efforts to sell them."

● 605

"Johnny," said his teacher, "if coal is selling at \$6 a ton and you pay your dealer \$24 how many tons will he bring you?"

"A little over three tons, ma'am," said Johnny promptly.

"Why, Johnny, that isn't right," said the teacher.

"No, ma'am, I know it ain't," said Johnny, "but they all do it."

● 606

Mr. and Mrs. Borge met Sonja Henie, the American skating queen, at a party. "My," Mrs. Borge said later, "she certainly looks young."

"Why not?" Victor commented. "She's been on ice all her life."

● 607

"The doctor said he'd have me on my feet in a fortnight."

"And did he?"

"Sure. I've had to sell my automobile."

● 608

*Patient* — "Will the anesthetic make me sick?"

*Doctor* — "No, I think not."

*Patient* — "How long will it be before I know anything?"

*Doctor* — "Aren't you expecting too much of an anesthetic?"

162

● 609

The Sunday-school teacher was describing how Lot's wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt, when little Jimmy interrupted "My mother looked back once while she was driving," he announced triumphantly, "and she turned into telephone pole!"

● 610

Charles Francis Adams was escorting a British friend to view the different objects of attraction in the vicinity of Boston, brought him to Bunker Hill. They stood, looking at the splendid monument when Mr. Adams remarked:

"This is the place, sir, where Warren fell."

"An!" replied the Englishman, evidently not posted up in local historical matters, "did it hurt him much?"

Mr. Adams looked at his friend. "Hurt him," said he, "he was killed, sir."

● 611

*Papa* — "Son, are you pursuing your studies faithfully?"

*Son* — "Yes indeed, father. I'm always behind."

● 612

*Muggins* — "Yes, I'm living out in the country now. It certainly has its inconveniences."

*Buggins* — "What do you miss most?"

*Muggins* — "The last train home at night."

● 613

A policeman who had stopped a motorist for dangerous driving, and was taking down the particulars, kept putting the point of his pencil in his mouth.

"Why is it necessary to moisten your pencil?" the motorist asked.

"To make the case look blacker," replied the policeman.

● 614

*Father* — "Are the tires on the car all right?"

*Son* — "No, two of them are left."

● 615

Here lies my wife; here let her lie!  
Now she's at rest, and so am I.  
(Dryden)

6"

163

● 616

In a recently published book dealing with what do in emergencies, we are told that, if our clothes catch fire, above all things we must keep cool.

● 617

"And how much would you say this colt was worth?" asked the railroad claim-agent of the farmer.

"Not a cent less than \$500!" emphatically declared that sturdy son of the soil.

"Pedigreed stock, I suppose?"

"Well, no," the bereaved admitted reluctantly. "But you could never judge a colt like that by its parents."

"No," the attorney agreed dryly. "I've often noticed how crossing it with a locomotive will improve a breed!"

● 618

They had just turned the corner from one of the most beautiful of steep valleys.

She exclaimed: "What a beautiful gorge that was!"

"Yes, it wasn't bad," he replied, his mind flashing back, unromantically, to the restaurant in the hollow, "but I could have done with a bit more apple pie."

● 619

*Irate Father* — "I'll teach you to kiss my daughter."

*Cornelius* — "You're too late. I've already learned."

● 620

"I can't bear a fool," said a lawyer to a farmer.

"Your mother could," said the farmer.

● 621

A driver and his family had gathered bluebells, primrose roots, budding twigs and so on from a country lane. Just before they piled into the car to move off Father approached a farmer who was standing nearby and asked: "Can we take this road to Sheffield?" The farmer eyed the car and its contents sourly, then: "Aye, you mun as well, you've takken nigh everything else around here."

● 622

One of the Kembles made his first appearance on the stage as an opera singer. His voice was, however, so bad, that at a rehearsal the conductor of the orchestra called out, "Mr. Kemble! Mr. Kemble! You are murdering the music!"

"My dear sir," was the quiet rejoinder, "it is far better to murder it outright, than to keep on beating it as you do."

● 623

An Englishman was being shown the sights along the Potomac. "Here," remarked the American, "is where George Washington threw a dollar across the river."

"Well," replied the Englishman, "that is not very remarkable, for a dollar went much further in those days than it does now."

The American would not be worsted, so after a short pause, he said: "But Washington accomplished a greater feat than that. He once chucked a sovereign across the Atlantic."

● 624

"Say, what became of that girl you made love to in the hammock?"

"We fell out."

● 625

"More than 5,000 elephants go each year to make our piano keys."

"Really? Well, it's remarkable what those beasts can be trained to do."

● 626

A lady sent her little girl to see the doctor. When she returned, the fond mother said, "Mary, did the doctor treat you?"

"No," said Mary, "he charged me two dollars."

● 627

When Bishop Phillips Brooks sailed from America in his last trip to Europe, a friend jokingly remarked that while abroad he might discover some new religion to bring-home with him. "But be careful of it, Bishop Brooks," remarked a listening friend, "it may be difficult to get your new religion through the Custom House."

"I guess not," replied the Bishop, laughingly, "for we may take it for granted that any new religion popular enough to import will have no duties attached to it."

● 628

A confirmed woman-hater looked up from the piece of wood he was whittling by the old cracker barrel. "Women wouldn't be here except for a little misunderstanding," he

snarled. "The Lord came down from the sky one day and asked Adam how things were going. Adam felt a little pernickety that day and he said, 'Lord, you ain't givin' me no company.' 'That's right,' said the Lord. 'Maybe what you need is a nice woman. Adam turned white at that and said, 'Aw, Lord, can't you take a rib?' Well, sir, that's just what the Lord did. The next day Eve put in an appearance and you fellers know the rest of the terrible story."

● 629

"I don't find that it is the motor-cycle which costs a lot: it's the motor-cycle attachments," said young Flyer.

"Hum, yes," replied his father," especially those with bobbed hair."

● 630

"I suppose, Henry," said the old gentleman to his new son-in-law, "that you are aware the cheque for fifty thousand dollars I put among your wedding presents was merely for effect?"

"Oh, yes, sir," responded the cheerful Henry, "and the effect was excellent. The bank cashed it this morning without a word."

● 631

A young man was asked what his father did.

He replied: "He cleans out the bank."

"Janitor or president?" asked the questioner.

● 632

"Oh, he fixed that slow leak all right, got it flowing in a steady stream."



● 633

A young lady entered a crowded car with a pair of skates slung over her arm.

An elderly gentleman arose to give her his seat.  
"Thank you very much, sir," she said, "but I've been skating all afternoon and I'm tired of sitting down."

● 634

*Hunter* — "Just met a great big bear in the woods!"

*Second Hunter* — "Good! Did you give him both barrels?"

*First* — "Both barrels be blowed. I gave him the whole blooming gun."

● 635

Father was explaining to his little son the fundamentals of astronomy: "That's a comet."

"A what?"

"A comet. You know what a comet is?"

"No."

"Don't you know what they call a star with a tail?"

"Sure — Mickey Mouse."

● 636

"Doctor, what should a woman take when she is run down?"

"The license number, madame, the license number."

● 637

"There is talk that the next war will be fought with radio."

"Well, I'm in training. I've faced some terrible programs."

● 638

*Customer* — "Have you a book called 'Patton — A Great General?'"

*Salesgirl* — "The fiction department is on the other side, sir."

● 639

Never mind if the roof falls in as long as you and your wife don't fall out.

● 640

A New Yorker was travelling west in a Pullman when a group of chamber of commerce boosters from Kansas City, Mo., boarded the train and began to praise their city to the New Yorker, telling him of its beautiful boulevards, large industrial establishments, and its wonderful possibilities. Finally the New Yorker became tired and said the



only thing that would improve their city would be to make it a seaport.

The enthusiastic Kansas Citians laughed at him and asked how they could make it a seaport, being so far from the ocean.

The New Yorker replied that it would be a very easy task.

"The only thing that you will have to do," said he, "is to lay a two-inch pipe from your city to the Gulf of Mexico. Then if you fellows can suck as hard as you can blow you will have it a seaport inside half an hour."

● 641

With a charming air of romance and pleasant sentimentality, the company were discussing how each married couple among them first met.

"And where did you first meet your wife?" the little man in the corner was asked.

"Gentlemen, I did not meet her," he replied, solemnly, "she overtook me."

● 642

"Did you behave in church?" asked an interested relative when Junior returned from the service.

"Course I did," replied Junior. "I heard the lady back of us say she never saw a child behave so."

● 643

Tiny Clara heard her mother say that a neighbouring lady had a new baby. The tot puzzled over the matter, and at last sought additional information:

"Oh, mumsy, what is she going to do with her old one?"

● 644

The wife of a well-known literary man, while reading one of his articles in the press, corrected it as she went along, and the errors were somewhat numerous. "Why, dear," she exclaimed, "you don't know the first rules in grammar, or else you are very negligent."

"Well, well, my love," he exclaimed, looking up from his work, "what is the matter now?"

"Why, in three cases you speak of our sex in the plural, and write it in the singular number."

"I can't help it," was the retort. "Woman is a singular being."

● 645

A Texas sheriff, with papers in a civil suit, entered the house of an attractive widow and said:

"Madam, I have an attachment for you."

The widow blushed, but said something about reciprocation.

"You must proceed to court."

"I prefer that you do that —"

"Come, hurry, please, the Justice is waiting."

"Oh, well, then you have the license, I suppose?"

The sheriff cleared himself in time.

● 646

"Have you cleaned the deck and polished the brass?" the chief petty officer asked a sailor.

"Yes, chief, and I've swept the horizon with my telescope."

● 647

"Pa, what is a retainer?"

"What you pay a lawyer before he does any work for you, my son."

"Oh, I see. It's like the quarter you put in the gas-meter before you get any gas."

● 648

A woman was mailing the old family Bible to her brother in a distant city. The postal clerk examined the heavy package carefully and inquired if it contained anything breakable. "Nothing but the Ten Commandments," was the quick reply.

● 649

An officer of the nazi Luftwaffe boasted about the high fighting spirit of the fascist pilots: "Our young pilots are burning with the desire to win victory."

"Well," commented an infantry officer. "But why are they burning together with their planes?"

● 650

"Where have you been for the last four years?"

"At college taking medicine."

"And did you finally get well?"

● 651

"How can I avoid falling hair?"

"Jump out of the way."

● 652

*Pedestrian (to local idiot)* — "Can you tell me where this road goes, please?"

*Idiot* — "It don't go anywhere; it just stops where it is."

● 653

A man at a hotel table drank his neighbour's wine. "That's cool," said the owner.

"Yes," said the other, "it must have been on ice."

● 654

"My Uncle William has a new cedar chest."

"So! Last time I saw him he just had a wooden leg."

● 655

"Did you follow my prescription?" inquired the doctor.

"No," replied the patient. "If I had I should have broken my neck, because the draught blew it out of the window."

● 656

"Where is the population of this country the most dense?"

"That's an easy question — from the neck up, brother."

● 657

"Hey, look — the barometer's falling!"

"Tsk, ts — probably wasn't nailed up right."

● 658

*Ship's Cook* — "Have you ever been to sea before?"

*New Assistant* — "Yes, I used to be a gunner in the Navy."

*Ship's Cook* — "Good, can start in shelling them peas."

● 659

"Speaking of bathing in famous springs," said the tramp to the tourist, "I bathed in the spring of '86."

● 660

"Well, son, I see you are in the Army," said an old man.

"Done much shooting lately?"

"Won 80 bucks last Saturday," was the proud answer of the soldier.

● 661

A struggling author had called on a publisher to inquire about a manuscript he had submitted.

"This is quite well written," admitted the publisher, "but my firm only publishes work by writers with well-known names."

"Splendid!" shouted the caller in great excitement. "My name's Smith!"

● 662

The best way to keep your friends is not to give them away.

(Wilson Mizner)

● 663

A steward stood at the gangway of the liner and kept shouting for the benefit of arriving passengers: "First-class to the right! Second-class to the left."

A young woman stepped daintily aboard with a baby in her arms. As she hesitated before the steward he bent over her and said in his chivalrous way: "First or second?"

"Oh!" said the girl, her face as red as a rose. "Oh, dear, it's — it's not mine."

● 664

"Pardon me for a moment, please," said the dentist to the victim, "but before beginning this work I must have my drill."

"Good heavens, man!" exclaimed the patient irritably. "Can't you pull a tooth without a rehearsal?"

● 665

"This dog," Mr. Weber once said to Mr. Fields, "is worth five hundred dollars."

To which Mr. Fields replied, "How could a dog save that much money?"

● 666

*Dentist (to talkative patient)* — "Open your mouth and shut up."

● 667

A quartermaster who had not enough food to feed all men in his unit suggested to issue each soldier a pencil and a sheet of paper.

"What for?" he was asked.

"They will draw their rations."

● 668

The quickest way to break a bad habit is to drop it.

● 669

*Salesman* — "Yes, sir, of all our cars, this is the one we feel confident and justified in pushing."

*Prospective Customer* — "That's no good to me. I want one to ride in."

● 670

"We are dunning him, but without much effect."

"Are you unremitting?"

"Yes, and so is he."

● 671

"Look here, you swindler!" roared the owner of the suburban property to the real-estate man. "When you sold me this house, didn't you say that in three months I wouldn't part with it for \$20,000?"

"Certainly," said the real-estate dealer calmly, "and you haven't, have you?"

● 672

"Was he very much cast down after he'd spoken to papa?"

"Yes. Three flights of stairs!"



● 673

*Golfer* — "Hi, caddie! Isn't Major Pepper out of that bunker yet? How many strokes has he had?"

*Caddie* — "Seventeen ordinary, sir, and one apoplectic!"

● 674

On being asked to write down a definition of "capital punishment," a Glasgow schoolboy submitted this:

"Being locked in an ice-cream or chocolate factory for a week-end would, in my opinion, be capital punishment."

● 675

*Prof.* — "Nobody ever heard of a sentence without a predicate."

*Stude* — "I have, Professor."

*Prof.* — "What is it?"

*Stude* — "Thirty days."

● 676

*Professor in Physiology* — "This morning we will consider the heart, liver, kidney, and lungs."

*Tired Student* — "Just another organ recital."

● 677

*Political Speaker* — "I'm pleased to see such a dense crowd here to-night."

*Voice* — "Don't be too pleased. We ain't all dense."

● 678

"Dear Editor, one night I came home and found my wife in the arms of a man who owes me money. Have I grounds for divorce?"

*Answer* — "The man was just paying a little interest to your wife."

● 679

You've probably heard the joke about the lady who had water on the knee. She got rid of it by wearing pumps.

And it must have been her father who suffered from water on the brain. One cold night he fell asleep and the water froze. When he awoke, he couldn't remember a thing. Everything had slipped his mind.

● 680

*Mr. Babbitt* (looking at a well-known picture) — "'Van Dyke, by Himself.' What a silly thing to put there; anyone could see that there is no one with him."

● 681

A customer told a hardware-store clerk that she wanted a three-quarter-inch pipe plug. The man asked, "Do you want a male plug, a female plug or both?"

"I just want to stop a leak," the woman replied. "I don't plan to raise them!"

● 682

*Prof.* — "Oxygen is essential to all animal existence. There could be no life without it. It was discovered only a century ago."

*Stude* — "What did they do before it was discovered?"

● 683

"I have a hair-raising story."  
"Tell it to some baldheaded man."

● 684

A truly eloquent parson in the South had been preaching for an hour or so on the immortality of the soul.

"I looked at the mountains," he declaimed, "and could not help thinking 'Beautiful as you are, you will be destroyed, while my soul will not. I gazed upon the ocean and cried 'Mighty as you are, you will eventually dry up, but not I!'"

● 685

"I think that fellow is a bad egg."  
"No, he's too fresh for that."

● 686

"My hair has been giving me a great deal of trouble lately; can you suggest anything?"

"Don't let that worry you, old man; it'll come out, all right."

● 687

*The Real Land Question:* How to make land answer?

● 688

*Landlady* — "So Mr. Newboard has found something fresh to complain about this morning."

*Maid* — "No, mum, it's the eggs."

● 689

*Sergeant* — "What was your occupation before entering the Army?"

*Rookie* — "Travelling salesman, sir."

*Sergeant* — "Stick around, you'll get plenty of orders here."

● 690

In a Charlotte, North Carolina, domestic-relations court, the judge listened intently to both sides in a case against an elderly man who was charged by his wife with non-support. After all the evidence was in, the judge told the defendant: "You haven't taken proper care of this good woman and I'm going to give \$25 a month."

The defendant beamed with pleasure. "That's mighty nice of your honour," he said, "and I'll give her a dollar or two from time to time myself."

● 691

"Very sorry, Mr. Brown, but the coffee is exhausted," the landlady announced.

"Not at all surprised," came back Mr. Brown. "I've seen it growing weaker and weaker every morning."

● 692

The scene was a tiny wayside railway platform and the sun was going down behind the distant hills. It was a glorious sight. An intending passenger was chatting with one of the porters.

"Fine sight, the sun tipping the hills with gold," said the poetic passenger.

"Yus," retorted the porter; "and to think that there was a time when I was often as lucky as them 'ills."

● 693

A man, in his carefree bachelor days, had been very fond of a Washington restaurant which specialized in waffles with honey. Year after year he had journey to the place to get the delectable viand; so, when he finally married, he decided to take his wife there, in order to share the pleasure with her. He did not tell her what was coming; merely ordering an excellent meal, with two orders of waffles.

The meal came, the waffles came: but there were two small pitchers of near-maple syrup, and no honey.

He called the waitress over, and whispered, loud enough for his wife to hear: "Where's my honey?"

The waitress beamed intelligently, "She's on her vacation now, sir," was her answer.

● 694

*Traffic Cop* — "Now, Miss, what gear were you in at the time of the accident?"

*Demure Miss* — "Oh, I had on a black beret, tan shoes, and a tweed sports dress."

● 695

"Have you ever appeared as a witness in a suit before?" asked the prosecutor.

"Why of course!" replied the sweet young thing.

"Will you please tell the jury just what suit it was?"

"It was a blue suit," she replied quickly, "with white collar and cuffs, and buttons all the way down the front."

● 696

*Critic* — "The picture of the horse is good, but where is the wagon?"

*Artist* — "Oh, the horse will draw that."

● 697

*Mrs. A (with newspaper)* — "It says here that cooks are often decorated in France."

*Mr. A* — "I sometimes feel like crowning the one we've got."

● 698

Two London cabmen were glaring at each other. "Aw, what's the matter with you?" demanded one.

"Nothing's the matter with me."

"You gave me a nasty look," persisted the first.

"Well," responded the other, "now you mention it, you certainly have a nasty look; but I did not give it to you."

● 699

*Guest* — "What a pretty name your maid has!"

*Hostess* — "Oh, that isn't her real name. We just call her 'Dawn' because she's always breaking."

● 700

"It's one thing to itch for something and another to scratch for it."

● 701

Ad in Thompsonville, Connecticut, Press: "Wanted — Man to manage Accounting Department in charge of 20 girls. Must like figures."

● 702

A man entered a chemist's and asked whether he could ring up. The chemist agreed and pointed to the telephone apparatus. The man then took a bell out of his pocket, rang it, raised his hat, bowed and left the shop.

● 703

"That tenor of ours has a marvellous voice. He can hold one of his notes for half a minute."

"That's nothing! I have held one of his notes for two years."

● 704

"I desire no remuneration for this poem," said the office visitor. "I merely submit it as a compliment."

"Then, my dear sir, allow me to return the compliment," replied the editor with true journalistic courtesy.

● 705

*Brown* — "Why should people always select the serpent as the symbol of evil and badness?"

*Robinson* — "Well, you see, the poor thing hasn't a leg to stand on."

● 706

"What part of the car causes the most accidents?"

"The nut that holds the wheel."

● 707

The critic started to leave in the middle of the second act of the play.

"Don't go now," said the manager. "I promise there's a terrific kick in the next act."

"Fine," was the retort; "give it to the author."

● 708

"Why is it that a judge has so little time left for himself?"

"I suppose it's because he is so busy."

"Wrong. It's because he hands out so much time to other people."

● 709

A sales manager had one of his salesman on the carpet. The young salesman resented the calldown and becoming quite huffy, said:

"Don't talk to me that way. I take orders from no man!"

"Now we're getting somewhere," said the sales manager. "That's just what I'm raising hell about."

● 710

*Client* — "I know the evidence is strongly against my innocence, but I have \$50,000 to fight the case."

*Lawyer* — "As your attorney, I assure you that you'll never go to prison with that amount of money."

And he didn't, he went there broke.

● 711

"How do you find yourself these cold mornings?"

"Oh, I throw back the covers and there I am."

● 712

*Valet (to Master)* — "Sir, your car is at the door."

*Master* — "Yes, I hear it knocking."

● 713

"Sedentary work," said the college lecturer, "tends to lessen the endurance."

"In other words," butted in the smart student, "the more one sits, the less one can stand."

"Exactly," retorted the lecturer; "and if one lies a great deal, one's standing is lost completely."

● 714

"My husband is merely a manufacturer of waste-baskets," sighed the woman with aspirations. "It seems such a prosy occupation."

"On the contrary, there is really much poetry in waste-baskets," replied the unappreciated bard.

● 715

"You college men seem to take life pretty easy."

"Yes; even when we graduate we do it by degrees."

● 716

*Customer* — "I would like a book, please."

*Bookseller* — "Something light?"

*Customer* — "That doesn't matter — I have my car with me."

● 717

"I can't find a single pin. Where do they all go to, anyway?"

"It's hard to tell, because they're pointed in one direction and they're headed in another."

● 718

"Pop!"

"Yes, my son."

"What is a gardener?"

"A gardener is a man who raises a few things, my boy."

"And what is a farmer?"

"A man who raises a lot of things."

"Well, what is a middleman, Pop?"

"Why, he's a fellow who raises everything, my son."

● 719

The difference between an ordinary suit and a lawsuit, is that the former gets cleaned and pressed, while the latter is pressed and it is the litigant that gets cleaned.

● 720

*Old Lady (to librarian)* — "I'd like a nice book."

*Librarian* — "Here's one about the cardinal."

*Old Lady* — "I'm not interested in religion."

*Librarian* — "But this is a bird."

*Old Lady* — "I'm not interested in his private life, either."

● 721

*Judge* — "What were you doing in that place when it was raided?"

*Locksmith* — "I was making a bolt for the door."

● 722

The Junior String Quarter played Brahms one evening last term. Brahms lost.

(From a school magazine)

● 723

An impecunious young lawyer once received the following letter from a tailor to whom he was indebted:

"Dear sir: Kindly advise me by return mail when I may expect a remittance from you in settlement of my account."

Yours truly,  
J. Snippen."

The lawyer immediately replied:

"Dear sir; I have your request for advice of a recent date, and beg leave to say that not having received any retainer from you I cannot act in the premises. Upon receipt of your check for \$250 I shall be very glad to look the matter up for you and to acquaint you with the results of my investigations."

"I am, sir, with great respect, your most obedient servant,

Barclay B. Coke."

● 724

"Teacher" was giving her class a little weekly talk on painting, illustrated by reproductions of famous pictures. "Sir Joshua Reynolds," she said, "was able to change a smiling face into a frowning one with a single stroke of the brush."

"Huh," little Johnnie was heard to mutter, "my maw kin do that!"

● 725

*Cannibal* — "We've just captured an actor."

*Chief* — "Hurray! I was hoping for a good ham sandwich."

● 726

On a recent survey of the question it was found that the college that produced the most U. S. Presidents was —

"Yes, go on" (breathlessly).

"— the electoral college."

● 727

"There's a woman who suffers for her beliefs."

"Why, what does she believe?"

"She believes she can wear a number five shoe on a number seven foot."

● 728

A prolific Welsh preacher arrived at a chapel where he was to preach a special sermon by invitation. The minister of the chapel knowing his prolixity was anxious to give him a hint about the length of his sermon. "Now tell me," he said, "upon what subject do you intend to speak?" "Upon the milk of human kindness," came the reply. "Indeed," said the Minister, "condensed, I hope?"

● 729

"Poor old Johnson bends over backwards to give his wife every luxury."

"Business man?"

"No, contortionist."

● 730

Private Wilkins, just back from the foxhole walked up the aisle of a post theater where he was about to see a show.

"Say," yelled an MP. "You can't sit there. The front is reserved for officers."

"The one I just came from," he snapped, "wasn't."

● 731

Father of a naval cadet inquired about his son's progress in studies: "Is my son getting well grounded in his subjects?"

"I'd put it stronger, sir," replied the instructor. "I'd say that your son is stranded high and dry on them."

● 732

*A 'Drive Safe' sign*: "Check your brakes an your brakes will check you."

● 733

The dramatist mistook the noise in front and was distressed to find that although they wanted to see him, what they wanted to see him for was something very different from his expectations.

But he dodged behind the curtain just in time, and dodged back again to reproach the gallery.

"It's true," he said, "that I haven't made a hit. But neither have any of you!"

● 734

In God we trust. All others cash.

(*Notice in a village blacksmith's shop*)

● 735

*Professor* — "What did you find out about the salivary glands?"

*Student* — "I couldn't find out a thing, Professor, they're too darn secretive."

● 736

The dean of the Law Department was very busy and rather cross. The telephone rang.

"Well, what is it?" he snapped.

"Is that the city gas-works?" said a woman's soft voice.

"No, madam," roared the dean; "this is the University Law Department."

"Ah," she answered in the sweetest of tones, "I didn't miss it so far, after all, did I?"

● 737

"What shall I do?" wailed the sweet young thing. "I'm engaged to a man who just cannot bear children."

"Well," remarked a kindly old lady, "you mustn't expect too much of a husband!"

● 738

And then there are cynics who claim that movies would be better if they shot less films and more actors.

● 739

*First Lawyer* — "I've just taken the case of that woman who says she shot her husband because she loved him."

*Second Lawyer* — "I suppose your plea will be that spring is the time for tender shoots."

● 740

*Peggy* — "I want to help you, dad. I shall get the dressmaker to teach me to cut out gowns."

*Dad* — "I don't want you to go that far, Peg, but you might cut out cigarettes and taxi-bills."

● 741

Son in college was applying pressure for more money from home.

"I cannot understand why you call yourself a kind father," he wrote his dad, "when you haven't sent me a check for three weeks. What kind of kindness do you call that?"

"That's unremitting kindness," wrote the father in his next letter.

● 742

A fluttery young thing was being interviewed for a book-keeping job at a swanky night club. "You understand," said the personnel man, "that we need a responsible person?"

"I'm very responsible," she assured him. "Why, in my last job, whenever there was something called a discrepancy, they always said I was responsible."

● 743

A popular bachelor decided to reform. The first day he cut out cigarettes. The second day he cut out drink. The third day he cut out women. The fourth day he cut out paper dolls.

● 744

After Hawkins had been a guest of the Chambersburg Palace Hotel for thirty years, an interior decorator came through town one day and persuaded the management to do the whole place over. In due course the alterations were completed.

"These here new trappings sure are elegant," conceded Hawkins a few weeks later, "but I must admit I miss that old spittoon in the corner."

"You always did," a room clerk pointed out.

● 745

Take two apples from three apples and what have you got?

(Two apples of course)

● 746

*He* — "There are several things I can always on."

*She* — "What are they?"

*He* — "My fingers."

● 747

*Hotel Keeper* — "Here are a few views of our hotel for you to take with you, sir."

"Thanks, but I have my own views of your hotel."

● 748

"Is horse racing a clean sport?"

"Well, it cleans quite a few every day."

● 749

"How much did old Moneybags leave?"

"Oh, he left it all. He didn't take any with him."

● 750

"What happens to the horses you follow, Albert?"

"Oh, they usually follow the other horses."

● 751

"How long was your last cook with you?"

"She was never with us. She was against us from the start."

● 752

"A statesman is supposed to be familiar with all public questions."

"Yes," replied Senator Blank, "but not necessarily with all the answers."

● 753

A Chicago newspaper points out that the Government prints and distributes the speeches made by Congressmen without the slightest profit. It might also be added they are read the same way.

● 754

"I'm taking political economy at college."

"That's a useless course. Why learn to economize in politics? It's not being done."



● 755

*Actor (modestly)* — "As a matter of fact, I have received letters from ladies in almost every place in which I have appeared."

*Rival* — "Landladies, I presume."

● 756

*First Artist* — "Well, old man, how's business?"

*Second Artist* — "Oh, splendid! Got a commission this morning from a millionaire. Wants his children painted very badly."

*First Artist (pleasantly)* — "Well, my boy, you are the very man for the job."

● 757

"Ah, good mornin', Mrs. Murphy, and how is everythin'?"

"Sure, an' I'm havin' a great time uv it between me husband and the fire. If I keep me eye on the wan, the other is sure to go out."

● 758

"Papa, what is the person called who brings you in contact with the spirit world?"

"A bartender, my boy."

● 759

"A woman fell overboard from a ship yesterday, and a shark came up and looked her over and went away."

"He never touched her?"

"No. He was a man-eating shark."

● 760

"I had a mighty queer surprise this morning," remarked the stockbroker. "I put on my last summer's thin suit on account of this extraordinary hot weather, and in one of the trousers pockets I found a big roll of bills which I had entirely forgotten."

"Were any of them receipted?" asked a pessimist.

● 761

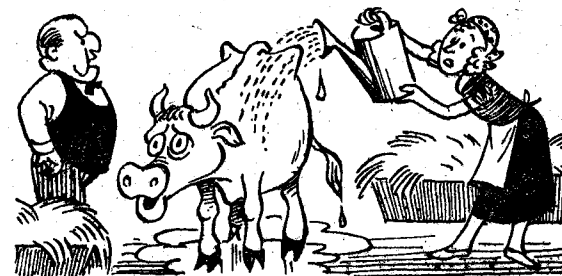
A clergyman who had two lovely and attractive daughters was once walking with them along a river bank where they happened upon a man fishing. After enquiring about the conditions and whether he had caught anything the clergyman observed: "I too am a fisherman but I fish for men."

—With a knowing look at the girls the fisherman said: "Good luck to you — you've some very fine bait."

● 762

*Farmer (who in war-time has got a lady-help in the dairy)* — "'Ullo, Missy, what in the world be ye doin'?"

*Lady* — "Well, you told me to water the cows, and I'm doing it. They don't seem to like it much."



● 763

On his deathbed a manufacturer named six bankers as his pall-bearers and explained that as they had carried him for so long that they might as well finish the job!

● 764

"Whiskey is your greatest enemy." "Are we not told to love our enemies?" "Yes," was the reply, "but not to swallow them."

● 765

Consider the postage stamp, my son. Its usefulness consists in sticking to one thing till it gets there.

(Josh Billings)

● 766

Said one travelling salesman to another in a restaurant:

"What's the matter, Bill? You are only eating crackers and milk. Are you on a diet?"

"No, on commission."

● 767

The congressman's wife sat up in bed, a startled look on her face. "Jim," she whispered, "there's a robber in the house."

"Impossible," was her husband's sleepy reply. "In the Senate, yes, but in the House, never."

● 768

"I used to know Mr. Smithers, who was with your firm. I understand he is a tried and trusted employee —"

The banker looked at his questioner coldly.  
"He was trusted, yes; and he will be tried, if we're fortunate enough to catch him."

● 769

"So that distinguished-looking gentleman in the tall hat is your leading citizen, eh? Has he received many degrees from colleges?"

"Has he? Why, he has received so many degrees we call him the 'Human Thermometer.'"

● 770

"We have everything on the menu today, sir," the waitress said.

"So I see," the customer said. "How about a clean one?"

● 771

A 'Drive Safe' sign: "The driver is safer when the road is dry. The road is safer when the driver is dry."

● 772

Another 'Drive Safe' sign: "It's better to be late, Mr. Motorist, than to be the late, Mr. Motorist."

● 773

A farmer was passing the insane asylum with a load of fertilizer. An inmate called through the fence, "What are you hauling?"

"Fertilizer," replied the farmer.

"What are you going to do with it?"

"Put it on my strawberries."

"And we put cream on ours, and they say we're crazy," the inmate countered.

● 774

"I shall have to give you ten days or \$20," said the judge.

"I'll take the \$20, Judge," said the prisoner.

● 775

"The thing for you to do," said the doctor to the man with the frazzled nerves, "is to stop thinking about yourself — to bury yourself in your work."

"Gosh!" returned the patient. "and me a concrete mixer."

● 776

"When a woman marries and then divorces her husband inside of a week what would you call it?"

"Taking his name in vain."

● 777

The feminine of bachelor is lady-in-waiting.

● 778

"Has that florist any children?"

"Two: a girl who is a budding genius and a son who is a blooming idiot."

● 779

Private Beadecker, a driver from a truck unit, on a trip out of the garrison town, was busily engaged with a shovel in the mud beside his truck when an MP hailed him.

"Stuck in the mud?"

"Oh, no," exclaimed the driver cheerily, "my motor just died and I'm digging a grave for it."

● 780

The arithmetic teacher said, "Now boys, I want you to figure what interest of one percent on a million dollars for two years would come to." The whole class set to work diligently with the exception of little Mawruss in the front row. "What's the matter, Mawruss?" said the teacher. "One percent doesn't interest me," said Mawruss.

● 781

*First Cannibal* — "Have you seen the dentist?"

*Second Cannibal* — "Yes, he filled my teeth at dinner."

● 782

*She* — "How do you like my new coat?"

*He (looking at her)* — "Fine, only you got it on too thick!"

● 783

"So Hilda's broken it off with Bobby. I wonder if she still keeps his lovely letters?"

"No. As a matter of fact, they're keeping her now."

● 784

A Cleveland man stopped a newsboy in New York saying: "See here, son, I want to go to the Fifth National Bank. I'll give you a dollar if you direct me to it."

With a grin, the boy replied: "All right, come along," and he led the man to a building a half-block away.

The man paid the promised fee, remarking, however, "That was a dollar easily earned."

"Sure!" responded the lad. "But you mustn't fergit that bank-directors is paid high in Noo Yawk."

● 785

"Jones isn't too pleased he's got twins. He only wanted one child."

"Well, what do you expect? He married a telephone girl, and they always give the wrong number."

● 786

"How is Recruit Perkins doing, Sergeant?"

"I think he'll become a fine soldier, sir."

"Oh, he picks up things fast?"

"Yeah, he was a shop lifter in Civvie street after all."

● 787

*Agent* — "Don't you wish your office furnishings insured against theft?"

*Boss* — "Yes, all except the clock. Everybody watches that."

● 788

Little Tommy came home from Sunday school with the distressing news that he had lost the penny given him for the collection.

"But that is three Sundays running you have lost your penny," his mother complained.

"Well," replied Tommy, "I must win sooner or later."

● 789

A Scotch gentleman asked a friend of his to pay a visit to his house to hear his daughter sing.

After she had finished singing, the proud father said to his friend:

"Well, hoo dae ye like it? Wha' dae ye think o' her execution?"

"Mon, I'm in favor o' it!"

● 790

"Did you ever run for office?"

"Yes. I did yesterday morning when the alarm clock failed to go off."

● 791

Little Marvin found a button in his salad.

He remarked: "I suppose it fell off while the salad was dressing."

● 792

*Customer* — "Where is the other barber you formerly had here? The one who used to tell the funny stories?"

*Barber* — "He got too ambitious. He started to illustrate his funny stories with cuts."

● 793

"Can you tell me why the hand of the Statue of Liberty is just eleven inches long?"

"Why, certainly; if they had made it an inch longer, it would have been a foot."

● 794

The chief of an ordnance laboratory was making an account of the results of his experiments in different explosives to a group of big brass from the Pentagon.

"This," he explained, "is one of the most dangerous explosives of them all. If I am in the slightest degree wrong in my experiment, we are liable to be blown through the roof. Kindly come a little closer, gentlemen, so that you may follow me better."

● 795

A vain clergyman asked an old man how he had enjoyed his sermon.

"I like one passage at the end very much," said the old man.

"Which was that?" asked the clergyman.

"The one from the pulpit to the vestry," said the old man.

● 796

*The Real Fall of Man*: Falling in love!

● 797

*Her* — "Have you been up before the Dean?"

*Him* — "Oh, I don't know. What time does he get up?"

● 798

"Sir, I have all the gems of English literature in my library."

"Yes, and I notice that they are uncut gems."

● 799

*Manager* — "Is this play of yours clean?"

*Author* — "Clean! I should say so. Why, there's a bathroom scene in the first act."

● 800

"I desire no remuneration for this poem," said the office visitor. "I merely submit it as a compliment."

"Then, my dear sir, allow me to return the compliment," replied the editor with true journalistic courtesy.

● 801

"I am delighted to meet you," said the father of college student, shaking hands warmly with the professor. "My son took algebra from you last year, you know."

"Pardon me," said the professor, "he was exposed to it, but he did not take it."

● 802

*Director* — "Have you ever had any stage experience."

*Applicant* — "Well, I had my leg in a cast once."

● 803

"Do you know that Noah was the greatest financier that ever lived?"

"How do you make that out?"

"Well, he was able to float a company when the whole world was in liquidation."

● 804

*First Author (reading aloud as he writes)* — "The evening wore on."

*Second Author (listening)* — "Well, what did it wear?"

*First Author* — "Oh, I don't know — the close of day, I suppose."

● 805

"We are taking in boarders this summer."

"Have they found it out yet?"

● 806

This is from a circular of the Zanesville (Ohio) Chamber of Commerce:

"Zanesville is an exceptionally rich city; so rich, in fact, that every blade of grass has a green back, every bird has a bill, the chimneys have their drafts, and the maids wash our front doors with gold dust; every horse has a check, and every ditch has two banks; even our streets are flushed and the lawns get a rake off; every cloud has a silver lining and every flower in the city has a scent; when you put a five dollar bill in your pocket

you double it, and when you take it out you find it in creases. Now do you want to leave here or not?"

● 807

William Wordsworth (1770—1850) once unguardedly stated that he could "write like Shakespeare if he had a mind to." Charles Lamb (1775—1834) heard this and said immediately: "So it's the mind that's wanting!"

● 808

*Shaw* — "I understand that the young woman in the flat over yours is a finished pianist."

*Robinson* — "Gad! Is she? I was just mustering the courage to finish her myself! Who did it?"

● 809

"They laughed when I started to make a new kind of dynamite, but when I dropped it, they exploded."

● 810

"If you won't accept me as your lover," said the tragic youth, "I shall hang myself on the tree in front of your house."

"For goodness' sake, don't do that," she said, "you know how my parents object to fellows hanging about the house."

● 811

"Missed the boat, man?" said a sympathetic witness to the perspiring seaman apprentice who was just too late from liberty leave.

"Not much. I never really had time to get attached to her," snapped back the seaman.

● 812

*Father (to lover)* — "If I were to give my consent, could you support my daughter?"

*Lover* — "I often have."

● 813

In a little East Coast town there was an undertaker who, for reasons of his own, made close acquaintances of all those whose health was none of the best. He plied his friendship with due decorum, and often when the friendship was terminated by death a little piece of business fell to his lot. One old lady — a chronic invalid — saw him almost daily and his interest in her health was unbounded. Last week he called and the housekeeper told

the undertaker that her mistress was gone. Slipping five shillings into her hand, he asked when she departed.

"By the mid-day train for London," came the answer.

● 814

As a judge was leaving the bench one day he slipped, bumped down several steps and landed with some violence on the floor. An alarmed court attache ran to help him up, inquiring solicitously: "I hope Your Honour is not hurt?"

"No, no," replied the judge, rubbing himself tenderly, "my honour is safe enough, but the seat is bruised considerably."

● 815

"My wife's a fine shot. She can hit a dollar every time."

"That's nothing. My wife goes through my trousers and never misses a dime."

● 816

*Small Boy* — "Dad, the barometer has fallen."

*Father* — "Very much?"

*Small Boy* — "About five feet — it's broken."

● 817

When asked about the state of American television one summer, radio comedian Goodman Ace reported, "We've enjoyed television very much this summer. We've got a six-foot screen now, you know."

See also 3, 4, 50, 102, 103, 170, 180, 191, 366, 379, 385, 387—389, 407, 411, 412, 417, 420, 427, 444, 483, 491, 498, 750, 841, 844, 849, 871, 885, 922, 929, 937, 945, 967, 976, 989, 991, 994, 996, 998, 1000, 1002, 1003, 1007, 1012, 1016, 1022, 1025, 1027, 1053, 1059, 1060, 1062, 1064, 1078, 1107, 1109, 1114, 1115, 1118—1121, 1124, 1125, 1127, 1132, 1133, 1141, 1151, 1161, 1167, 1169, 1174, 1206, 1222, 1226, 1227, 1247, 1260, 1263, 1280, 1285, 1297, 1298, 1302—1305, 1307, 1314, 1316, 1320, 1326, 1328—1336, 1341, 1343, 1346, 1348, 1349, 1351, 1352, 1354, 1370, 1379, 1385, 1435, 1437, 1445, 1447.

### Homonymy, True and False

● 818

"How is it," said a gentleman to Sheridan, "that your name has not O attached to it? Your family is Irish, and no doubt illustrious."

"No family has a better right to O than our family," said Sheridan; "for we owe everybody."

● 819

"Sir, I want to tender my resignation."

"Never mind making it tender — make it brief."

● 820

It being reported that Lady Caroline Lamb had, in a moment of passion, knocked down one of her pages with a stool, the poet Moore, to whom this was told by Lord Strangford, observed:

"Oh! nothing is more natural for a literary lady than to double down a page."

"I would rather," replied his lordship, "advise Lady Caroline to turn over a new leaf."

● 821

*Sonny* — "Mother, Dolly is using fearful swearwords."

*Mother* — "What did she say?"

*Sonny* — "She said she wouldn't wear those darned stockings any more."

● 822

A certain man came down to his office grinning all over his face. All the morning long he hummed and whistled, until partner asked him what he'd had.

"My wife told me this morning that I was a model husband."

"I don't call that much of a compliment," said the other. "You just look that word up in the dictionary," was the advice.

He went to the dictionary and this is what he read: "Model — a small pattern; a miniature of something on a larger scale."

● 823

*Chemistry Professor* — "What can you tell me about nitrates?"

*Student* — "Well-er-they're a lot cheaper than day rates."

● 824

"Farmer Brown, I can't come out to see you any more."

"Why, what's the matter, doctor?"

"Why, every single time I come out, your ducks insult me."

● 825

Sheridan was one day much annoyed by a fellow-member of the House of Commons, who kept crying out every few

minutes, "Hear! hear!" During the debate he took occasion to describe a political contemporary that wished to play rogue, but had only sense enough to act fool. "Where," exclaimed he with great emphasis — "Where shall we find a more foolish knave or a more knavish fool than he?"

"Hear! hear!" was shouted by the troublesome member.

Sheridan turned round, and, thanking him for the prompt information, sat down amid a general roar of laughter.

● 826

A cub reporter in Iowa reported that a local farmer had been robbed of 2,025 pigs. The cagey night editor thought the figure pretty high and phoned the farmer to check up. "Is it true that you lost two thousand twenty-five pigs?"

"Yeth," sighed the farmer.

The cagey editor thanked him and changed the copy to make the loss read, "two sows and twenty-five pigs."

● 827

The Prize for Paralyzing Puns this year falls into the lap of the perpetrator of the following horror:

*Waitress* — "Hawaii, mister? You must be Hungary?"

*Gent* — "Yes, Siam. And I can't Rumania long either. Venice lunch ready?"

*Waitress* — "I'll Russia table. What'll you Havre? Aix?"

*Gent* — "Whatever's ready. But can't Jamaica cook step on the gas?"

*Waitress* — "Odessa laugh! But Alaska."

*Gent* — "Don't do me favours. Just put a Cuba sugar in my Java."

*Waitress* — "Don't you be Sicily, big boy. Sweden it yourself. I'm only here to Serbia."

*Gent* — "Denmark my check and call the Bosphorus. I hope he'll Kenya. I don't Bolivia know who I am!"

*Waitress* — "Canada noise! I don't Caribbean. You sure Ararat!"

*Gent* — "Samoa your wisecracks? What's got India? D'you think this arguing Alps business? Be Nice! Matter of fact, I gotta Smolensk for ya!"

*Waitress* — "Attu! Don't Kiev me that Boulogne! Alamein do! Spain in the neck. Pay your check and scram, Abyssinia!"

● 828

The professor rapped on his desk and shouted: "Gentlemen — order!"

The entire class yelled: "Beer!"

● 829

*Nell* — "Oh, he's so romantic. When he addresses me he always calls me 'Fair Lady.'"

*Belle* — "Force of habit, my dear. He's a streetcar conductor."

● 830

A young writer sent a number of manuscripts to a celebrated newspaper columnist, asking his advice as to the best channel for marketing the writings. The manuscripts came back with this curt note: "The one channel I can conscientiously recommend as the greatest outlet for articles of this type is the English Channel."

● 831

*Husband to wife*: "He was a perfect lamb when I asked him for a raise. All he said was "Bah!"

● 832

There were three men in a boat with four cigarettes but no matches. What did they do?

They threw out one cigarette, and made the boat a cigarette lighter.

● 833

"I know a fellow who got into trouble being frank and earnest."

"Yeah!"

"Yeah! Frank in New York and Ernest in Brooklyn."

● 834

*Voice on phone* — "Is Hugh there?"

*Sweet Thing (answering)* — "Hugh who?"

*Voice* — "Yoo-hoo yourself!"

● 835

"An anecdote is a tale," said the teacher. "Now, Sidney, use it in a sentence."

"I tied a tin can to the dog's anecdote."

● 836

A wise man is one who noes a lot.

● 837

There was a young lady of Crewe  
Who wanted to catch the 2.2.  
Said a porter, "Don't worry  
Or flurry or scurry,  
It's a minute or 2 to 2.2."

● 838

A man who was kept waiting whilst an unduly long conversation took place between the girl shop assistant and her friend showed his annoyance in his face. Turning to him eventually she said: "You look at me as if I were poison." "Not so much poison," he replied, "as a counter irritant."

● 839

*First Pilot (to the aircraft designer)* — "Say, that new prop of yours on the starboard engine throws the ship off centre. All the pilots are discussing it."  
*Second Pilot* — "Yes, it's the torque of the town."

● 840

*Reporter* — "What shall I say about the peroxide blondes — who made such a fuss at the ball game?"  
*Editor* — "Say, the bleachers went wild."

● 841

An inspector, examining a class in religious knowledge, asked the following question of a little girl, intending it for a catch: "What was the difference between Noah's Ark and Joan of Arc?" He was not a little surprised when the child, answering, said: "Noah's Ark was made of wood and Joan of Arc was maid of Orleans."

● 842

"Yes, sir, our household represents the United Kingdom of Great Britain," said the proud father of number one to the rector. "I am English, my wife's Irish, the nurse is Scotch and the baby wails."

● 843

"I got sick last night eating eggs."  
"Too bad."  
"No, only one."

● 844

*History Lecturer* — "Can any of you tell me what makes the Tower of Pisa lean?"  
*Corpulent Lady* — "I don't know, or I'd take some myself."

● 845

"Christmas," was explained by someone, "is the time of year when bosses throw their dogs a bonus."

● 846

*First Stude* — "Being broke makes me writhe!"  
*Second Stude* — "Don't writhe, telegraph!"

● 847

"That bashful boyfriend of mine is a G-man,"  
"A government man?"  
"Naw. All he can say is 'geel'."

● 848

"How was the geology lecture?"  
"Fine, I was rocked to sleep."

● 849

When does a goose look like a snowball?  
(When it looks round)

● 850

*Conductor (helping stout lady on car)* — "Yer should take yeast, mother, ter 'elp yer to rise better."  
*Stout Lady* — "Take some yerself, lad, and then yer'd be better bred."

● 851

The naval vessel homecoming at a port brought forth many people, who crowded the pier.

The wife of a ship officer asked another wife beside her, "Will your man be here to-day?"

"He probably will," the Navy wife replied, "if he's 'SOPA'."

"Oh," gasped her neighbour shocked, "I didn't know he drank that much!"

● 852

A fly and a flea in a flue  
Were imprisoned, so what could they do?  
Said the fly, "Let us flee,"  
"Let us fly," said the flea.  
So they flew through a flaw in the flue.

● 853

Why is a man who never bets as bad as a gambler?  
Because he is no better.

● 854

*Stranger* — "In what direction does the village lie, my friend?"

*Native* — "Wal, it's liable to lie in any old direction that comes handy, but at this time of the year it's mostly about fish."

● 855

"My daughter has arranged a little piece for the piano."  
"Good! It's about time we had a little peace!"

● 856

Many men have too much will power. It's *won't* power they lack.

(John A. Shedd)

● 857

"So you're down to the seaside now?"

"Yes, and it's great. By the way, speaking of seaside, if a man gets a biff in the eye and it swells up like a mountain, doesn't it follow that the other side of his face is the see-side?"

● 858

The way to better your lot is to do a lot better.

● 859

The foreman looked the applicant for work up and down.

"Are you a mechanic?" he asked.

"No, sirr," was the answer, "Oi'm a McCarthy."

● 860

The doctor was examining a naval hospital orderly for advancement in rating. "What would you do if the captain fainted on the bridge?"

"Bring him to," warbled the aspiring orderly.

"Then what?" asked the doctor.

"Bring him two more," returned the man promptly.

● 861

"I've solved the mystery of what a hotel means when it advertises 'rooms 1 and up.'"

"What is it?"

"I got one of the dollar rooms and was up all night."

● 862

Teacher, wishing to arouse the interest of her Sunday class, asked them to write down the names of their favourite hymns.

All the scholars bent their heads over pencil and paper for a few minutes, and handed in their slips. All except Jane.

"Come, Jane," said the teacher, "write down the name of your favourite hymn and bring me the paper."

Jane wrote, and with downcast eyes and flaming cheeks, handed the teacher a slip of paper bearing the words "Willie Smith."

● 863

*Teacher* — "Can you explain to me how matches are made?"

*Scholar (sympathetically)* — "No, miss, I'm sorry I don't know. I'd love to be able to tell you."

*Teacher (a little surprised)* — "Why, what do you mean?"

*Scholar* — "Well, I've heard mother say you have been trying hard to make a match these last halfdozen years."

● 864

Advertisement in *Billboard*: "Lion tamer wants tamer lion."

● 865

The Battle of the Sexes: Middlesex v. Sussex.

● 866

An editor met the late Sir James Barrie, the famous author of *Peter Pan*, at a dinner.

"Sir James" he said "I suppose some of you plays do better than others. They are not all successes, I imagine."

Barrie leaned toward him confidentially. "No," he said, his eyes twinkling, "some Peter out and some Pan out."

● 867

*Professor* — "What kept you out of class yesterday — acute indigestion?"

*Co-ed* — "No, a cute engineer."

● 868

Betty was taken to the museum by auntie. They went into the Egyptian room, and there saw a mummy. Betty asked what it was.

"That is some one's mummy, dear," answered auntie.

"Auntie," she confided, "I am glad my mammy's not like that!"



● 869

We know one co-ed who was cured of that cute little habit of coyly injecting an "r" sound into each word.

*Male (over phone)* — "Hello, cutie."

*Co-ed* — "Why Phillurp, when did you get back?"

*Male* — "Just a while ago. Say, how about a date tonight, kid. What are you doing?"

*Co-ed (coyly)* — "Nurthin'."

*Male* — "Gosh, excuse me. I didn't know."

● 870

"This is where I found that ball," said a young friend of mine.

"Are you sure that it was lost?" I asked.

"Well," she replied, "it looked very lonely."

● 871

A party of young people were amusing themselves by guessing the answers to conundrums. One of them asked, "Why is the pancake like the sun?"

"Because it rises in der yeast and sets behind der vest," was the answer given by a brilliant young Swede.

● 872

"Ma, is Mr. Jones an awfully old man?"

"No, dear, I don't believe so. What makes you ask?"

"Well, I think he must be, because I heard Pa say last night that Mr. Jones raised his ante."

● 873

A child having picked some roses was reproved by her father, who said: "Didn't I tell you not to pick any flower without leave?" "Yes, papa," replied she; "but all these had leaves."

● 874

*a*

Miranda edged to the ticket window to secure information. "I say, young man, what time does the next train arrive and how long does it wait here?"

"From two to two to two-two," was the prompt reply.

"Well, I declare!" Miranda exclaimed. "Be you the whistle?"

*b*

At a station an old lady asks a young man: "When does the next train come in, and how long does it stop?" The man answers: "From two to two to two-two." "Let's

ask somebody else," the lady says to her husband, "this poor man stutters."

● 875

An observing man claims to have discovered the colour of the wind. He says he went out and found it blew.

● 876

"Yes, Miss Jones, it's true my husband has left his job. He thought it was better for him to enlist rather than to be called up. Anyway, he has burned his bridges behind him."

"O, well, I shouldn't worry about that. They'll provide him with a uniform in the Army," commented the neighbour.

● 877

A Scotch minister in a strange parish, wishing to know what his people thought of his preaching, questioned the beadle:

"What do they say of Mr.—?" (his predecessor).

"Oh," said the beadle, "they say he's not sound."

"What do they say of the new minister?" (himself).

"Oh, they say he's all sound!"

● 878

*Hopeless Widower* — "Nothing can mend a broken heart."

*Hopeful Widow* — "Except re-pairing."

● 879

*Chicago Pork Sausage Magnate* — "In our line we drive the live pig in at one end of the machine and it comes out at the other end in the form of sausages and other things. There's absolutely nothing wasted except the grunts, and those we can't use."

*Canadian Lumber Magnate* — "Well, in my line we waste nothing. The trees go into the machines exactly as they are felled and come out the far end in the form of paper. We use even the bark."

● 880

A man named Dodgin was recently appointed foreman at a factory, but his name was not known to all the employees. One day while on his rounds he came across two men sitting in a corner, smoking, and stopped near them.

"Who are you?" said one of the men.

"I'm Dodgin, the new foreman," he replied.

"So are we," replied the other workers, "sit down and have a smoke."

● 881

A tailor affirms that he guarantees to give each of his customers a perfect fit.

● 882

A school-teacher asked the pupils to write a short essay and to choose their own subjects.

A little girl sent in the following paper:

"My subjek is 'Ants.' Ants is of two kinds, insects and lady uncles.

"Sometimes they live in holes and sometimes they crawl into the sugar bole, and sometimes they live with their married sisters.

"That is all I know about ants."

● 883

An elderly lady in one of the railway coaches inquired of the fresh young trainman what the train was stopping for.

"Engine was out late last night, ma'am," he grinned, "so she's got a thirst on her this morning. They're givin' her a drop o' water."

"Sure it's water?" the old lady asked.

"If you'll wait a second, ma'am, I'll inquire whether they're givin' 'er hard cider."

"Never mind, young man," came the answer, "but I thought, perhaps, by the way we have been dragging along she was run on sloe gin."

● 884

"No, fat-head, I said GUE-RILLA, not GORILLA tactics."



● 885

Here lies an honest lawyer,  
And that is Strange.

(The famous epitaph on Sir John Strange that compliments him at the expense of the whole legal profession).

● 886

It was the eve of March 13th. "Chico," said Groucho Marx sadly, "the time has come to discuss our taxes."

"Datsa where my friend Ravelli lives," said Chico.

"No, no," corrected Graucho. "Not Texas. Taxes. The dollars we have to pay the government."

"Datsa what I said," insisted Chico. "Dallas, Texas."

● 887

His wife was a Wave; he waved at a Wac.

The Wac was in front, but his wife was in back.

Instead of a wave from the Wac, it is said,

What he got was a whack from the Wave he had wed.

● 888

What is it that is black and white, and yet red all over?  
(A newspaper: the paper is white and the words are black, and it is read all over.)

● 889

Do you know the difference between a honeycomb and a honeymoon?

Well, a honeycomb is made up of masy small cells; a honeymoon of one great sell.

● 890

Enthusiastic Agent — "Now, there is, a house without a flaw!"

Harvard Man — "My gosh, what do you walk on?"

● 891

Artillery Commander — "Fire at will!"

Recruit — "Where's Will?"

● 892

"I suppose Thompson is the most pious fellow I know."

"Why, he never struck me that way. In fact I always thought him rather worldly."

"Well, I happen to know for a fact that he never kisses his girl without saying grace."

"Why, what in the world does he do that for?"

"That's her name."

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● 893

When Charles Darwin was visiting the country house of a friend, the two boys of the family thought they would play a joke on the scientist. So they caught a butterfly, a grasshopper, a beetle, and a centipede, and out of these creatures they made a strange composite insect. They took the centipede's body, the butterfly's wings, the grasshopper's legs, and the beetle's head, and they glued them together carefully. Then, with their new bug in a box, they knocked at Darwin's door.

"We caught this bug in a field," they said. "Can you tell us what kind of a bug it is, Mr. Darwin?"

Darwin looked at the bug and then looked at the boys. He smiled slightly.

"Did you notice whether it hummed when you caught it, boys?" he asked.

"Yes," they answered, nudging one another.

"Then," said Darwin, "it is a hum-bug."

● 894

A woman went to a butcher shop to buy a chicken. The butcher asked, "Do you wanna pullet?" The woman answered, "No, I'll carry it."

● 895

*Professor* — "So, sir, you said that I was a learned jackass, did you?"

*Frechie* — "No, sir. I merely remarked that you were a bur-ro of information."

● 896

a

*Schoolboy* — "Garn, I ain't done it."

*Haughty Schoolmistress* — "Tommy, Tommy, where is your grammar?"

*Schoolboy* — "She's a tome in bed, teacher, with the noo-monier."

b

"Are your father and mother in?" asked the visitor of the small boy who opened the door.

"They was in," said the child, "but they is out."

"They was in. They is out. Where's your grammar?"

"She's gone upstairs," said the boy, "for a nap."

● 897

"That's a swell rooting section they have at that college. What makes it so good?"

"Oh, they give all the rooters a cheering drink."

"Of what?"

"Don't be dumb. Root beer, of course."

● 898

A celebrated comedian arranged with his greengrocer, one Berry, to pay him quarterly; but the greengrocer sent in his account long before the quarter was due. The comedian, in great wrath, called upon the greengrocer, and, labouring under the impression that his credit was doubted, said: "I say, here's a mull, Berry; you have sent in your bill, Berry; before it is due, Berry. Your father, the elder, Berry, would not have been such a goose, Berry; but you need not look black, Berry; for I don't care a straw, Berry; and I shan't pay you till Christmas, Berry."

● 899

"Waiter!"

"Yes, sir."

"What's this?"

"It's bean soup, sir."

"No matter what it's been. What is it now?"

● 900

What is the difference between a schoolmaster and an engine-driver?

(One minds the train, and the other trains the mind.)

● 901

"You should meet my husband. He makes a living with his pen."

"Oh, so he's a writer?"

"No, he raises pigs."

● 902

A Cry from Kent

Prosperity's fled from our gardens and grounds;

How spindly our vines and how scanty our crops!

Wealth *may* be "advancing by leaps and by bounds,"

It certainly isn't by *hops*!

● 903

*Farmer* — "Where 'ave you been all this time? And where's the old mare — didn't ye have her shod as I told ye?"  
*Farge* — "Shod! Law, no, master. I bin a buryin' shel! Didn't I think thee said 'shot'!"



● 904

Gibbon, the historian, was one day attending the trial of Warren Hastings in Westminster Hall, and Sheridan, having perceived him there, took occasion to mention "the luminous author of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*." After he had finished, one of his friends reproached him with flattering Gibbon.

"Why, what did I say of him?" asked Sheridan.

"You called him the luminous author."

"Luminous. Oh, I meant voluminous!"

● 905

"What did the telephone girl say to you when she broke the engagement?"

"Ring off."

● 906

A gentleman was describing to Douglas Jerrold the story of his courtship and marriage — how his wife had been brought up in a convent, and was on the point of taking the veil, when his presence burst upon her enraptured sight, and she accepted him as her husband. Jerrold listened to the end of the story, and then quietly remarked, "Ahl she evidently thought you better than nun."

● 907

A religious and charitable woman noticed a very down-and-out sort of man standing at the corner of the street near her residence.

One morning she took compassion on him, pressed a dollar into his hand and whispered, "Never despair."

Next time she saw him he stopped her and handed her nine dollars.

"What does this mean?" she asked.

"It means, ma'am," said the man, "that 'Never Despair' won at 8 to 1."

● 908

What is the difference between a cat and a comma?

(A cat has its claws at the end of its paws, a comma its pause at the end of a clause)

● 909

"Some men are born great, some achieve greatness —"

"And some just grate upon you."

● 910

*Matrimony (by a musical cynic)*: The common c(h)ord of two flats.

● 911

*Momma (singing)* — "By low, my baby."

*Poppa* — "That's right you tell him to buy low and I'll teach him to sell high."

● 912

Every girl likes to be well groomed at her wedding.

(Dorothy Parker)

● 913

The ladies at the Club were talking about a conversation they had overheard in the morning between a man and his wife.

"They must have been at the Zoo," said Mrs. A., "because I heard her mention 'a trained deer'."

"Goodness me!" laughed Mrs. B. "What queer hearing you must have! They were talking about going away and she said: 'Find out about the train, dear'."

"Well did anybody ever?" exclaimed Mrs. C., "I am sure they were talking about musicians, for she said 'a trained ear' as distinctly as could be."

The discussion was beginning to warm up, when in the midst of it the lady herself appeared. They carried their case to her promptly, and asked for a settlement.

"Well, well, you do beat all!" she exclaimed, after hearing each one. "I'd been out to the country overnight, and I was asking my husband if *it rained here* last night."

● 914

The man who is always asking for a loan is always left alone.

● 915

A doctor fell in a well,  
And broke his collarbone.  
The doctor should attend the sick  
And leave the well alone.

● 916

A Frenchman stopped a newsboy in New York City to make some inquiries of his whereabouts. "Mon fren, what is ze name of zis street?"

"Well, who said 'twant'?"

"What you call him, zis street?"

"Of course we do!"

"Pardonnez! I have not the name vat you call him."

"Yes, Watts we call it."

"How you call ze name of zis street?"

"Watts street, I told yer."

"Zis street."

"Watts street, old feller, and don't you go to make game o' me."

"Sacré! I ask you one, two, tree several times oftin, vill you tell me ze name of ze street-eh?"

"Watts strêet, I tole yer. Yer drunk, ain't yer?"

● 917

*First Guest* — "I'm sure I don't know why they call this hotel 'The Palms,' do you? I've never seen a palm anywhere near the place."

*Second Guest* — "You'll see them before you go. It's a pleasant little surprise the waiters keep for the guests on the last day of their stay."

● 918

"When rain falls, does it ever arise again?" asked the professor of chemistry.

"Yes, sir."

"When?"

"Why, in dew time —"

"That will do. You can sit down."

● 919

*Serious and Much-Married Man* — "My dear friend, I was astonished to hear of your dining at Madame Troisétolles! — a 'woman with a past', you know!"

*The Friend (bachelor "unattached")* — "Well, you see, old man, she's got a first-rate chef, so it isn't her 'past', but her 're-past' that I care about."

● 920

*Mrs. Gray* — "I like to have a man about, don't you?"

*Mrs. Green* — "Provided I know what he is about."

● 921

A depot officer in a mountainous theater received a shipment on which there was a donkey, described on a bill as 'one burro.' After checking his cargo, the man made his report to the Depot Quartermaster.

"Short one bureau; over one jackass."

● 922

"Guess my pen will have to go on itching."

"Why?"

"I'm out of scratch paper."

● 923

"What do you think of these new French shorts they're showing?"

"O. K., I guess, but I still like the newsreels better."

● 924

"Are you reading yourself to sleep with that story?"

"Yes, it's a great 'yawn'."

● 925

*Diner* — "Waiter, this soup is spoiled."

*Waiter* — "Who told you?"

*Diner* — "A little swallow."

● 926

*Judge (in traffic court)* — "I'll let you off with a fine this time, but another day I'll send you to jail."

*Driver* — "Sort of a weather-forecast, eh, Judge?"

"What do you mean?"

"Fine to-day — Cooler tomorrow."

● 927

"O, Uncle John, Miss Green and Mr. Smith are in the parlour, and she has her head on his shoulder."

"That's all right, Willie. She has a lien on him."

● 928

*Second-hand Car Salesman (on trial ground)* — "This car is sound in every part."

*Prospective Buyer* — "So I hear."

● 929

"Are mosquitoes religious?"

"Yes. They first sing over you and then prey on you."

● 930

a

"I love thee still," said the quiet husband to the chattering wife.

b

*Wifey* — "Do you love me still?"

*Hubby* — "I might if you'd stay still long enough."

● 931

Husband and wife were enjoying a quiet evening by their fireside, he deep in a book and she in a crossword puzzle. Suddenly she questioned him:

"Darling, what is a female sheep?"

"Ewe," he replied. His further explanation hardly soothed her.

● 932

A recent visitor to an English prison discovered among the inmates a man whom he knew. This particular prisoner had been finally laid by the heels for swindling, though for quite a time he had cut a large figure in English public life. But there he was making sacks.

The visitor went up to him and said. "Why how do you do, Mr. Bottomley? What are you doing — sewing?"

"No — reaping."

● 933

Why is an old chair that has a new bottom put to it like a paid bill?

(*Because it has been re-seated (receipted)*)

● 934

"There's one strange thing about our soprano."

"No; you don't say so! What is it?"

"Merely that her solo is always so high."

● 935

*Girl* — "Doctor, is there anything wrong with me?"

*Doctor* — "Yes, but it's trifling."

*Girl* — "Oh, but I don't think that's so very wrong, do you?"

● 936

A journalist on a North Country paper says he couldn't resist sending this from the *Newcastle Evening Chronicle*: TWO REMANDED IN CIGARETTE CASE — and adds that he'd no idea Newcastle's police vans were so overcrowded.

● 937

A man went into a restaurant and had a "sizzling platter" of sole. On the way to the cashier's desk he happened to notice how the item was entered on his check: "1 sizzling soul."

● 938

Someone was praising public schools to Charles Lamb and remarked:

"Then there's Byron; he was a Harrow boy."

"Yes," interrupted Lamb, "and there's Burns; he was a ploughboy."

● 939

"I spent last summer in a very pretty city in Switzerland."

"Berne?"

"No, I almost froze."

● 940

Why is a book like a king?

(*Because it has many pages*)

● 941

A hatter displays on his windows the notice:

"My felt hats fit so well that they cannot be felt."

● 942

*John* — "Don't you think I'm rather good looking?"

*Jane* — "In a way."

*John* — "What kind of a way?"

*Jane* — "Away off."

a

Three slightly deaf men were motoring from the north to London in an old, noisy car, and hearing was difficult. As they were nearing the city, one asked:

"Is this Wembly?"

"No," replied the second, "this is Thursday."

"So am I," put in the third. "Let's stop and have one."

b

Two old friends, both elderly and rather deaf, stood outside a bar where they had generously refreshed themselves.

Said A to B, "I say, old man, which way to Wembley?"

B to A, "No, not Wednesday, it's Thursday."

A to B, "Thirsty? So am I; let's go back and have one more."

● 944

Teacher — "Johnny, do you know who built the Ark?"

Johnny — "No."

Teacher — "Correct for once in your life."

● 945

When are stockings like dead men?

When they are men-ded; when their soles are departed; when they are in holes; when they are past heeling; when they are no longer on their last legs.

● 946

A teacher called for sentences using the word "beans."

"My father grows beans," said the bright boy of the class.

"My mother cooks beans," said another pupil.

Then a third popped up: "We are all human beans."

● 947

A small boy stood in the entrance to the cobbler's shop watching the man at work.

"What do you repair boots with, mister?" he suddenly asked.

"Hide," replied the cobbler sharply.

"E-r-r, eh?" asked the boy.

"I said hide," replied the cobbler impatiently.

"What for?" the boy insisted, somewhat surprised.

"Hide! The cow's outside," sighed the man.

"Don't care if it is. Who's afraid of a cow anyway?" said the youngster defiantly.

● 948

"Could I see General Blank?"

"I'm sorry, but General Blank is ill today."

"What made him ill?"

"Oh, things in general."

● 949

What did the sceptic say to the inventor of the steam engine?

(*"Hm! 'o S.."*)

● 950

"How can I pay when I haven't any money?" said the debtor. "You can't get blood out of a turnip."

But the collector was ready for him: "You're not a turnip — you're a beat."

● 951

"Good morning, sir. I'm a bond salesman."

"That's all right, my good fellow. Here's a half dollar — go buy yourself a square meal."

● 952

A Greek professor tore his suit and took it to a tailor who actually had been born in Athens. The tailor examined the suit and asked, "Euripides?" "Yes," said the professor. "Eumenides."

● 953

Doctor — "Now remember, my man, three or four drops of this mixture three times a day — and inhale."

Patient — "Be I to take it in four or six hale, guv'nor?"

● 954

When has a farmer the best chance to see his pigs?

(*"When he has a sty in his eye"*)

● 955

Mistress — "You must exercise a little will power with him, nurse."

Nurse — "I do try to, mum, but you don't know his won't power."



● 956

What is the difference between a soldier and a young girl?

*(One powders the face, and the other faces the powder)*

● 957

"Why should a straw hat never be raised to a lady?"

"Well, that's a very hard question."

"Because no matter how much you shake it, or how much she appreciates it, it is never felt."

● 958

The U. S. Army Department turned out Fact Sheets in an attempt to set the facts in order for the press and Congress which accused the Army of corruption and mismanagement. The Fact Sheets were called "Statement of Army Position." However these publications had to be hastily withdrawn when a perceptive officer in Public Information noted that the initials spelled SOAP.

● 959

*a*

A doctor was diagnosing the complaint of a pretty young girl.

"You've got acute appendicitis," he said, at last. The girl sat up indignantly.

"Say, don't get fresh," she said. "I want to be examined, not admired."

*b*

The dentist stood back and shook his head at the young thing in the chair. "My dear," he said. "I don't like to tell you this, but you've got acute pyorrhea." "Never mind that now, Doctor," snapped the young thing. "Just get on with your dentistry."

● 960

A teacher was giving her class a lesson on gardening.

"Now," she asked, "who can tell me what herbaceous border means?"

There was a pause, then a small voice said: "Please, miss, it's a lodger who doesn't eat meat."

● 961

"Have you noticed how Ashton drops his aspirates?"

"It's nothing to the way he drops his vowels. I've got more than a dozen of his I. O. Us."

● 962

The longer the spoke the bigger the tire.

● 963

"Do you know Art?"

"Art who?"

"Artesian."

"Sure. I know Artesian well."

● 964

*Man* — "The husband ought to have a voice in the furnishing of the home," says a woman writer."

*Brother* — "Oh, but he does — the invoice."

● 965

A cynic was standing in front of an exhibition of local art talent labelled, "Art Objects."

"Well," he announced to the attendant in charge, "I should think Art would object, and I can't say that I blame her."

● 966

"Girls make me tired," said the fresh young man. "They are always to palmists to have their hands read."

"Indeed!" said she sweetly; "is that any worse than men going into saloons to get their noses red?"

● 967

*Restaurant Patron* — "I ordered rolls, waiter. Will they be long?"

*Waiter* — "No, sir; they'll be round. We're quite out of the long ones, sir."

● 968

The following conversation took place between a visiting American and an Eton schoolmaster.

"Do you allow your boys to smoke?" the American asked.

"I'm afraid not," was the reply.

"Can they drink?"

"Good gracious no."

"What about dates?"

"Oh, that's quite all right," said the master, "as long as they don't eat too many."

● 969

*Father (reprovingly)* — "Do you know what happens to liars when they die?"

*Johnny* — "Yes, sir; they lie still."

● 970

*First Pilot* — "It makes me cross to see I haven't enough altitude."

*Second Pilot* — "It makes me soar, too."

● 971

*Producer* — "Our last picture was a super production."

*Critic* — "I thought it looked as if a super had produced it."

● 972

*Teacher* — "Johnny, can you tell me how iron was discovered?"

*Johnny* — "I heard Dad say yesterday that they smelt it."

● 973

Little Tommy had spent his first day at school.

"What happened?" he was asked on his return home.

"Nothin'. A woman wanted to know how to spell *cat*, and I told her."

● 974

Which is the strongest day of the seven?

*(Sunday, because the others are week days)*

● 975

Why do women seek husbands named William?

So they can have a Will of their own.

● 976

"Do you know some things are getting very cheap now?"

"What, for instance?"

"Well, you can get all the cologne that you want for a scent."

See also 13, 417, 421, 645, 679, 806, 997, 1006, 1037, 1045, 1056, 1068, 1084, 1102, 1113, 1136, 1156, 1161, 1176, 1179, 1190, 1240, 1264, 1265, 1294, 1313, 1319, 1330, 1331, 1332, 1346, 1351, 1353, 1447.

### Synonymy and Antonymy

● 977

*Synonym*: Word you write when you can't spell the other.

● 978

Mrs. Webster, the wife of Professor Webster, who compiled the dictionary named after him, returned home one day to find her husband in the kitchen dallying with the maid. "Oh, Fred!" she exclaimed, "I am surprised!" "My dear," he replied unperturbed, "as the wife of an eminent lexicographer you should know that you are astonished. It is I who am surprised!"

● 979

A girl may love you from the bottom of her heart, but there's always room for some other guy at the top.

● 980

"Strange Alice should invite that horrid grasswidow to her wedding; she has such a disagreeable past."

"Yes, my dear, but she's rich enough to furnish a very agreeable present."

● 981

*Curious Distinction*: The English love; the French make love.

● 982

Walter Winchell attended a dinner party for which Beatrice Lillie (Lady Peel in private life) had trotted out the family pearls. A malicious rival murmured "I can't believe those pearls are genuine, my dear. They say you can always tell by biting them. Would you let me try?" "Certainly," said Miss Lillie promptly. "But remember, my sweet, that you can't tell real pearls with false teeth."

● 983

"You're not THRIFTY, Roger Begley, you're just plain CHEAP."



● 984

*Waitress* — "Have you given your order?"

*Customer* — "Yes, but I should like to change it to an entreaty."

● 985

*Bell Hop* — "Did you ring, sir?"

*Irate Guest* — "No, I was tolling. I thought you were dead."

● 986

Disraeli defined the difference between a misfortune and a calamity: "If Gladstone fell into the Thames, that would be a misfortune; if anybody pulled him out, that would be a calamity."

● 987

Trying to eclipse his brother's gift of a Cadillac, a Hollywood producer paid ten thousand dollars for an amazing mynah bird to give his mother on her birthday. The bird spoke eleven languages and sang grand opera.

On the night of her birthday he put through a long-distance call. "What did you think of the bird, Mamma?" he asked.

"Delicious!" she said.

See also 83, 86, 88, 911, 921, 1061, 1336.

### Metaphor

● 988

*Summer Boarder* — "What a beautiful view that is!"

*Farmer* — "Maybe. But if you had to plow that view, harrow it, cultivate it, hoe it, mow it, fence it and pay taxes on it, it would look derved ornery."

● 989

"Do you sing and play much?" a young man asked the pretty girl who was carelessly thrumming the keys of the piano.

"Only to kill time," she replied.

"You've got a fine weapon. I must admit," ventured the young man.

● 990

"What is puppy love?"

"It's the beginning of a dog's life."

● 991

The housewife passed a handout to the disreputable hobo standing at her back door, and as she did so she remarked curtly:

"Eat it outside, if you don't mind."

"If I don't mind?"

"Yes, that's what I said."

"Why, bless yer ma'am, I don't mind. I'm used to it. When I was at home and in clover, as it were, it was me daily custom, when donnin' me dress suit, to announce to me valet. 'Parkins, don't await dinner fer me tonight. I'm dinin' out.'"

● 992

"I understand that the boss's son started at the foot of the ladder and worked up."

"Oh, yeh! But the ladder was stepped on an upper floor."

● 993

*Evangelist* — "Don't you want to come and labour in the Lord's vine-yard?"

*Ole* — "No. Ay got fine job with Yon Yonson already."

● 994

*Doctor (ecstatically)* — "Sir, yours is a case which will enrich medical science!"

*Patient* — "Oh, dear, and I thought I wouldn't have to pay more than five or ten dollars."

● 995

A foreign visitor at Hitler's General Headquarters asked his companion: "Who is that brave general so heavily be-medalled. Probably he's won very many glorious victories?"

"Yes, very many indeed."

"What unit does he command?"

"None. He compiles our war communiques," was the answer.

● 996

"Just as Hopkins and the widow Jones started up the aisle to the altar every light in the church went out."

"What did they do then?"

"Kept right on going, the widow knew the way."

● 997

Upon a reception of the Marquis Lafayette in Philadelphia, during his last visit to America, Colonel Forrest, one of the Revolutionary officers, upon being presented, burst into tears, upon which Judge Peters, who was standing at the side of the marquis, dryly observed:

"Why, Tom, I took you for a Forrest tree, but you turn out to be a weeping willow."

● 998

To the Bride —

Her eyes kindle the only flame against which there is no insurance.

● 999

"You're a pretty sharp boy, Tommy."

"Well, I ought to be. Pa takes me into his room and strokes me three or four times a week."

● 1000

"Rah for Ireland!" yelled Pat.

"Rah for hell!" roared a disgusted Tory.

"Iverywan for his own country!" came back Pat.

● 1001

Jane — "Would you be insulted if that good looking stranger offered you some champagne?"

Joan — "Yes, but I'd probably swallow the insult."

● 1002

"What? You were out with Betty last night? But I thought she threw you over."

"Well, you know how a girl throws!"

● 1003

Robert returned from school with his report card for his mother's inspection. "But, dear," she said, "what's the trouble? Why have you such poor grades this month?"

"There's no trouble, mom," was the quick reply. "You know yourself things are always marked down after the holidays."

● 1004

The baby sardine saw its first submarine, and went swimming in terror to its mother.

"Don't be frightened, darling," she reassured him, "it's only a can of people."

● 1005

The insurance adjuster who had been investigating the fire turned to go.

"I came down here to find out the cause of this fire and I have done so," he remarked.

"That's what I want to know. What caused it?" remarked the house owner.

"It's a plain case of friction."

"What-ya-mean — friction?"

"The fire was undoubtedly caused by rubbing a three thousand dollar insurance policy on a two thousand dollar house."

● 1006

An awful curious bore, learning that a young lady was going to another city, asked: "What motive is taking you there, my dear?"

"I believe they call it a locomotive."

● 1007

Some fellows believe in dreams until they marry one.

● 1008

She was home from college for the holidays, and the old folks were having a reception in her honor. During the event she brought out some of her new gowns to show to the guests. Picking up a beautiful silk creation, she held it up before the admiring crowd.

"Isn't this perfectly gorgeous!" she exclaimed. "Just think, it came from a poor little insignificant worm!"

Her hard-working father looked a moment, then he turned and said: "Yes, darn it, an' I'm that worm!"

● 1009

Two travellers arrived at the hotel and were shown a rather dingy room.

"What," said one, "does this pigsty cost?"

Promptly the proprietor replied: "For one pig two dollars; for two pigs, three dollars."

● 1010

The art of hitting a nail squarely on the head is one I have never mastered. But one day I did manage to nail a strip of board to the kitchen wall to make more room for utensils. True, the board bore more hammer marks than nails but at least it was up.

That evening my husband studied the new strip now bravely painted but still bearing the marks of the battle.

"What did you do, dear," he asked gently, "score them in?"

● 1011

"Your wife looks stunning tonight. Her gown is a poem."

"What do you mean, poem?" replied the struggling author. "That gown is two poems and a short story."

● 1012

What is it that walks with its head downwards?

*(A nail in the shoe)*

● 1013

Guest — "My word, but I'm thirsty."

Waiter — "Wait a minute and I'll get you some water."

Guest — "I said thirsty, not dirty."

● 1014

Critic — "Your work seems a little raw."

Poet — "It oughtn't to be. It's been roasted enough."

See also 18, 31, 370, 414, 492, 520, 617, 847, 979, 1435, 1444.

**Borrowings. Wrong or Excessive Use,  
Mis- or Nonunderstanding**

● 1015

"And when Mrs. Gubbins sez you wasn't no lidy, wot did yer say?"

"I sez, 'Two negatives means an infirmiry,' and I knocks 'er down. She is now in the 'orspital."

● 1016

"What are you studying in college now?" asked the fond mother of her son, who was a freshman.

"We have just taken up molecules."

"That's fine. I hope you will like them. I always tried to get your father to wear one, but he could not keep it in his eye."

● 1017

Two ladies were attending a concert or something at the Civic Auditorium. Seated in the parquet, they looked about them.

"Nice building," said one lady. "What style of architecture is it?"

"I'm not quite sure," said the other lady, "but I think it's Reminiscence."

● 1018

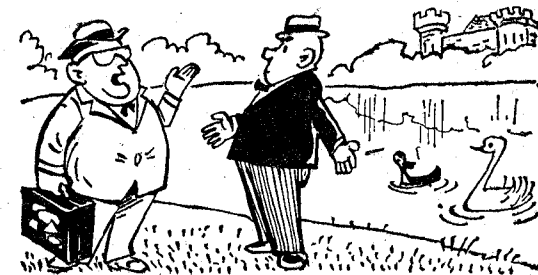
Customer — "Why do they call this course 'pièce de resistance'?"

Waiter — "Wait till you try it."

● 1019

First Town Councillor (who had recently been to Venice) — "Now that we've a people's park, and a lake in it, I should suggest that half a dozen gondolas might be purchased, as they'd give a —"

Second Ditto (untraveller) — "Oh, I don't see the good of havin' any more o'them foreign birds! We've plenty o' ducks an' geese already! 't any rate a pair would be enough to breed from. As to 'alf a dozen, I consider it'd be a waste o' public money, an' I'll oppose it tooth and —"



● 1020

The hotel clerk was astonished to see a guest parading through the foyer in a pair of pajamas.

"Here, what are you doing?"

The guest snapped out of it and apologized:

"Beg pardon. I'm a somnambulist."

"Well," sneered the clerk, "you can't walk around here like that, no matter what your religion is."

● 1021

Two men were discussing the vexed question of the education of their children. Said one:

"What's your boy going to be when he finishes his education?"

"An octogenarian, I think," replied the other.

● 1022

"What's that prima donna angry about?"

"Oh, some well-meaning critic said she sang like a siren. The only siren she knows anything about is the whistle they use on a steam-boat."

● 1023

*Agent (to newly rich client, engaging talent for her "At Home")* — "What about Madame D'Oprano?"

*Client* — "Is she good?"

*Agent* — "Good? Why, she's a great virtuosa."

*Client* — "Never mind about her morals. Can she sing?"

● 1024

"If you are tired of dancing, let us sit down and have a little tête-à-tête."

"No, thank you. After such a big supper I really couldn't eat a thing."

● 1025

"And now, Mrs. Sullivan," said Lawyer Thomson, "will you be kind enough to tell the jury whether your husband was in the habit of striking you with impunity?"

"Wid what, sir?"

"With impunity."

"He wuz, sir, now and thin; but he sthrudd me ofthener wid his fisht."

● 1026

A script was submitted to a producer. The movie boss took one quick look at the title and handed it back to the author with a sorrowful smile.

The author of the story was puzzled. He hadn't been in pictures very long.

"But you didn't read it!"

The big boss was patient. "The title. 'The Optimist! Me and you knows what it means but how many of them thick skulls out in front is gonna know it's a eye doctor?'"

● 1027

*Judge (sternly to Pat and Mike, who have been arrested for fighting)* — "Now, which one of you took the initiative?"

*Prisoners (in unison)* — "Begorra, sir, not I; wan of the bystanders must have sneaked it."

See also 503, 904, 1044, 1046, 1048, 1052, 1055, 1057, 1064—1067, 1088.

## Toponymy

● 1028

Grandma Jackson and her young grandson were riding on a train. Grandma had dozed and suddenly she sat up. "What was that station the conductor called?" she asked the boy.

"He didn't announce any station; he just put his head in the door and sneezed."

"Get the bundles together quickly," said grandma. "This is Oshkosh."

● 1029

A woman travelling by train was talking with the man in the next seat. In describing her holiday, she said that she had visited San Jose.

"You pronounce that wrong," said the man. "It is San Hosay. In California you should pronounce all J's as H's. When were you there?"

The woman thought a minute, then answered, "In Hune and Huly."

● 1030

*Englishman* — "Odd names your towns have. Hoboken, Weehawken, Oshkosh, Poughkeepsie."

*American* — "I suppose they do sound queer to English ears. Do you live in London all of the time?"

*Englishman* — "No indeed. I spend part of my time at Chipping Norton, and divide the rest between Bigglewade and Leighton Buzzard."

See also 827, 830, 844, 865, 886, 916, 938, 939, 943, 1395, 1409, 1435.

## Anthroponymy

● 1031

What belongs only to you, and yet is used more by others than by yourself?  
(Your name)

● 1032

Regularly each year for ten years Mrs. Grover Cleveland Filliken presented her husband with a bouncing new baby, and there followed the business of going to the local church for the christening. The first baby was named Eustace William Jennings Bryan Euripides Obadiah Filliken. Each succeeding baby had a name that was a little bit longer and more elaborate. When she arrived with

the eleventh baby, the vicar was waiting for her with a stern look on his face. "Mrs. Filliken," he said, "I am sorry to say that our little parish has reached the end of its resources. From now on you really must bring your own ink."

● 1033

*Policeman (producing notebook)* — "Name, please."

*Motorist* — "Aloysius-Alastair-Cyprian —"

*Policeman (putting book away)* — "Well, don't let me catch you again."

● 1034

He was the only witness to the car accident. The cop asked his name. "John Smith," he said.

"Give us your real name," ordered the cop.

"Well," said the witness, "put me down as William Shakespeare."

"That's better," said the cop, "you can't fool me with that Smith stuff."

● 1035

A lady of some beauty whose surname was Birch was seated at dinner next to a man with a strong sense of humour. After a few polite exchanges the lady enquired: "Are you acquainted with any of the Birches?" "Yes indeed," he replied, "with several of them at school and I can't say I liked them at all!" "And why was that?" she asked curtly. "Well, you know," he said, "they cut me; but I must say I never felt more inclined to kiss the rod than I do now!" And her good humour was restored.

● 1036

"She's so fashion-conscious! She had them christened Mini and Maxi."



● 1037

*First Student* — "Great Scott! I've forgotten who wrote *Ivanhoe*."

*Second Ditto* — "I'll tell you if you tell me who the dickens wrote *The Tale of Two Cities*."

● 1038

A clergyman from northeastern Pennsylvania tells the story of an Italian who brought his baby to him to be baptized.

"Now," he said, "you see you baptize heem right. Last time I tell you I want my bay call 'Tom,' you call heem Thomas. Thees time I want heem call 'Jack,' I no want you call him Jackass!"

● 1039

*Minister (at baptism of baby)* — "His name, please."

*Mother* — "Randolph Morgan Montgomery Alfred Van Christopher MsGoof."

*Minister (to assistant)* — "A little more water."

● 1040

The circus was doing badly and funds sank lower and lower. At last the cashier pinned up a notice announcing that in future salaries would be paid as funds permitted, and that artists would be paid in the alphabetical order of names.

Next day Zero, the strong man, called on the cashier.

"I have come," he said, "to tell you that I have changed my name."

"Oh!" replied the cashier. "And what are you going to call yourself now?"

"Achilles."

● 1041

Longfellow, the poet, was introduced to one Longworth, and some one noticed the similarity of the first syllable of the names.

"Yes," said the poet, "but in this case I fear Pope's line will apply — 'Worth makes the man, the want of it the fellow.'"

● 1042

A stranger accosted an Irishman walking along a roadway in New Jersey.

"Say, Pat, how far is it to Newark?"

"How did ye know my name?"

"I guessed it."

"Thin guess how far it is to Newark."

● 1043

"I'm going to marry a patrolman."

"How thrilling! What's his name?"

"I don't know his name, but I've got his number."

See also 377, 386, 423, 426—430, 432, 434, 515, 661, 699, 833, 834, 859, 866, 880, 885, 891, 892, 898, 916, 963, 997, 1045, 1072, 1102, 1116, 1179, 1234, 1308, 1309, 1419, 1433.

### Technicalities

● 1044

"Where did the car hit him?" asked the coroner.

"At the junction of the dorsal and cervical vertebrae," replied the medical witness.

The burly foreman rose from his seat.

"Man and boy, I've lived in these parts for fifty years," he protested ponderously, "and I have never heard of the place."

● 1045

Mrs. Simpson moved into a new hotel and, before she went out to buy herself a radio, called up the desk. "Have you AC or DC current here?" she asked.

"One minute," said the clerk, and returned to report, "I am sorry, madam, but neither is registered with us."

● 1046

This is Professor Brown talking. No — not Bond — Brown. *B* as in Brontosaurus, *R* as in Rhizophoraceae, *O* as in Opisthotelae, *W* as in Willingbalya and *N* as in Nucifraga — Brown. Do you comprehend?

● 1047

Commencing the discussion having to do with the atomic theory, the instructor of a physical class in the nukes course wrote an equation on the board and stated that a certain number of electrons were involved. From this he developed an entire board full of equations winding up at the bottom with:

"So you see, we have five less electrons than at the start. What has become of them?"

No answer from the class. Sternly the instructor asked: "Well, where are those electrons?"

From a rear seat came a gruff command of the top sergeant: "Nobody leaves this room till they're found!"

● 1048

The parish priest heard that Paddy, an ignorant but wealthy member of his flock, had made a will in favour of the State University. "And why not?" Paddy said, "for if I had been an educated man I should have gone much further, so I intend to help the poor students." "You don't know what a place it is," said the priest, "now do ye? It's nothing at all you know. Why, the boys and girls in that place share the same curriculum!" Paddy said he had no idea it was so. "And," added the priest, "they spend most of their time in the seminars!" Paddy was horrified and altered his will.

● 1049

*Fond Mother* — "Yes, Genevieve is taking French and Algebra. Say 'Good morning' to Mrs. Jones in Algebra, darling."

● 1050

*Inspector (who notices backwardness in history)* — "Who signed Magna Charta?" (No answer).

*Inspector (more urgently)* — "Who signed Magna Charta?" (No answer).

*Inspector (angrily)* — "Who signed Magna Charta?"

*Scapègrace (thinking matters are beginning to look serious)* — "Please, sir, 'twasn't me, sir!"

● 1051

A sailor was called into the witness-box to give evidence.

"Well, sir," said the lawyer, "do you know the plaintiff and defendant?"

"I don't know the drift of them words," answered the sailor.

"What! Not know the meaning of 'plaintiff' and 'defendant'?" continued the lawyer. "A pretty fellow you to come here as a witness! Can you tell me where on board the ship was the man struck the other?"

"Abaft the binnacle," said the sailor.

"Abaft the binnacle," said the lawyer. "What do you mean by that?"

"A pretty fellow you," responded the sailor, "to come here as a lawyer, and don't know what 'abast the binnacle' means!"



● 1052

"Are you sure you have shown me all the principal parts of this car?" asked the fair prospective purchaser.

"Yes, madam, all the main ones," replied the dealer.

"Well, then, where is the depreciation? Tom told me that was one of the biggest things about a car."

● 1053

An Englishman was seeing his first game of baseball, and the fan was explaining the different plays as they were being made.

"Don't you think it's great?" enthusiastically asked the fan.

"Well," replied the Englishman, "I think it's very exciting, but also a very dangerous game."

"Dangerous nothing," replied the fan.

Just then a runner was put out at second base.

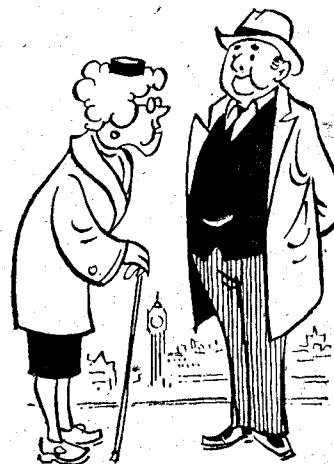
"What has happened now?" asked the Englishman.

"Chick Smith has died at second," laconically replied the fan.

"Died at second?" replied the astonished Briton. "I knew it was a dangerous game."

● 1054

*Doctor* — "Well, Mrs. Mugeridge, how are you getting on? Taken the medicine, eh?"  
*Mrs. M.* — "Yes, doctor. I've taken all the tabloids you sent, and now I want a new persecution."



● 1055

The doctor's new secretary, a conscientious girl, was puzzled by an entry in the doctor's notes on an emergency case: "Shot in the lumbar region," it read. After a moment

she brightened and, in the interest of clarity, typed into the record: "Shot in the woods."

● 1056

*Dear Old Lady* — "No, I'm afraid I know very little about golf. I couldn't even tell one end of a caddie from the other."

● 1057

"Papa", said the doting mother, "Robert's teacher says he ought to have an encyclopedia."

"Encyclopedia, my eye," grumbled the father. "Let him walk to school like I did."

● 1058

A student of military English asked the language instructor: "I don't know what to make of the sentence: 'If possible, the attack should be sandtabled so that infantry and tanks understand what others are going to do.'"

The instructor inquired: "You know what a sand table is used for?"

"Sure. For kittens."

● 1059

Fancy our dear old lady's horror when she heard that last week, at Lord's, a cricketer had bowled a maiden over. "Poor thing!" exclaimed Mrs. R., "I hope she was picked up again quickly, and wasn't much hurt."

● 1060

*English Exam. Question* — "Give three collective nouns?"  
*Student's Answer* — "Flypaper, wastebasket and vacuum cleaner."

● 1061

*Absent-minded Professor (to Pharmacist)* — "Give me some prepared monacetic-acidester of salicylic acid."

*Pharmacist* — "Do you mean aspirin?"

*Absent-minded Professor* — "That's right! I can never think of that name."

● 1062

"There is direct and indirect taxation. Give me an example of indirect taxation."

"The dog tax, sir."

"How is that?"

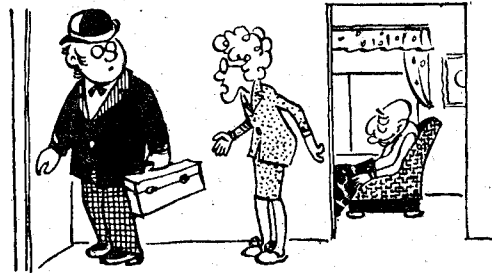
"The dog does not have to pay it."

● 1063

*Old Lady* — "My 'usband 'e nêver did 'old with doctors, and 'e wouldn't let me send for yer till 'e was real bad. What's wrong with him, doctor?"

*Doctor* — "Mainly senility, Mrs. Wilkins."

*Old Lady* — "Lor' now! An' I dessay, 'e wouldn't ave 'ad if 'e'd 'ad yer soon enough!"



● 1064

A man was tuning in on the radio, when he got a sudden twinge of pain in his back.

"I believe I'm getting lumbago!" he exclaimed.

"What's the use," answered his wife, "You won't understand a word they say."

● 1065

*Lecturer* — "Of course, you all know what the inside of a corpuscle is like."

*Chairman* — "Most of us do, but you'd better explain it for the benefit of them as have never been inside one."

● 1066

"May it please your honour," said a lawyer, addressing one of the city judges, "I brought the prisoner from jail on a habeas corpus."

"Wee," said a fellow in an undertone, who stood in the rear of the court, "these lawyers will say anything. I saw the man get out of a cab at the court door."

● 1067

A policeman rose in a Western court to testify against a prisoner. "Wot's this here feller charged with?" the magistrate demanded. "Bigotry, judge," the police answered. "He's got three wives." "Three!" cried the magistrate. "Why, you ignoramus, that ain't bigotry. That's trigonometry!"

● 1068

On the morning of an important recital in London, a famous American violinist stopped in at a small Leicester Square shop and asked the girl for an E string. "Yes, sir," she replied dubiously, and disappeared for several minutes. When she returned, she had in her hand a box full of assorted pieces of cord, string and old rubber hands. "Ere, sir," she said, "you pick hit yourself. I can't tell the bloody 'e strings from the she strings."

● 1069

*He* — "Look! Our captain is going to kick a goal!"

*She* — "What did the goal do?"

● 1070

A physician of an acrimonious disposition, and having a thorough hatred of lawyers, reproached a lawyer with the use of phrases utterly unintelligible.

"For example," said he, "I never could understand what you lawyers mean by docking an entail."

"That is very likely," answered the lawyer, "but I will explain it to you: it is doing what you doctors never consent to — suffering a recovery."

● 1071

A class of cadets were getting their introduction to engineer support techniques in river crossing operations. The instructor explained how a pontoon bridge was constructed. He described how pontoons were floated into the far shore and then secured to deadmen.

After the lecture a cadet asked the instructor if he was really serious about the deadmen. "Yes," replied the instructor. "They hold the bridge."

"But," persisted the cadet, "do you use ours or the enemy's?"

● 1072

"I don't like your heart action," the doctor said, applying the stethoscope again. "You have had some trouble with angina pectoris, haven't you?"

"You're right in a way, Doctor," said the young man sheepishly, "only that isn't her name."

See also 353, 397, 399, 404, 412, 413, 513, 521, 534, 570, 573, 681, 762, 905, 1082, 1130, 1377, 1380.

## Euphemisms

### ● 1073

"Mother, what does dee-dee stand for?"

"Doctor of Divinity, my dear. Don't they teach you such things in school?"

"Oh, yes; but it doesn't sound right here."

"Read it out loud, dear."

"The witness said he heard the defendant say 'I'll make you suffer for this, I'll be Doctor of Divinity if I don't.'"

See also 821, 1037, 1187, 1194.

## Etymology: Scholarly, Popular, Facetious

### ● 1074

*Wife* — "That new maid of ours must be from New York. She speaks of the nursery as the 'noisery'."

*Hubby* — "Well, I rather think that's the way it should be pronounced."

### ● 1075

"Yes," the teacher explained, "quite a number of plants and flowers have the prefix 'dog'. For instance, the dog-rose and the dog-violet are well-known. Can you name another?"

There was silence, then a happy look illuminated the face of a boy at the end of the class.

"Please, Miss," he called out, proud of his knowledge, "collie-flowers."

### ● 1076

*Englishman (patronizingly)* — "Your school facilities are excellent, I am told."

*American (suavely)* — "Well, I should say. See the Smithsonian Institution over there? Think of a building like that just to educate the Smiths!"

### ● 1077

"My instructor in English told me not to say 'hair-cut.'"

"How's that?"

"He said it was a barbarism."

### 1078

"Papa, why is it that dentists call their offices dental parlours?"

"Because they are drawing-rooms, my son."

### ● 1079

*Hotel Manager (to new guest)* — "I shall have to ask you to pay in advance. Your luggage is tooer-emotional."

*Guest* — "Emotional?"

"Yes — easily moved."

### ● 1080

*Captain* — "Is there any difference between a fort and a fortress?"

*Stude* — "I should imagine a fortress would be more difficult to silence."

### ● 1081

"I often think you can tell people's character by their gardens."

"I do, too. There's Miss Richlove, who is as mercenary as she can be, and the prominent plants in her garden are moneywort and marigold."

### ● 1082

*Village Doctor* — "Well Scroggins, I hope your wife is much better to-day, eh? How is her pulse, eh? And how's her temperature?"

*Scroggins (considering)* — "Well, doctor, I don't know much about her pulses, but as for her temper" — (*feeling-ly*) —

'she's got a plenty of *that* to-day!'



### ● 1083

A novelist who writes stories that are perhaps too good to be "best sellers" was asked by a little girl the meaning of the word penury. "Penury, my child," was the answer, "means the wages of the pen."

### ● 1084

Chivalry is how you feel when you're cold.

(*Schoolboy howler*)

● 1085

*Instructor* — "What is the feminine of bachelor?"

*Student* — "Er-r- lady-in-waiting."

● 1086

Why do we call our language the mother tongue?  
(*Because Father never gets a chance to use it*)

● 1087

*Teacher* — "Every day we breathe oxygen. What do we breathe at night, Willie?"

*Willie* — "Nitrogen."

● 1088

When the Kentucky colonel was in the North, some one asked him if the Kentuckians were in fact very bibulous.

"No, suh," the colonel declared. "I don't reckon they're mo' than a dozen Bibles in the whole state."

● 1089

"Talking of ants," said the American story teller, "we've got 'em as big as crabs out West. I've seen 'em fight with long horns, which they use as lances, charging each other like savages."

"They don't compare with the ants I saw in the Far East," said an inoffensive individual nearby. "The natives have trained them as beasts of burden. One of 'em could trail a ton-load for miles with ease. They worked willingly, but occasionally they turned on their attendants and killed them."

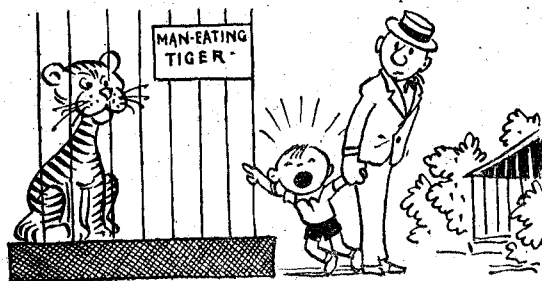
But this was drawing the long bow a little too far.

"I say, old chap," said a shocked voice from the corner, "what sort of ants were they?"

"Eleph-ants," replied the inoffensive individual.

● 1090

'He wants to stop and watch it being fed'



● 1091

*Magistrate* — "You have been sentenced eight times, and this makes the ninth. You ought to be thoroughly ashamed of yourself."

*Prisoner* — "I say, guv'nor, no man ought ter be ashamed of his convictions."

● 1092

A reader doesn't understand why goods sent by ship constitute a cargo, while goods sent in a car are a shipment.

See also 1023, 1057, 1425, 1434.

### Phraseology

● 1093

*Judge* — "The police say that you and your wife had some words."

*Prisoner* — "I had some, but I didn't get a chance to use them."

● 1094

*Splendid Fellow* — "There's nothing to beat an apple. You know the old saying, 'An apple a day keeps the doctor away.'"

*Cynic* — "Oh, isn't there? What about an onion or even peppermint? They'll keep everybody away."

● 1095

A father had been lecturing his young hopeful upon the evils of staying out late at night and getting up late in the morning.

"You will never amount to anything," he continued, "unless you turn over a new leaf. Remember that the early bird catches the worm."

"How about the worm, father?" inquired the young man. "Wasn't he rather foolish to get up so early?"

"My son," replied the father solemnly, "that worm hadn't been to bed all night; he was on his way home."

● 1096

From the *Bedfordshire Times and Standard*: "At the pleasant Wednesday afternoon meeting held in the Congregational Church schoolroom, Miss E. Boucher recited her poem of 206 verses entitled 'Mother's Last Words.'"

● 1097

A commercial traveller, on leaving a certain hotel, said to the proprietor: "Pardon me, but with what material do you stuff the beds in your establishment?"

"Why," said the landlord, proudly, "with the best straw to be found in the whole country!"

"That," returned the traveller, "is very interesting. I now know whence the straw came that broke the camel's back."

● 1098

Whiskey is about the only enemy man has succeeded in really loving.

● 1099

*Sign on the wall of a research laboratory:* "Consider the turtle — he doesn't make any progress unless he sticks his neck out."

● 1100

A woman submitted a torrid love story to a confession magazine and waited impatiently for several weeks for a reply. When none was forthcoming she wired, "Please report on my story immediately as I have other irons in the fire." An answering wire-collect read, "We have considered your story and advise you to put it with the other irons."

● 1101

What is that which you can keep, after giving it to someone else?

(*from now*)

● 1102

"So you are the new girl," said the young smart aleck to the new waitress in his hotel. "What shall we call you?"

"Pearl, sir."

"The Pearl of Great Price?"

"No, sir, the Pearl cast before swine."

● 1103

The proverb, "Where there's a will there's a way," is now revised to "When there's a bill we're away."

● 1104

"You know, Jim, I got into a discussion with the top sergeant to-day."

"You forget, Bob, that the soldier had better keep his mouth in two cases — when he's diving while swimming and when the Top's talking with him."

"That's right. But the discussion was whether my belt buckle was really shined or not. But I had the last word with him anyway."

"A mistake again, Bob. You should never talk back to the Top. What did you say?"

"I said: 'Yes, sir!'"

● 1105

"Yes, sir, Guiseppe goes to great lengths to please his restaurant patrons."

"In what way?"

"With spaghetti."

● 1106

A chemistry professor chalked a formula  $\text{HNO}_3$  on the blackboard. Then he wheeled about and pointed a finger at the sleepest member of the class. "Identify that formula," he demanded.

"Er, ah," stalled the unhappy student, "I've got it right on the tip of my tongue, sir."

"In that case," said the professor softly, "you'd better spit it out, my boy. It's nitric acid."

● 1107

A young man, sent by his employer to enquire about a house where a 'to let' board had been put up, was answered at the door by a very pretty maidservant. In the course of his enquiries he impertinently asked if she was to let with the establishment.

"Oh, no indeed, sir," she exclaimed, "I am to be let alone."

● 1108

Tom — "What would you do if you were in my shoes?"

Tim — "Polish them!"

● 1109

"I believe in calling a spade a spade," said the emphatic person.

"That's right, friend," replied Bronco Bob. "There was a man who nearly lost his life by gittin' into a game an' tryin' to call a spade a club."

● 1110

What did the bridegroom do when his wife made him a marble cake?

*(He took it for granite)*

● 1111

"Are you a back-seat driver?"

"Indeed I'm not. I sit right here where I can grab the wheel if he doesn't do what I tell him."

● 1112

*Lady* — "What is that peculiar odour I get from that field?"

*Farmer* — "That's fertilizer."

*Lady* — "Oh, for the land's sake!"

*Farmer* — "Yes, lady."

● 1113

The crow is not so bad a bird after all. It never shows the white feather and never complains without caws.

● 1114

*Guide* — "Quick! There's a full-grown leopard. Shoot him on the spot!"

*Lord Dumbleigh* — "Which spot? I say, be specific, my man."

● 1115

Sign in roadside eating place on a Maryland highway:

SOME PAY BEFORE DUE

SOME PAY WHEN DUE

SOME PAY WHEN PAST DUE

SOME NEVER DO

HOW DO YOU DO?

● 1116

A young woman once married a man by the name of Dust against the wish of her parents. After a short time they began to quarrel, and she attempted to return to her father's house, but he refused to receive her, saying, "Dust thou art, and unto Dust thou shall return."

● 1117

"Well, Denis, I hear as how ye were the best man at Mike's wedding."

"Well, no, mum, not exactly that I wuzn't in the weddin' — I were jist there; so I wuzn't the best man. But I wuz as good as any man there, an' that's no lie!"

● 1118

"If you spend so much time at golf you won't have anything laid aside for a rainy day."

"Won't I? My desk is loaded up with work that I've put aside for a rainy day."

● 1119

"I heard something this morning that opened my eyes."

"So did I — an alarm clock."

● 1120

"I understand that she fairly threw herself at him."

"Yes! They met in an automobile collision."

● 1121

"Last week a grain of sand got into my wife's eye and she had to go to a doctor. It cost me five dollars."

"That's nothing. Last week a fur coat got into my wife's eye and it cost me five hundred dollars."

● 1122

"Does the animal trainer in a circus get much money?"

"He sure does. He gets the lion's share of the money."

● 1123

*He (at football game)* — "That fellow out there playing centre will be our best man before the season is over."

*She* — "Oh, Jack, this is so sudden."

● 1124

*Fair Patient* — "They tell me, doctor, you are a perfect lady killer."

*Doctor* — "Oh, no-no! I assure you, my dear madam, I make no distinction between the sexes."

● 1125

*He* — "Don't you hate people who talk behind your back?"

*She* — "Yes, especially at the movies."

● 1126

"Our economics prof talks to himself. Does yours?"

"Yes, but he doesn't realize it — he thinks we're listening."

● 1127

"Which travels faster — heat or cold?"

"Heat, because you can catch cold easily."

● 1128

"What is the rod of affliction?" the Sunday-school teacher asked.

"Goldenrod," shouted the little girl whose mother has hay-fever every fall.

● 1129

"I'd hate to be in your shoes," said a woman yesterday, as she was quarreling with a neighbour.

"You couldn't get in them," sarcastically remarked the neighbour.

● 1130

*Dumb Dora* — "I don't see how football players ever get clean!"

*Ditto* — "Silly, what do you suppose the scrub teams are for?"

● 1131

"Doctor, I am sorry to drag you so far out in the country on such a bad night."

"Oh, it's all right because I have another patient near here so I can kill two birds with one stone."

● 1132

*Herbert* — "Arthur hasn't been out one night for three weeks."

*Flora* — "Has he turned over a new leaf?"

"No; he's turned over a new car."

● 1133

The doctor had an inveterate punster and wit among his patients. One day he was late in making his rounds, and explained to the incorrigible humourist that he had stopped to attend a man who had fallen down a well.

With a groan of agony, the wit mustered up strength enough to murmur: "Did he kick the bucket, doctor?"

● 1134

Marriage vows might be a trifle more accurate if the phrase were changed to read, "Until debt do us part."

● 1135

"Your office is as hot as an oven," said a client to his lawyer.

"So it ought to be. I make my bread here."

● 1136

*Maude* — "The ring of sincerity was in his voice when he told me of his love."

*May* — "It should have been in his hand. A ring in the hand is worth two in the voice."

● 1137

*Motorist* — "How far is it to the next town?"

*Native* — "Nigh on to five miles as the crow flies."

*Motorist* — "Well, how far is it if a damned crow has to walk and carry an empty gasoline can?"

● 1138

*Mrs. Newrich (looking over house plan)* — "What's this thing here going to be?"

*Architect* — "That is an Italian staircase."

*Mrs. Newrich* — "Just a waste of money. We probably won't ever have any Italians coming to see us."

● 1139

*Amos* — "In view of the fact that you said you always had the last word with your wife, how does it happen that she continually orders you about?"

*Andrew* — "I meant what I said. I always do have the last word. Whenever we have an argument, I always say, All right."

● 1140

A barrister was arguing at great length in a wearied court and the Judge plainly showed his impatience. Finally he broke in with: "Mr. Blank, what you are now saying is going in at one ear and coming out at the other!"

Mr. Blank looked unperturbed: "Indeed, my Lord," he replied, "is there nothing there to stop it?"

● 1141

*Mistress (to new maid)* — "Regarding your evenings out, I'm willing to meet you halfway."

*Maid* — "Oh, that's all right. I don't mind coming home in the dark."

● 1142

*First Doctor* — "Well, doctor, I had a peculiar case to-day."

*Second Doctor* — "What was it, please?"

*First Doctor* — "I attended a grass widow who is afflicted with hay-fever."

● 1143

*Architect* — "Have you any suggestions for the study, Mr. Quickrich?"

*Quickrich* — "Only that it must be brown. Great thinkers, I understand, are generally found in a brown study."

● 1144

A clergyman was once accosted on the street by a man who thought he knew the churchman's face, but could not quite place it.

"Now, where in hell have I seen you?" he asked perplexedly.

"From where in hell do you come, sir?" said the clergyman.

● 1145

*Art Editor* — "Now, what we need for our next magazine cover is a girl wearing one of those religious gowns."

*Artist* — "What do you mean, a religious gown?"

*Art Editor* — "Oh, you know, one of these lo and behold."

● 1146

"So all your daughters are married now."

"Yes, the last one left us last week."

"It must be nice to get them all off your hands."

"Well, it's nice enough to get your daughters off your hands; but what we don't like is having to keep our sons-in-law on their feet."

● 1147

A newspaper reporter gave an account of a ceremonial parade of NATO forces. The censor was afraid that the sentence: "The crowd of spectators stood within a stone's throw of the Commander-in-Chief of NATO Forces" was a colossal rudeness. Finally when the reporter was permitted to explain what the English expression really meant, the censor said: "Oh, in that case we change it. We change it to read like this: 'The crowd of spectators stood near the NATO Commander-in-Chief. They threw no stones!'"

● 1148

"So she turned you down, eh?"

"Yes. I made the mistake of confessing that my heart was in my mouth when I proposed."

"What had that to do with it?"

"Oh, she said she couldn't think of marrying a man whose heart wasn't in the right place."

● 1149

Dull and morose people, says a medical writer, seldom resist disease as easily as those with a cheerful disposition. The surly bird catches the germ.

● 1150

*Irate Caller* — "You spoiled my article by a misprint."

*Editor* — "I'm very sorry. What did we get wrong?"

*Caller* — "A proverb I employed. You printed it, 'A word to the wife is sufficient.'"

● 1151

"I'll be good for a penny, mother," coaxed little William, hopefully.

"Oh, Willie," reproved his mother, "why can't you be like your father? He isn't good for a penny. He's good for nothing!"

● 1152

*Choir-master (after lamentable failure on part of pupil)* — "Confound it! I thought you said you could 'Read at sight'?"

*Pupil* — "So I can. But not first sight."

● 1153

"Are you saving up anything for a rainy day?"

"Yes, in a little while I expect to have enough to buy a new top for my old auto."

● 1154

"Bragson claims to have been born with a gold spoon in his mouth."

"If he was, I'll bet it had somebody else's initials on it."

● 1155

"Can you operate a typewriter?"

"Yes, sir, I use the Biblical system."

"I never heard of it."

"Seek and ye shall find."

● 1156

*She* — "Now that we're engaged, dear, you'll give me a ring, won't you?"

*He* — "Yes, dear, certainly. What's your number, darling?"



● 1157

Robert Browning's most obscure and difficult poem is "*Sordello*." One of its passages baffled even the London Poetry Society. They asked him to explain it. Browning read it over twice, shrugged his shoulders, and said, "When I wrote that, God and I knew what it meant, but now God alone knows."

● 1158

*Irate Guest* — "Look here, the rain is simply pouring through the roof of my bedroom."

*Summer Hotel Proprietor* — "Absolutely according to our prospectus, sir. Running water in every room."

● 1159

*Restaurant Version* — One man's meat is another man's croquette.

● 1160

"And remember, my son," said the father of the groom, "the early husband gets his own breakfast."

● 1161

*City Slicker* — "What does your son do?"

*Farmer* — "He's a bootblack in the city."

*City Slicker* — "Oh, I see, you make hay while the son shines."

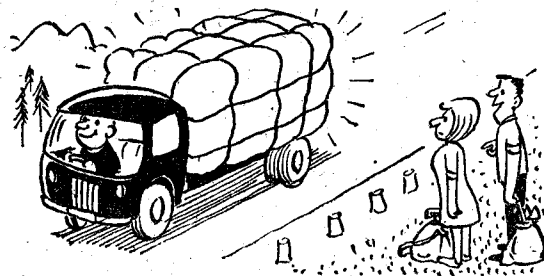
● 1162

*Mother* — "Now, Bobby, was it you that picked all the white meat off this chicken?"

*Bobby* — "Well, mother, to make a clean breast of it, I did."

● 1163

"Perhaps it's one of these package tours!"



● 1164

"I want this meal put on the cuff."

"Sure, I'll throw the whole thing in your lap, if you want."

● 1165

"You say this fellow is crooked?"

"Is he crooked? Say, he's so crooked even the wool he pulls over your eyes is half cotton."

● 1166

"She's always looking for a man who'll give her the shirt off his back."

"She's a golddigger?"

"No, a laundress!"

● 1167

"For ten long, lean years," the author told the producer, "I've been writing this drama, working on it till my fingers were cramped and aching, my brain and body weary."

"Too bad," the producer murmured, "all work — and no play."

● 1168

"Herbert's promised me he'll never set foot inside that pub again."



● 1169

"I've changed my mind."

"Thank Heaven! Does it work any better now?"

● 1170

*Adage by a Young Lady:* Man proposes, but mamma disposes.

● 1171

*Teacher* — "What is meant by Hobson's choice?"  
*Bright Pupil* — "Mrs. Hobson, sir."

● 1172

One of the most famous pieces of dramatic criticism ever penned appeared in an English newspaper the day after a local stock company had essayed a presentation of Hamlet. "For some time," read the notice, "there has been a controversy as to whether Shakespeare or Francis Bacon actually wrote the plays attributed to the former. Now at last this column is in a position to settle the question once and for all. Let the tombs of both men be opened. The one who turned over last night is the true author of Hamlet."

● 1173

An Easterner was being driven by a rancher over a blistering almost barren stretch of West Texas when a strange bird scurried in front of them. Asked what it was, the rancher replied, "That's a bird of paradise."

The stranger from the East rode on in silence for a moment, then said, "Long way from home, isn't it?"

● 1174

The movie actor who had been divorced four times proposed again.

"Why, I rather like you, John," said the young woman, "but, you see, I've heard so many things about you——"

"My dear," interrupted the much-married actor, "you really must not believe these old wives' tales."

● 1175

To what man do men always take their hats off?

(The barber.)

● 1176

Where there's a will there's an heir of expectation.

● 1177

The other day a man up from the country went to Scotland Yard and told the police that he had dropped his watch in one of the main thoroughfares. They listened intently and said no stone would be left unturned in try-

ing to find it. Next day, the countryman walked along the Strand, along Oxford Street, along Piccadilly, and along lots of other streets. Everywhere he went he was evidently pleased.

"They're doing as they promised," he told a friend; "they're digging up all the streets and if they don't find it it won't be their fault."

● 1178

"Who is your favorite classic novelist?"

"Thackeray."

"Great Scott!"

"Some think so; still I prefer Thackeray."

● 1179

"Have you seen my husband down on the allotment, Mr. Jones?" she queried.

"Yus, 'e's darn there right enough diggin' in dead earnest," said Mr. Jones.

"Muvver, dear," gurgled the little son, "is Ernest dead?"

● 1180

A gentleman who had been in Chicago only three days, but who had been paying attention to a prominent Chicago belle, wanted to propose, but was afraid he would be thought too hasty. He delicately broached the subject as follows: "If I were to speak to you of marriage, after having only made your acquaintance three days ago, what would you say of it?" "Well, I should say, never put off till tomorrow that which should have been done the day before yesterday."

● 1181

The evening papers announced that one of the professors at a famous London teaching hospital had been appointed Honorary Physician to H. M. the Queen. Next morning when he entered the lecture theatre he saw chalked on his blackboard:

God Save the Queen

See also 12, 224, 393, 404, 405, 414, 580, 614, 698, 704, 721, 806, 820, 876, 932, 945, 979, 990, 993, 1027, 1035, 1037, 1354, 1435, 1438, 1444, 1445.

## Substandard

### ● 1182

"What is slang but language with its sleeves rolled up?"

### ● 1183

*Mother* (to son, who has been growing rather free of speech) — "Tommy, if you promise not to say 'hang it!' again, I'll give you sixpence."

*Tommy* — "All right, ma. But I know another word that's worth half-a-crown!"

### ● 1184

*Traffic Cop* — "Use your noodle, lady! Use your noodle!"  
*Lady* — "My goodness! Where is it? I've pushed and pulled everything in the car."

### ● 1185

*Son* — "Pop, I got into trouble at school to-day an' it's all your fault."

*Pop* — "How's that?"

*Son* — "Remember I asked you how much \$500,000 was?"

*Pop* — "Yes, I remember."

*Son* — "Well, 'a helluva lot' ain't the right answer."

### ● 1186

A seaman apprentice bought a dictionary of naval terms. After leafing through it for some time he remarked with disappointment. "What a short dictionary of naval words! I could not find here a single word of those so much used by the Captain."

### ● 1187

In order to discourage the use of objectionable words the father had evolved a system of fines, somewhat after this fashion:

Hang it — One cent.

Darn it — Two cents.

Gosh — Three cents.

Gosh darn it — Five cents.

The boy who was to be reformed by this method studied the tariff with considerable interest, but it was some time before he spoke.

"Well," he said at last, "I guess I know some words that would cost a quarter."

### ● 1188

*Mother* — "What did your father say when he saw his broken pipe?"

*Innocent* — "Shall I leave out the naughty words, mother?"

*Mother* — "Certainly, my dear."

*Innocent* — "Then I don't think he said anything."

### ● 1189

A dictionary of golfing terms is to be published. If it's complete it will be banned from the mails.

### ● 1190

*Doctor, to Cockney patient* — "Now, my man, what about this ear?"

*Patient* — "This 'ere wot?"

### ● 1191

Einstein was really stopped cold at a recent Princeton function by Heifetz's irrepressible sister Pauline. "Tell me, Professor," she said with deadly seriousness, "is this mathematics racket really on the level?"

### ● 1192

*Johnnie* — "Let me see your shoes, won't you, Mr. Al-  
Irish."

*Mr. Allrich* — "Why, what do you want to see my shoes for?"

*Johnnie* — "'Course I heard pop tellin' sis the other day that you was 'well heeled', and I want to see what kind they are."

### ● 1193

A reader once wrote to *Everybody's* asking "What is Cockney rhyming slang?" He was given this as an example:

Wearing a Dicky Dirt, his Round the Houses and a Tit for Tat, the Artful Dodger went down the Apples and Pears. His I Suppose was red from too much Needle and Pin, and now all he had in his pocket was a Lord of the Manor. So he was going to get some You and Me. He lit his Cherry Ripe as he left the Rat and Mouse and decided to buy a Linen. Then he ran into his Rob my Pal, who had blue Minces and golden Barnet. She took his German. "Come on," she said with a flash of Hamp-

steads, "I've got a Saucepan Lid. We'll have enough for a Dick the Dandy."

And the interpretation given was:

Wearing his shirt, his trousers and a hat, the lodger went down the stairs. His nose was red from too much gin, and now all he had in his pocket was a tanner (sixpence). So he was going to get some tea. He lit his pipe as he left the house and decided to buy a paper (linen draper). Then he ran into his gal, who had blue eyes (mince pies) and golden hair (Barnet Fair). She took his hand (German Band). "Come on," she said with a flash of teeth (Hampstead Heath), "I've got a quid. We'll have enough for a brandy."

● 1194

Now Charles had been brought up with care  
At number 12, Begonia Square,  
And taught while still extremely young  
Not to misuse the English tongue.  
No words unfit for him to hear  
Had ever reached his sheltered ear.  
For instance, such disgusting slang  
As "Gosh" and "Golly", "Blow" and "Hang".  
Imagine therefore what a pang  
His learned father felt one day  
When Charles distinctly said "Okay".  
The horrid habit grew and grew;  
It seemed the only word he knew;  
Whatever he was asked to do —  
To eat or drink, to work or play —  
All Charles could answer was "Okay."  
"Charles!" cried his father in amaze.  
"Where did you learn that vulgar phrase?  
Refrain from using it, I pray."  
And meekly Charles replied, "Okay!"

See also 75, 202, 360, 371, 394, 555, 572, 647, 684, 685, 697, 706, 720, 806, 821, 950,, 1164, 1375, 1403.

Etc.

● 1195

*She* — "She gave us something on our wedding anniversary that plush tea-cosy and we ought to reciprocate."  
*He* — "Reciprocate? You mean retaliate."

● 1196

*Tourist* — "My physician advises me to stop where I may have the benefit of the south wind. Does it blow here?"

*Landlord* — "Yes, sir; you're fortunate in coming to just the right place! Why, the south wind always blows here."

*Tourist* — "Always? Why, it seems to be blowing from the north now."

*Landlord* — "Oh, it may be coming from that direction, but it's the south wind. It's just coming back, you know."

● 1197

Eddie Cantor was once appearing at a music hall giving a monologue when a cat walked across the stage and momentarily distracted the attention of the audience. "Go away, go away," Cantor urged the offending animal, "this is a monologue — not a catalogue."

● 1198

*Teacher* — "Let me hear how far you can count."

*Eugene* — "One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, Jack, Queen, King."

● 1199

An advertisement in a newspaper ran as follows: "Incredible but True! A Space Flight from Earth to Heaven for \$ 100 Only!" The ad belonged to a funeral service establishment.

● 1200

Sergeant Williams poked his head into barracks during rest period one sultry afternoon. "Anybody here good at shorthand?" he asked. Half a dozen rookies, sensing relief from unpleasant fatigues, jumped to their feet.

"That's fine," said the sergeant with a satisfied chuckle. "I have just gotten word from the kitchen that they are short-handed on dish washers. On the double, boys!"

● 1201

Many girls who can't add can distract.

● 1202

What is the difference between the admission to a dime museum and the admission to Sing Sing?

One is ten cents and the other is sentence.

● 1203

In a contest in Surrey for road safety slogans, one youngster came up with this suggestion.

He looked; she didn't.  
He is; she isn't.

● 1204

The officer of the day discovered a sentry engrossed in a book. "Don't you know it's offense to read on guard duty?" he roared.

"Oh! I'm not reading, sir, this is a dictionary."

"A dictionary?"

"Yes, sir. You know how it gets kinda lonely here on post and you start to talk to yourself. Well, sometimes I come out with a word I don't understand and I like to look it up."

● 1205

When a man wants to murder a tiger he calls it sport; when the tiger wants to murder him he calls it ferocity.

(George Bernard Shaw)

● 1206

The big-game hunter had taken his wife on her first safari. He had bagged a few minor trophies, but the principal prize was the huge lion killed by his wife.

"Did she hit it with that 303 Magnum rifle you bought her?" asked an admiring friend.

"No," answered her husband. "With the 1972 station-wagon we hired."

● 1207

A Montana rancher had to paint 'COW' in large letters on all his cattle to keep them from being shot by hunters. When he even painted 'COW' on his prize bull, one of the neighbours remarked upon the injustice. 'Hell!' snorted the rancher, 'there's no use confusing them city hunters with details!'

● 1208

The twins had been brought to be christened.

"What names?" asked the clergyman.

"Steak and Kidney," the father answered.

"Bill, you fool," cried the mother, "it's Kate and Sydney."

● 1209

A little boy who slept with his big brother complained to his mother one morning about the discomforts he suffered.

"It's an awful hard bed, mother, and, what's more, Bob takes up quite half of it."

"Well," replied the mother, "why shouldn't Bob have a half?"

"But, mother," added the youngster, "he always takes the middle half."

● 1210

Bobbie — "Mother, I don't mind going to Sunday school any other day, but it just spoils Sunday."

● 1211

"I want to know," said the grim-faced woman, "how much money my husband drew out of the bank last week."

"I cannot give you that information, madam," answered the man in the cage.

"You're the paying teller, aren't you?"

"Yes, but I'm not the telling payer."

● 1212

Mother — "Now, Willie, why don't you go and play with your little friends?"

Willie — "I have only one little friend, and I hate him."

● 1213

In a parliamentary speech, an admirer of Lloyd George, then Prime Minister, referred to him as the "Wizard of Britain."

"I beg pardon, you mean the Blizzard of Wales," broke in Jack Jones of the Labourite opposition.

The House roared.

● 1214

A guard challenged a man appearing within sight of his post: "Halt! Who goes there?"

And he heard the reply from an AWOL. "Shhh! I ain't goin' — I'm comin' back."

● 1215

"Any fishing around here?"

"Some," answered the barefoot boy.

"What do you catch?"

"You said 'fishin,' not 'ketchin.'"

● 1216

A miserly man was approached by a friend who did his best to persuade him to dress more in accordance with

his station in life. "I'm surprised," said the friend, "that you should allow yourself to become shabby."

"But I'm not shabby," said the miser.

"Oh, but you are," said his friend. "Remember your father. He was always neatly dressed. His clothes were always well tailored and of the best material."

"Why!" shouted the other, triumphantly, "these clothes I'm wearing were father's!"

● 1217

"As a matter of fact," said the lawyer of the defendant, trying to be sarcastic, "you were scared half to death, and don't know whether it was a motor car or something resembling a motor car that hit you."

"It resembled one all right," the plaintiff made answer. "In fact, I was forcibly struck by the resemblance."

● 1218

✓ *Son and Heir (whose inquiring turn of mind is occasionally a nuisance)* — "Say, 'pa, what's a v'cab'lary?"

*Father* — "A vocabulary, my boy — what d'you want to know that for?"

*Son* — "'Cause I heard 'ma say she'd no idea what a tremendous v'cab'lary you'd got, till you missed the train on Saturday!"

● 1219

"Halt," yelled the sergeant to a new squad of recruits. But one of them marched on.

"Here, Jones, what were you doing before you joined the Army?" yelled the sergeant.

"A horse driver, sir," replied Jones.

When the squad was marching again the sergeant cried: "Squad halt! Jones, whoa."

● 1220

When hearing his GI's report that guerillas usually ambush the last rear truck in convoys, the general decided, "The rear trucks should be never included into a motor column."

● 1221

"I want a man to do odd jobs about the house, run on errands, one who never answers back and is always ready to do my bidding," explained a lady to an applicant for a post in the household.

"You're looking for a husband, ma'am, not a servant!" said the seeker for work.

● 1222

On the last day of school prizes were distributed. When one boy returned home his mother was entertaining callers. "Well, my boy," said one of the callers, "did you get a prize?"

"No," replied the boy, "but I got horrible mention."

● 1223

"What is the name of your automobile?"

"I don't know."

"You don't know? What do your folks call it?"

"Oh, as to that, Father always says 'The Mortgage'; brother Tom calls it 'The Fake'; Mother, 'My Limousine'; Sister, 'Our Car'; Grandma, 'That Peril'; the chauffeur, 'Some Freak,' and our neighbours, 'The Limit.'"

● 1224

The Baltimore & Ohio R. R. Co.,  
Pittsburgh, Pa.  
Gentlemen:

Why is it that your switch engine has to ding and fizz and spit and pant and grate and grind and puff and bump and chug and hoot and toot and whistle and wheeze and howl and clang and growl and thump and clash and boom and jolt and screech and snarl and snort and slam and throb and roar and rattle and hiss and yell and smoke and shriek all night long when I come home from a hard day at the boiler works and have to keep the dog quiet and the baby quiet so my wife can squawk at me for snoring in my sleep?

● 1225

"Haven't your opinions on this subject undergone a change?"

"No," replied Senator Blank.

"But your views, as you expressed them some time ago?"

"Those were not my views. Those were my interviews."

● 1226

Nothing more clearly expresses the sentiments of Harvard men in seasons of athletic rivalry than the time-honoured "To hell with Yale!"

Once when Dean Briggs, of Harvard, and Edward Everett Hale were on their way to a game at Soldiers' Field a friend asked:

'Where are you going, Dean?'

"To yell with Hale," answered Briggs with a meaning smile.

● 1227

*A man's idea about marriage:*

*Before* — Spooning around.

*After* — Forking over.

● 1228

*a*

Bishop Doane of Albany was at one time rector of an episcopal church in Hartford, and Mark Twain, who occasionally attended his services, played a joke on him one Sunday.

"Dr. Doane," he said at the end of the service, "I enjoyed your service this morning. I welcomed it like an old friend. I have, you know, a book at home containing every word of it."

"You have not," said Dr. Doane.

"I have so."

"Well, send that book to me. I'd like to see it."

"I'll send it," the humourist replied.

Next morning he sent an unabridged dictionary to the rector.

*b*

A man who was criticized for not having a bible in the house, excused himself by saying that there was not a word in the bible that wasn't in his dictionary.

● 1229

Better a witty fool than a foolish wit.

(William Shakespeare)

● 1230

If a Hottentot tot taught a Hottentot tot to talk e'er the tot could totter, ought the Hottentot tot be taught to say aught, or naught, or what ought to be taught her?

If to hoot and to toot a Hottentot tot be taught by a Hottentot tutor, should the tutor get hot if the Hottentot tot hoot and toot at the Hottentot tutor?

● 1231

*She (tearfully)* — "You said if I'd marry you you'd be humbly grateful."

*He (sourly)* — "Well, what of it?"

*She* — "You're not; you're grumbly hateful."

● 1232

A man threw a nickel towards the blind man's cup. The coin missed and rolled along the pavement, but the man with the dark glasses quickly recovered it.

"But I thought you were blind?"

"No, I am not the regular blind man, sir," he said. "I'm just taking his place while he's at the movies."

● 1233

Smith was relating his experiences in South America.

"I was taking my usual morning dip when I spotted three gladiators making for me, so I had to swim for my life!"

"You mean navigators — something like a crocodile?" interposed Jones.

"Well, what are gladiators?"

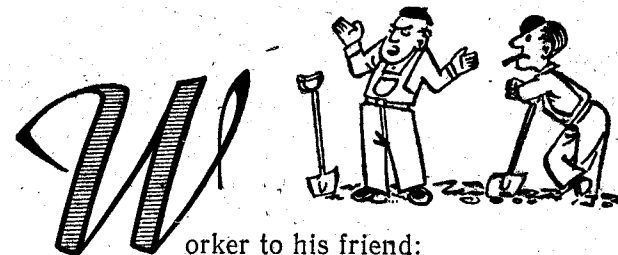
"Gladiators? Why, they're a sort of flower grown from bulbs."

See also 900, 1146, 1149.

## SECTION VIII

### Word-Formation

*Unusual jocular nonce-formations, unexpected reinterpretations of time-honoured derivatives, peculiarities of the English word-formation system (cf. for instance the significance of conversion as a means of word-formation) — these and some other facts of word-formation make up the centre of jokes collected or referred to in this part. Among these, jokes in which an abbreviation forms the linguistic core of the joke are brought together and placed in the latter part of the section. This was done for two reasons, one substantive, the other formal. First, the nature of ambiguity inherent in abbreviations is of a very specific sort, namely abbreviations allow of a much greater freedom of semantic interpretation as compared to ambiguous "full" words. The second reason is simply the comparatively large amount of this type of material.*



● 1234

orker to his friend:

"I am taking a honey-day vacation this year. You know, that is when you stay home and the whole time your wife says: 'Honey, do this and Honey, do that,'"

● 1235

Tell us this — "Does a doctor doctor a doctor according to the doctored doctor's doctrine or doctoring, or does the doctor doing the doctrine doctor the other doctor according to his own doctoring doctrine."

● 1236

"Unmarried?" asked the census taker.

"Oh, dear no," replied the prim little lady blushing. "I've never even been married."

● 1237

Two training planes piloted by air cadets collided in mid-air. The pilots who had safely bailed out were interrogated about the accident.

"Why didn't you take any evasive action to avoid hitting the other plane?"

"I did," the first pilot explained, "I tried to zigzag."

"And what?"

"But he was zigzagging, too, and zagged when I thought he was going to zig."

● 1238

Telling of a member expelled from her club, a woman said: "They dismembered her."

● 1239

This is the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps. Its members are called "Neurotics."

● 1240

Two GI's sitting on men stools in the company kitchen removing the skins from potatoes and dropping the peeled spuds into the usual pan of water,



"Why that officer keeps calling us KP?" one of them inquired.

"Hold your mouth, ignorance," advised the second. "That's an abbreviation for 'Keep Peeling.'"

● 1241

"What is your daughter working for at college — an M. A.?"

"No, an M-R-S."

● 1242

Radio equipment used in the US Armed Forces has some multiletter designations which are often converted into words. Thus AN/GRC became "Angry" or "Jerk." AN/PPS was renamed "Pipsy" and AN/TPS turned "Tipsy."

● 1243

Two men, who were visiting a museum, were seen standing in front of an Egyptian mummy, over which hung a placard bearing the inscription: "B. C. 1187."

Both visitors were much mystified thereby.

"What do you make that, Jim?"

"Well," said Jim, "I dunno; but maybe it was the number of the motor car that killed him."

● 1244

"And what," asked the chief of the Cannibal Islands, in his kindest tones, "was your business before you were captured by my men?"

"I was a newspaper man," answered the captive.

"An editor?"

"No, merely a sub-editor."

"Cheer up, young man! Promotion awaits you. After dinner you shall be editor-in-chief."

● 1245

Perfection will be reached when the automobile can be made fool-in-the-other-car-proof.

● 1246

Movie Director — "Unmarried?"

Applicant — "Twice."

● 1247

Daughter — "Did you hear, dad, they have just caught the biggest hotel-thief in New York?"

Dad — "What hotel did he run?"

See also 392, 396, 847, 851, 865, 1038, 1073, 1089, 1279.

## SECTION IX

### Grammar

*The arrangement of the material in this part is consonant with the traditional division of grammar into morphology and syntax. The morphological section primarily contains jokes in which properties characteristic of English word classes or particular items within these classes are treated in a humorous way.*

*Accordingly, the major groupings of jokes in this section correspond to grammatical word classes. The humorous use of morphological homonymy and substandard forms is exemplified by jokes furnished or referred to in the opening and concluding subsections of the morphological division of this part. Most of the substantive content in the syntactic section is composed of jokes in which ambiguity of polysemantic and homonymic constructions is utilized.*

## MORPHOLOGY

### Homonymy



● 1248 A young woman had just returned to her farm home after several years in the big city. She was exhibiting the contents of her trunk to the admiration and amazement of her mother, who had bought her clothes for forty years at the village general store.

"And these," said the daughter, holding up a delicate silken garment, "are teddies."

"Teddy's. You don't say. Young men are certainly different from what they used to be."

See also 88, 517, 965, 1312.

### Nouns

#### ● 1249

A little Eskimo and a big Eskimo are walking in the snow. The little Eskimo is the big Eskimo's son. The big Eskimo is not the little Eskimo's father. Who is it?

(Mother)

#### ● 1250

"What is the plural of man, Willie?" asked the teacher.

"Men," answered Willie.

"And, the plural of child?"

"Twins," was the unexpected reply.

#### ● 1251

Teacher — "A noun is the name of a thing. Who can give me a noun?"

First Boy — "A cow."

Teacher — "Very good. Another noun!"

Second Boy — "Another cow."

#### ● 1252

My Uncle Herbert from Vermont. Cerf informs, was mailing an order to his butcher in Boston. First he began the note, "Kindly send two geeses." That didn't seem right, so he started over again with "Kindly send two geeses." Still he wasn't satisfied. He settled his dilemma by writing finally, "Kindly send me a goose." Then he signed his name and added a P. S.: "Send another one with it."

#### ● 1253

Teacher — "Johnny, what is the plural of hippopotamus?"

Johnny — "Who would want two of those?"

#### ● 1254

##### Arbitrary English Language

We'll begin with *box*, and the plural is *boxes*,

But the plural of *ox* should be *oxen*, not *oxes*.

The one fowl is a *goose*, but two are called *geese*,

Yet the plural of *mouse* should never be *meese*.

You may find a lone *mouse*, or a whole nest of *mice*,

But the plural of *house* is *houses*, not *hice*.

If the plural of *man* is always called *men*,

Why shouldn't the plural of *pan* be called *pen*?

The *cow* in the plural may be *cows* or *kine*,

But a *bow*, if repeated, is never called *bine*;

And the plural of *vow* is *vows*, never *vine*.

If I speak of a *foot*, and you show me your *feet*,

And I give you a *boot*, would a pair be called *beet*?

If one is a *tooth* and a whole set are *teeth*,

Why shouldn't the plural of *booth* be called *beeth*?

If the singular is *this* and the plural is *these*,

Should the plural of *kiss* ever be nicknamed *keese*?

They one may be *that* and three would be *those*,

Yet *hat* in the plural would never be *hose*,

And the plural of *cat* is *cats*, not *cose*.

We speak of a *brother* and also of *brethren*,

But though we say *mother*, we never say *methren*.

Then the masculine pronouns are *he*, *his*, *him*,

But imagine the feminine *she*, *this*, and *shim*!

#### ● 1255

"Yes," prattled the elderly lady, "that is the Duke and Duchess; the couple behind them are the Mayor and the Mayoress, and those on the right are the Vicar and the-er-Vixen."

● 1256

A lawyer says that a dangerous year in married life is the first. Then follows the second, third, fourth, fifth and so on.

● 1257

Mr. Smith goes walking and meets an old friend whom he hasn't seen or heard of for twenty years. The old friend says: "I've been married since we last met. We have a little daughter — here she is."

The little daughter appears and is presented to Mr. Smith.

Mr. Smith says: "What's your name, little girl?" and the little girl answers: "My name is the same as my mother's."

"Ah!" says Mr. Smith, "then your name's Margaret?" "Yes," says the little girl.

How did Mr. Smith know that her name was Margaret?

\* \* \*

The right answer, which makes the enigma no enigma at all, is that Mr. Smith's old friend was a woman — and it is by no means unnatural that he should have known her first name.

The English language is one in which the gender of "friend" is not clearly indicated.

See also 517, 1060, 1085.

### Adjectives

● 1258

Alice — "Are you married?"

Virginia — "Am I? Three judges have refused me a divorce!"

See also 293, 742.

### Numerals

● 1259

Battered Motorist (*waking up*) — "Where am I? Where am I?"

Nurse — "This is number 127."

Motorist — "Room or cell?"

See also 155, 494.

### Verbs

● 1260

"Does the razor hurt, sir?" inquired the barber, anxiously.

"Can't say," replied the victim, testily, "but my face does."

● 1261

Inquirer (*at Philadelphia Station*) — "Where does this train go?"

Brakeman — "This train goes to New York in ten minutes."

Inquirer — "Goodness! That's going some!"

● 1262

#### Variable Verbs

A boy who *swims* may say he *swum*,  
But milk is *skimmed* and seldom *skum*,  
And nails you *trim*, they are not *trum*.  
When words you *speak*, these words are *spoken*,  
But a nose is *tweaked* and can't be *tween*,  
And what you *seek* is seldom *soke*.  
If we *forget*, then we've *forgotten*,  
But things we *wet* are never *wotten*,  
And houses *let* cannot be *lotten*.  
The goods one *sells* are always *sold*,  
But fears *dispelled* are not *dispoled*,  
And what you *smell* is never *smold*.  
When young, a top you oft saw *spun*,  
But did you see a grin e'er *grun*,  
Or a potato nearly *skun*?

(Anonymous)

● 1263

"I must say these are fine biscuits!" exclaimed the young husband.

"How could you say those are fine biscuits?" inquired the young wife's mother, in a private interview.

"I didn't say they were fine. I only said I must say so."

● 1264

A district attorney objected to a lawyer calling the State's evidence "tainted testimony." His objection was sustained by the judge, before whom the case was being tried. "The testimony isn't tainted," he declared.

"'Tis," replied the lawyer.  
"'Tain't," voiced the judge.

● 1265

*Prof.* — "Take this sentence. 'Let the cow be taken out of the lot.' What mood?"

*Frosh* — "The cow."

● 1266

*Boston Child* — "Mamma! Mamma! The baby has fell out of the window!"

*Boston Mother* — "Fallen, you mean, dear. Quick! Run for the doctor!"

● 1267

After receiving another reprimand from his sergeant private Higgins remarked to his bunk buddy. "That sergeant of mine ought to be hung."

"Not hung, Fred," his learned friend corrected, "hanged."

"Hung, I say; hanging is too good for him."

● 1268

Logical English

I said, "This horse, sir, will you shoe?"

And soon the horse was shod.

I said, "This deed, sir, will you do?"

And soon the deed was dod!

I said, "This stick, sir, will you break?"

At once the stick he broke.

I said, "This coat, sir, will you make?"

And soon the coat he moked!

(Anonymous)

● 1269

*Impecunious One* — "I would like to settle that little debt of mine."

*The Man who Lent the Money* — "I'm very glad to hear it; just step into the office."

*Impecunious One* — "I said I would like to; but I can't."

● 1270

*Teacher (in grammar class)* — "Willie, please tell me what it is when I say 'I love, you love, he loves.'"

*Willie* — "That's one of them triangles where somebody gets shot."

See also 82, 88, 104, 215, 469, 671, 791, 896, 1323, 1356, 1365.

Pronouns, Pronominal Adverbs

● 1271

A very elaborate funeral procession was proceeding through the East End of London. An old army colonel passing was much struck with the large amount of flowers and the number of coaches following, and turned to a small urchin with the remark:

"Boy, who's dead?"

The bright little fellow replied:

"The bloke in the coffin."

● 1272

Mrs. Smithers was explaining the routine to the new cook.

"We lunch precisely at one on Wednesday," she said, "as on that day we always go for a spin in the car at two."

"Very good, mum," replied the cook, "but I shall have to leave the washin' up till we gets back again!"

● 1273

"I married a widow with six children. I had five myself by my late wife. We have been married four years and our union had been blessed with three more, and the other day my wife came in hurriedly and said, come into the yard, quick for goodness sake, hurry! there is a terrible row going on, and I said, 'What is it?' 'Well,' she said, 'your children and my children are whipping our children.'"

● 1274

"Whom are you?" said he, for he had been to night school.  
(George Ada)

● 1275

*Teacher* — "Correct this sentence: 'It was me that spilt the ink.'"

*Pupil* — "It wasn't me that spilt the ink."

● 1276

When a piercing shriek of "Oh, my God!" broke off a matter-of-fact telephone conversation between a married couple, the husband, terrified by the ensuing silence, called the police.

Fifteen policemen sped to the house and found an unconscious woman beside a dangling telephone. Rivved,

she gasped: "He's still here in the house. He may be under a bed, or he may be in a cupboard. But he's still here. He ran straight up to me —"

"What did he look like?" interrupted the police-sergeant.

"Why, he looked like — like any other mouse, I think — noly more so."

● 1277

To Let — Violin by an old gentleman who has been in family 100 years and still has excellent tone and guaranteed to play.

● 1278

What fish has its two eyes nearest together?

(The smallest)

● 1279

A man met another in a hotel lobby. While not remembering who he was, feeling certain that he was acquainted with him, he held out his hand and said: "I am sure I have met you somewhere."

"No doubt," was the reply, "I have been there often."

● 1280

A traveller once went to a country hotel to have dinner. He ordered dinner, and the waiter brought him a plate of soup. Putting it on the table before the traveller, he went to the window and looked out.

"It looks like rain, sir," he said.

"Yes," said the traveller, as he tasted the soup. "It tastes like rain, too."

● 1281

Madame (to servant) — "Marie, go quickly and buy me the book, 'How to Remain Young and Beautiful.'"

Servant — "Oui, Madame, I will tell them it is urgent."

● 1282

The instructor in the Medical College exhibited a diagram.

"The subject here limps," he explained, "because one leg is shorter than the other."

He turned to one of the students, and addressed him:

"Now, Mr. Sneed, what would you do in such a case?"

Young Sneed pondered earnestly and replied with conviction:

"I have an idea, sir, that I should limp, too."

● 1283

On what day of the year do women talk least?

(On the shortest one)

● 1284

Teacher (answering the telephone) — "You say Billy Smith has a bad cold and can't come to school? Who is this speaking?"

Voice (with assumed hoarseness) — "This is my father."

● 1285

When can you carry water in a sieve?

(When it is frozen)

● 1286

Teacher — "In what battle did Gen. Wolfe, when hearing of victory, cry, 'I die happy'?"

Johnny — "I think it was his last battle."

● 1287

An Irishman got a job in a railway station. When the first train came in, however, he forgot the name of the station, so he called out:

"Here ye are for where ye are going. All in there for here, come out".

● 1288

Two Scotsmen were involved in a court case. McTavish related how the defendant, McLeish, came up and struck him. He proceeded: "So I just up and gives him a wipe. Just then his dog came along an' I hit him again."

"Hit the dog?" asked the magistrate.

"No. Hit McLeish. An' then I upped wi' a stoon and throed it at him and it rolled over and over."

"Threw a stone at McLeish?"

"No, the dog. An' he got up and hit me again."

"The dog?"

"No, McLeish. An' wi' that he stuck his tail between his legs an' went off."

"McLeish?"

"No; the dog. An' then he came back and pounded me."

"The dog came back and pounded you?"

"No; McLeish. An' he isn't hurt a little bit."

"Who isn't hurt it?"

"The dog."

● 1289

*Thompson* — "So your son is in college? How is he making it?"

*Johnson* — "To be exact, he isn't making it. I'm making it and he's spending it."

● 1290

"Shay, pardon me, offisher, but where am I?"

"You're on the corner of Broadway and Forty-second Street."

"Cut out the details. What town am I in?"

● 1291

At a banquet: "Well, did they like your speech after the dinner?"

"Rather! When I sat down everybody said it was the best thing I'd ever done."

● 1292

*Sunday School Teacher* — "Can any little boy tell me what children go to heaven?"

*Nasty Little Boy* — "Dead 'uns."

● 1293

*Customer (at the grocer's, pilfering from the raisin box)* — "What are these raisins worth, boy?"

*Boy* — "Two pence."

*Customer (astonished)* — "What! only two pence a pound?"

*Boy* — "No, two pence for what you have eaten."

See also 41, 74, 78, 93, 115, 159—168, 170, 171, 173, 174, 179, 180, 185, 210, 215, 244, 276, 387, 406, 439, 442, 443—445, 449—451, 453, 454, 456, 458, 460, 464, 467—473, 476—478, 480—482, 485, 486, 489, 494—496, 503, 509, 512, 533, 551, 576, 581, 605, 608, 651, 682, 688, 770, 871, 885, 1044, 1050, 1106, 1307, 1310, 1326, 1344, 1385, 1412.

## Prepositions

See also 389, 680, 710, 714, 721, 751, 766, 770, 775, 795, 837, 841, 860, 976, 1226.

## Interjections

● 1294

*Teacher* — "Walter, spell FROG."

*Walter (rather frightened)* ("F — R — — F — R — —")

Then the boy sitting in back of him stuck him with a pin and he yelled, "Oh, geel!"

*Teacher* — "Correct!"

● 1295

"Johnny, where do you think God is this morning?" asked the Sunday-school teacher.

"In our bathroom," was the reply.

"What on earth makes you say that?" asked the amazed teacher.

"'Cause just before I left I heard pa say, 'My Lord! How long are you going to be in there?'"

See also 824.

## Substandard

See also 469, 896, 1264, 1274, 1344, 1365.

## SYNTAX

### Polysemy

● 1296

*Fair Maid* — "Oh, sir, what kind of an officer are you?"

*Officer* — "I'm a naval surgeon."

*Fair Maid* — "My goodness! How you doctors do specialize."

● 1297

A small boy debunked the talk about a painless dentist in his neighbourhood. "He's not painless at all," said the youngster. "He put his finger in my mouth and I bit it and he yelled just like anybody else."

● 1298

"Have you noticed the latest thing in men's clothes?"

"Yes. Women."

● 1299

A census clerk, in scanning over the form to see if it had been properly filled up, noticed the figures 120 and 112 under the headings, "Age of Father, if living," and "Age of Mother, if living."

"But your parents were never so old, were they?" asked the astonished clerk.

● 1300

Mabel (fresh from town) — "Topping! They haven't laid a bad egg yet."

● 1301

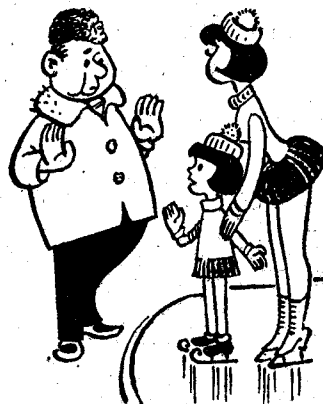
"Well," said the other, "we're pretty sure we have, but we can't prove it."

1302

"You can't," growled the farmer, "you ain't fat enough."

1303

*Little Girl* — "But Mabel said you were skating yesterday and cut a ridiculous figure."



1304

274

"Well, sah," retorted Dinah, "mebbe yo' is painless, but Ah isn't."

1305

*Hotel Manager* — "Thick? What can you expect for two dollars a day? Educated ones?"

1306

*Patient* — "Yes, sir, I tried it, and so long as it were be-ans and o-ats, I could manage pooty well, sir; but when you come to that there chopped hay, that right-down choked me, sir!"



## Homonymy

1307

"Did you?" eagerly replied his delighted listener, "What was it?"

"A pound of butter."

● 1308

Searching for my favourite kind of honey, I finally tried a shop specializing in exotic and unusual foods. As I entered the shop, a reserved white-haired assistant offered his service with such rare old-fashioned courtesy that I gave him my warmest smile.

"I'm looking for sage honey," I said. "Have you any?"  
 He nodded and returned shortly with a box of sage. Then it dawned on me that he thought I had called him honey, and rather than cause him embarrassment I accepted the seasoning. As he handed me the package, he said, "You should be more careful with your lovely smile and friendly manner of speech, Miss. Another man than myself might be misled."

(Theodosia Lester)

● 1309

An officer was halted on his approach to the boot camp by a green sentry.

In disgust over the sentry's challenge of "Who is here?" the officer shouted: "Me, jackass."

"Advance, jackass," was the solemn reply, "to be recognized."

● 1310

"How are they biting to-day, old man?"

"On the neck and legs mostly."

● 1311

"Wanted; a situation as governess by a young lady aged 26 for three years."

● 1312

An MP at the gates to the military reservation stopped a woman. "I'm sorry, lady, but I can't let you through the gate."

"But I'm one of the sergeants' wives," she protested.

"I couldn't let you in if you were the sergeant's only wife," was an adamant reply.

● 1313

A little fellow was learning from his aunt about Grant, Lee, and other famous leaders of the Civil War. "Is that the same Grant we pray to in church?" he inquired innocently.

"Pray to in church? You are mistaken, dear," said the aunt.

"No, I'm not," he insisted, "for during service we always say, 'Grant, we beseech thee, to hear us.'"

● 1314

An elderly gentleman was riding on a street car the other day. A boy began to laugh, and laughed so he couldn't

stop. The old gentleman told his mother that the boy needed a spanking and she replied that she didn't believe in spanking on an empty stomach, whereupon the man said, "Neither do I; turn him over."

● 1315

Wanted — A mahogany living-room table, by a lady with Heppelwhite legs.— *Atlanta Journal*.

● 1316

The story is told of James Smithson, founder of the Smithsonian Institution, that when five doctors had failed to discover what ailed him, he observed:

"I desire that you perform an autopsy to discover what is the matter with me, for I am dying to know what my ailment is myself."

● 1317

"Lost, an umbrella in Victoria by a lady with whalebone ribs."

● 1318

"I wish I had enough money to buy an elephant."

"What on earth do you need an elephant for?"

"I don't. I just need the money."

● 1319

A Scotchman strolled into a smart "gentlemen's outfitter's" and said to the salesman, "I want a necktie."

The salesman then produced a box of eyewisters, which he introduced with the remark:

"Here are some that are very much worn, sir."

"Oh, away, mon!" retorted the son of Scotland, offended. "I didna want yin that's verra much wor-r-rn! I hae plenty o'them at home."

● 1320

A Sunday-school visitor asked the children what he should talk about, and got an immediate answer: "Talk about three minutes."

● 1321

What word becomes shorter by the addition of a syllable?

(The word *short* becomes *shorter* by the addition of a syllable)

● 1322

"Now, I want Albert to have a thoroughly modern and up-to-date education," said his mother, "including Latin."



"Yes, of course," said the headmaster, "though Latin is, as you know, a dead language."

"Well, all the better. Albert's going to be an undertaker."

● 1323

"How do you like bathing beauties?"

"Can't tell. I never bathed any."

● 1324

A wag went out a fishing one day, and not meeting with the best luck, determined on having some fun. He went home and desposited what he had caught, and a neighbour passing by, soon after, asked:

"What luck to-day?"

"O," answered the wag, "not much — I caught a hundred or two."

"A hundred or two," replied the neighbour, with great surprise. "I'll bet you a dollar you didn't."

"Accepted," said the wag; whereupon he uncovered a pile near him and a couple of fish lay there, scarcely through with their death struggles, remarking: "There they are — I have won the wager."

"How so?" returned his neighbour, "here are only two."

"Well," replied the wag, "that is just as I told you — a hundred or two."

● 1325

The fair motorist was speeding through the sleepy village when a policeman stepped out on the road in front of her and forced her to stop.

"What have I done?" she asked innocently.

"You were travelling forty miles an hour," replied the policeman, taking out his notebook.

"Forty miles an hour!" echoed the fair motorist. "Why, I haven't been out an hour!"

The policeman scratched his head with his pencil before replying. "Go on, then. That's a new one on me."

● 1326

"What did you divorce your husband for?"

"Two hundred dollars a month."

● 1327

If you were going through the woods, which had you rather have, a lion eat you or a bear?

The lion eat a bear.

● 1328

Then there was the bow-legged floor walker who said, "Walk this way, please."

● 1329

*Teacher* — "When was Rome built?"

*Percy* — "At night."

*Teacher* — "Who told you that?"

*Percy* — "You did. You said Rome wasn't built in a day."

● 1330

"I see your wife's back from Florida."

"I always knew she wore a low-neck gown, but never thought you could see her back from that distance."

● 1331

A lady having her home remodelled called in a carpenter of Irish extraction and inquired if he was a carpenter.

"I am," said Pat.

"Can you do all kinds of work?"

"Sure I can," was the answer.

"Can you make a Venetian blind?"

"I can."

"How would you go about it?"

"I'd stick me thumb in his eye," said Pat.

● 1332

*Doctor (to patient being examined for nervous disorder)* —

"Do you talk in your sleep?"

*Parson* — "No, doctor, I talk in other people's."

● 1333

An angler was stopping at an inn, situated close to a river, which provided good fishing, and, desirous of getting some bait, he said to the servant-maid:

"I say, girl, can I get horse-flies round here?"

The girl looked wooden.

"Have you never seen a horse-fly in these parts?" he asked.

"No, sir," said the girl, "but I once saw a cow jump over a gate."

● 1334

At our house the only way to get the dinner pots washed is to wash them.

(A Rickmansworth housewife)

● 1335

*Jessie* — "Her husband didn't leave her much when he died, did he?"

*Jennie* — "No; but he left her very often when he was alive."

● 1336

"Your hair wants cutting badly, sir," said a barber insinuatingly to a customer.

"No, it doesn't," replied the man in the chair "it wants cutting nicely. You cut it badly last time."

● 1337

"Say!" yelled the farmer, who owned the pond, "don't you see that sign: No Fishing Here?"

"I sure do," said the disgusted fisherman. "The fellah that printed that sign knew what he was talkin' about!"

● 1338

Girl with wonderful personality wants work as maid in good family. Can cook and admire children.

(*Fort Wayne (Ind.) Journal-Gazette*)

● 1339

*Patron* — "Do you ever draw pictures in the nude?"

*Artist* — "No, I usually wear a smoking jacket."

● 1340

*Lawyer* — "Are you acquainted with any of the men on the jury?"

*Witness* — "Yes, sir, more than half of them."

*Lawyer* — "Are you willing to swear that you know more than half of them?"

*Witness* — "Oh, if it comes to that, I'm willing to swear that I know more than all of them put together!"

● 1341

*Mistress* — "What is your name?"

*Maid* — "Miss Arlington."

*Mistress* — "Do you expect to be called Miss Arlington?"

*Maid* — "No, ma'am; not if you have an alarm clock in my room."

● 1342

"Bedad, Pat, your wife is a strikin' good-lookin' leddy."

"Begorra, you are right; but she is more strikin' than good-lookin', I'll have you know."

● 1343

*Fed-Up Husband (to free-and-easy club friend who has popped in to supper uninvited)* — "Will you please understand, sir, that I won't have you use bad language before my wife?"

*Free-And-Easy Friend (unabashed)* — "Well, how should I know she wanted to swear first?"

● 1344

"Are you looking for me, old man?"

"I don't even know your old man!"

● 1345

"Willie," said his mother. "I wish you would run across the street and see how old Mrs. Brown is this morning."

"Yes'm," replied Willie, and a few minutes later he returned and reported:

"Mrs. Brown says it's none of your business how old she is."

● 1346

*First Knut* — "How did you get on with Miss Smart after the dance last night?"

*Second Knut* — "Well, I asked her twice if I could see her home, and she said that as I was so keen on seeing her home she would send me a photograph of it."

● 1347

*Leslie* — "I say, Freddie, what's a half of two and two?"

*Freddie* — "Why, two of course."

*Leslie* — "Wrong."

*Freddie* — "How do you make that out?"

*Leslie* — "Why, a half of two is one, and two makes three."

● 1348

*She* — "It's no use bothering me, Jack. I shall marry whom I please."

*He* — "That's all I'm asking you to do, my dear. You please me well enough!"

● 1349

*Mother* — "What do you want to take your cod liver oil with today, Junior?"

*Junior* — "With a fork."

● 1350

*Landlady* — "I think you had better board elsewhere."

*Boarder* — "Yes, I often have."

*Landlady* — "Often had what?"

*Boarder* — "Had better board elsewhere."

● 1351

A lady had just purchased a postage stamp at a substation. Must I stick it on myself? she asked.

"Positively not, madam," replied the postal clerk. "It will accomplish more if you stick it on the envelope."

● 1352

*Father* — "You first met my daughter at the seaside, I believe. She told me how she had attracted you."

*Suitor* — "Did she really, sir? Why, she told me you'd be furious if you found out she'd winked!"

● 1353

A small boy had watched a telephone repair man climb a pole, connect the test set and try the connection with the test board. There was some trouble obtaining the connection. The youngster listened a few minutes and rushed into the house exclaiming, "Mamma, come out here quick. There is a man up a telephone pole talking to heaven."

"What makes you think he is talking to heaven?"

"'Cause he hollered 'Hello! Hello! Good Lord, what's the matter up there, can't anyone hear?'"

● 1354

*Mother* — "You understand me, John, you must not eat any more to-night. It is dangerous to sleep on a full stomach!"

*John (her young son)* — "Never mind about that, mother dear, I can sleep on my back!"

● 1355

"Hubby, do you love me?"

"Yes."

"How much do you love me?"

"How much do you need?"

● 1356

To illustrate the importance of making prescriptions clear to patients, Dr. William Osler used to tell his students this story:

A doctor once told a foreign patient, "The thing for

you to do is to drink hot water an hour before breakfast every morning."

After a week the man returned to the doctor's surgery. "How are you feeling?" asked the physician.

"I feel worse if anything."

"Did you follow my directions and drink hot water an hour before breakfast every morning?" asked the doctor.

"I tried my best," replied the patient, "but I couldn't keep it up for more than fifteen minutes at a time."

● 1357

"There's a man outside with a wooden leg named Smith."

"What's the name of his other leg?"

● 1358

Two soldiers from different units met in the street when on leave.

"John Brown told me that you told him that secret about my assignment that I told you not to tell anybody," informed the first man.

"Why, that bigmouth!" cried the second soldier. "And after I especially told him not to tell you!"

"Oh, well," comforted the first one. "I told him I wouldn't tell you he told me — so now don't you tell him I did."

● 1359

When the war will end,  
Actual evidence I have none,  
But my aunt's charwoman's sister's son  
Heard a policeman, on his beat,  
Say to a housemaid in Downing Street,  
That he had a brother, who had a friend,  
Who knew when the war was going to end.

● 1360

"What's the election today for? Anybody happen to know?"

"It is to determine whether we shall have a convention to nominate delegates who will be voted on as to whether they will attend a caucus which will decide whether we shall have a primary to determine whether the people want to vote on this same question again next year."

See also 533, 564, 584, 595, 609, 680, 721, 756, 829, 849, 861, 930, 947, 948, 963, 967, 970, 971, 976, 1179, 1265, 1385, 1395.

### Multiple Nesting

## ● 1361

A young lad we know is still trying to decipher the following letter from his current girl friend:

"Dear John, I hope you are not still angry. I want to explain that I was really joking when I told you I didn't mean what I said about reconsidering my decision not to change my mind. Please believe I really mean this. Love, Grace."

## 1362

*Landlord* — "In one word, when are you going to pay your arrears?"

*Hard-Up Author* — "I will satisfy your demands as soon as I receive the money which the publisher will pay me if he accepts the novel I am going to send him as soon as the work is finished which I am about to commence when I have found a suitable subject and the necessary inspiration."

## ● 1363

"I'm terribly worried. I wrote Jack my last letter to forget that I had told him I didn't mean to reconsider my decision not to change my mind, and he seems to have misunderstood me."

## 1364

"She told me," a woman complained to a friend, "that you told her the secret I told you not to tell her."

"Well," replied her friend in a hurt tone, "I told her not to tell you I told her."

"Oh, dear," sighed the first woman. "Well, and he seems to have misunderstood me."

## Multiple Negation

## 1365

It was Timothy's first day at school. He walked up to the teacher's desk and announced: "I ain't got no pencil!"

Shocked at his expression, the teacher exclaimed: "Oh, Timothy, I have no pencil."

A sympathetic look crossed the small boy's face, and he replied: "You ain't, either? Well, we're both in the same fix."

*See also* 469, 1015.

Etc.

## 1366

Little Elsie had been naughty in school. By way of punishment, she was directed by the teacher to remain in her seat after the session until she had written an original composition containing not less than forty words. In a surprisingly short space of time, she offered the following, and was duly excused:

[illegible]

## ● 1367

An Irish country gentleman taking a walk over his estate, before breakfast, on turning a sharp corner, came face to face with a notorious poacher. The man walked straight up to him and said,

"Good morning, sir, and what brought you out so early?"

"I came out to see if I could get an appetite for my breakfast. But what are you doing here, Paddy?" said the gentleman suspiciously.

"Sure, sir," replied Paddy, "I just strolled out to see if I could get a breakfast for my appetite."

## 1368

"Yes, she's married to a real-estate agent and a good, honest fellow, too."

"My gracious! Bigamy?"

## ● 1369

Father to daughter's suitor: "My daughter says you have that certain something, but I wish you had something certain!"

## ● 1370

"John," she said, "I've got a lot of things I want to talk to you about —"

"Good," said her husband, "I'm glad to hear it. Usually you want to talk to me about a lot of things you haven't got."

## 1371

*Teacher* — "Correct the sentence, 'Before any damage could be done the fire was put out by the volunteer fire brigade.'"

Boy — "The fire was put out before any damage could be done by the volunteer fire brigade."

● 1372

Policeman — "Miss, you were doing sixty miles an hour!"  
She — "Oh, isn't that splendid! I only learnt to drive yesterday."

● 1373

Political Speaker — "What we need is a working majority and then —"

A Voice — "Better reverse it, mister. What we really need is a majority working."

● 1374

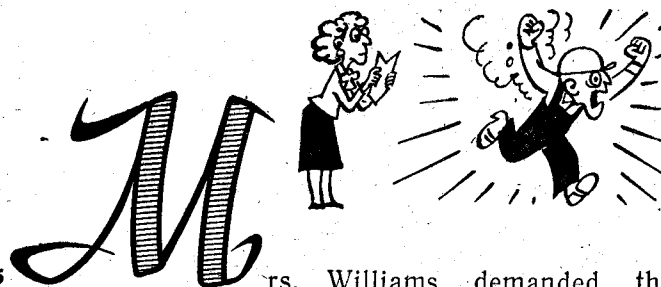
John Bright arrived at the scene of a street accident which had just happened. Seeing the serious injuries of the victim he took off his hat, put £10 in it and went round the onlookers saying: 'I am £10 sorry: how sorry are you?'

See also 88, 742, 896, 1378.

## SECTION X

### Style and Composition

*Linguistic items of distinct stylistic markedness cannot normally be used outside their proper environment. When placed in an alien context they may at best elicit a humorous effect. Sometimes it is not a particular item but the general selection of style made, consciously or unconsciously, by the language user which is unfortunate. In this case not only may language fail to function properly, but the inappropriateness of the style can be ridiculed. Stylistic incompatibility between linguistic items, whether words or larger units of discourse, and their context — linguistic or situational, characteristic of persons careless or insensitive to the use of language, underlies most of the jokes collected in this part.*



● 1375 Mrs. Williams demanded the removal of the telephone from her house. Said the language of the linemen at work on the wires in front of her residence was so loud and blasphemous she wanted no further dealings with a corporation that employed such ruffians.

The company acknowledged receipt of her complaint, but begged the suspension of cancellation until it could make its usual thorough investigation. Mrs. Williams agreed to wait.

At the end of a week the aggrieved patron received the following report:

"Dear Madam: We have gone into the alleged rowdism of our employes with great care, and have found the facts to be as follows: Richard Smith and Jeremiah Jones were repairing broken wires in front of your home. In receiving a bucket of hot metal which Smith was hauling up to the crosstrees, Jones (on duty aloft) accidentally tipped the receptacle and let a quantity of the molten lead fall on the shoulders and down the back of Smith. Whereupon Smith looked up at Jones and said: 'Be a little more careful with that stuff hereafter, Jeremiah.' Respectfully submitted."

● 1376

The Bishop of London, speaking at a meeting recently, said that when he was in America he had learned to say to his chauffeur, "Step on the gas, George"; but so far he had not summoned sufficient courage to say to the Archbishop of Canterbury, "O. K., Chief."

● 1377

Willie — "Won't your pa spank you for staying out so late?"

Tommy (whose father is a lawyer) — "Naw, I'll get an injunction from ma postponing the spanking, and then

I'll appeal to grandma and she'll have it made permanent."

● 1378

In many supply documents, as well as in other papers, the so-called nomenclature way of listing supply items is used. Attributes here follow the main word, rather than preceding it as usual. Here's a telephone conversation of a supply officer who's got so used to the language of supply requests that uses it even in oral speech.

"Here's Captain Milford speaking, Supply Officer, Request the following items: four pouches, ammunition; six helmets, steel; eleven knives, clasp — and send them in the morning first thing, heaven, for the sake of."

● 1379

A canon, invited to preach at St. Paul's Cathedral in Dean Inge's day, told the Dean that he was going to give the congregation "a dose of the milk of human kindness."

"Condensed, I trust," said Inge.

● 1380

Lawyer — "Now, sir, did you, or did you not, on the date in question or at any time, say to the defendant or anyone else that the statement imputed to you and denied by the plaintiff was a matter of no moment or otherwise? Answer me, yes or no."

Bewildered Witness — "Yes or no, what?"

● 1381

A political speaker, warning the public against the imposition of heavier tariffs on imports said, "If you don't stop shearing the wool off the sheep that lays the golden egg, you'll pump it dry."

● 1382

"Your doctor's out here with a flat tire."

"Diagnose the case as flatulency of the perimeter and charge him accordingly," ordered the garage man. "That's the way he does."

● 1383

Lawyer (to rattled witness) — "Did you, or did you not, on the aforementioned day, Tuesday, January nineteen, feloniously and with malicious afore-thought listen at the keyhole of the third floor rear apartment then occupied

as a residence by the defendant in this action on Seventieth Street near Park Avenue, and did you not also on the Friday following the Tuesday in January before referred to communicate to your wife the information acquired and repeat the conversation overheard on that occasion with the result that the gossip of your wife gave wide and far currency to the overheard conversation before mentioned? Did you or did you not? Answer Yes or No."

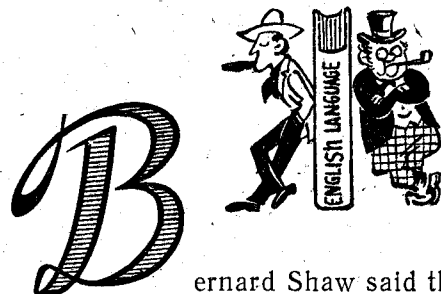
Witness — "Huh?"

See also 18, 503, 1145, 1191, 1311, 1315, 1317, 1338.

## SECTION XI

### Regional Variation

*Brought from its homeland to different parts of the globe, English has developed specific features in each of the areas where it has come to be used. The existent varieties of English differ considerably as to the substantive and quantitative nature of their idiosyncracies, the degree of variation within the language community, the territorial coverage and the sociolinguistic parameters of each variety. In spite of this all the varieties remain essentially one language. The differences among the regional varieties of English have long served as the basis of jokes, speakers of a particular variety usually taking a humorous stand towards forms of speech differing from their own. Jokes on the two major varieties of English, British and American, are followed by those based on peculiarities of other "Englishes".*



● 1384 Bernard Shaw said that America and England were two great nations separated by the same language.

● 1385 *Englishman* — "I'll never forget my feelings the first time I had breakfast in America, when the waitress leaned over my shoulder, and whispered in my ear: 'Are you through with the cereal?'" It was some time before I discovered that she meant: 'Have you finished your porridge?'"

*American* — "Wal, shortly after I landed in England a waiter came up to me at luncheon and said: 'How did you find your chop, sir?' I replied: 'Oh, I looked behind the potato and there it was,' before I understood that he was asking me how I liked it."

*Scotsman* — "That's nothing to what happened to me once. I was in lodgings in a small town in the West of Ireland. Half an hour after I had finished my supper an exceedingly pretty girl came into my room and said: 'Will I strip now, sir?' I fled into my bedroom and locked the door, but I found out afterwards that Irish girls always talk about 'stripping the table,' when they meant 'clearing away the dishes.'"

● 1386 "I speak four languages," proudly boasted the door man of a hotel in Rome to an American guest. "Yes, four — Italian, French, English, and American."

"But English and American are the same," protested the guest.

"Not at all," replied the man. "If an Englishman should come up now, I should talk like this: 'Oh, I say, what extraordinarily shocking weather we're having! I dare say there'll be a bit of it ahead.' But when you came up I was just getting ready to say: 'For the love o' Mike!

Some day, ain't it? Guess this is the second flood, all right.'"

● 1387

A Washington car conductor, born in London and still a cockney, has succeeded in extracting thrills from the alphabet-imparting excitement to the names of the national capitol's streets. On a recent Sunday morning he was calling the streets thus:

"Haitch!"

"High!"

"Jay!"

"Kay!"

"Hell!"

At this point three prim ladies picked up their prayer-books and left the car.

● 1388

American tourists, brought up on the black, glaring headlines of United States newspapers always find it a bit difficult to adjust themselves to the terse, conservative story heads in the English press. One New Yorker, for instance, chanced to be in Waterloo Station the day that an engineer fell asleep at the throttle of his cab. The engineer's train hurtled into the terminal at sixty miles an hour and scattered death and debris in all directions. Over sixty persons were killed, and hundreds seriously injured. The next morning the New Yorker hurried to read the story in the *London Times*. He found it on page seven under the headline, "Mishap in Waterloo."

See also 513, 1193.

### British English

● 1389

A visitor from England startled at dead of night by a terrifying hoot asked his American host: "What cawn that terrifying sound mean?"

"It's an owl," the host explained.

"H'l know, but who's 'owling?'"

● 1390

When Gypsy Rose Lee heard that her *G-String Murders* was going to be published in London, she wired her publishers, "Who is going to make the English translation?"



● 1391

The British Ambassador walked briskly into the foyer of a Washington hotel, and stopped for a moment to speak with one of the bright-buttoned servitors in the lobby. After he walked on, an assistant manager who had noted the incident, went over to the boy and said, "What did the Ambassador want?"

"I don't know," answered the bell-hop. "He couldn't speak English."

● 1392

*Witness (in an English Court)* — "The shock caused my wife to go off into asterisks."

● 1393

"'E's so keen on gardening that 'e bought a 'cyclopedia about it, an' I caught 'im lookin' all through the o's to see 'ow to grow 'ops."

*See also* 1068, 1190.

### American English

● 1394

The shopwalker in a large London store was asked by an American lady if he could supply "two starters and a catcher." Uncertain as to what they were but too proud to admit that his store might not know of them he said, "Certainly, madam — if you will leave your name and address we will send them round." She did so. Enquiry by the shopwalker on all floors failed to trace these articles and the managing director himself could throw no light upon them. However, when at lunch he spotted a friend who had lived in America and immediately asked him. "Oh yes," he said, "I know them. Starters are the pads of hair ladies who have very little, use to pad out their own and a catcher is a hair net to keep it all in place." Upon his return from lunch the managing director told the shopwalker what he had heard and the shopwalker was clearly staggered. "Good heavens," he exclaimed. "I thought the thing out for myself and I've already sent round two Seidlitz powders and a bed pan!"

● 1395

An American took an Englishman to a theatre. An actor in the farce, about to die, exclaimed: "Please, dear wife, don't bury me in Yonkers!"

The Englishman turned to his friend and said: "I say, old chap, what are yonkers?"

● 1396

An Alabama man was talking with a man from Maine:

"As near's I can see," said the Alabaman, "there ain't much difference atweens we-uns and youuns, 'cept that we-uns reckon an' you-uns guess."

"That's 'bout all, neighbour," replied the Maine man, "'cept that we can guess a plaguy sight better than you can reckon!"

*See also* 882, 968, 1074, 1375.

### Other Englishes

● 1397

When Maurice Margarot was tried at Edinburgh for sedition, the Lord Justice asked him, "Hae you ony counsel, mon?"

"No."

"Do you want to hae ony appointed?"

"I only want an interpreter to make me understand what your lordships say."

● 1398

A London dowager, very hard of hearing, visited her niece in Edinburgh, and went with her to church on Sunday. The deacon at the door eyed her ear-trumpet with deep suspicion. He tapped her on the shoulder and reminded her, "One toot and ye're oot!"

● 1399

*American Traveller (to hall-porter of an Irish country hotel)* — "How many mails a day are there in this hotel?"  
*Hall-Porter* — "Three, sir; breakfast, dinner, and tay."

● 1400

On the overnight boat from Ireland to England, a passenger accosted a uniformed character at the rail: "I say, are you the mate?"

"That Oi'm not," answered the character. "Oi'm the man that cooks the mate."

● 1401

"There's a moose loose!"

"Are you English or Scotch?"

## SECTION XII

### Spelling

*The nightmare of English spelling, the cause of grievances for many during their school-days (and I wonder if any adult user of English is completely at peace with regard to all his spellings), if not completely overcome at a riper age, comes to be viewed in a more philosophical than tragic light. Some even have courage enough, as if taking revenge on the injustices inflicted upon them in the past, to make fun of spelling. It is samples of this kind of humour which makes up the contents of this part.*



● 1402      ere is a letter that very effectively speaks for itself:

Thx Idxal Typxwritxr Company

Gxntlxmxn:

Wx hxrxy wish to acknowlxdgx rxcxip of your shipmxnt of onx of your xxtra-spccially quixt typxwritxrs.

Howxvvr, upon opxning thx shipmxnt wx found that for thx timx bxing wx shall bx sorxly handicappxd. In gxnxral, thx typxwritxr is in pxrfxct mxchanical condition xxcpt for onx dxtail. Through somx xrror of assxmby thxrx sxxms to bx rathxr xmbarrassing omision — thxrx is no lxttxr on thx machinx for "x", thx fifth lxttxr of thx alphabxt.

Will you plxasx bx so kind xithxr to sxnd us anothxr machinx or havx this onx sxrvicxxd as soon as possibl.

Sincxrxly,  
Xric Wxlls, Prxsidxnt,  
Thx Xxcxlsior Xxprxss Co.

● 1403

Branch Cabell points out that old General Nathan Forrest knew how to cut straight through Army red tape. The Richmond Museum treasures a document in which an Army captain made a formal request for leave. On the back of it, the forthright General scrawled his reply: "I tol you twict, Consarn it, Nol"

● 1404

*Ghoughphtheightteau* — What does this formidable looking word spell? Well, believe it or not someone has whimsically claimed that it spells "potato!"

Here's the way he sees it: "gh" stands for "p", as you will find from the last letters of "hiccough", "ough" for "o", as in "dough"; "phth" stands for "t", as in "phthisis"; "eigh" stands for "a" as in "neighbour"; "tt" stands for "l", as in "gazette"; and "eau" stands for "o" as in "beau."

● 1405

*First Co-ed* — "Does that Prof like you?"

*Second Co-ed* — "Oh, he must. At least every paper he hands back to me is covered with kiss marks."

● 1406

The Professor put this notice on the college notice-board:  
"Professor Bateson will be unable to meet his classes tomorrow."

A bright young spark deleted the "c" from the word "classes" and, since the college was not coeducational, the notice raised many appreciative laughs.

But the Professor had the last word — when he saw what had happened he rubbed off the first letter of "lasses."

● 1407

Why is the letter A like twelve o'clock?

(Because it is in the middle of day)

● 1408

Which letter of the alphabet goes all round Great Britain?  
[The letter C (the sea)]

● 1409

It is said that on an Oregon railroad there is much dispute over the proper pronunciation of the town called Eurelia. The brakemen who call the stations, however, always have to resort to their own judgment. On one of the trains, one day, so the story goes, a brakeman opened the door at one end of the car and called out:

"You're a liar!" which was his version of how to yell Eurelia.

Immediately afterward another brakeman opened door at the other end of the car and yelled:

"You really are!" and he was calling the same station, Eurelia.

● 1410

A Frenchman who had learned English at school, but had half forgotten it, was staying in London on business. It was in the month of November, and the weather was most unpleasant, disagreeable, damp and foggy.

The Parisian, not being accustomed to the English climate, had caught a severe cold, and was coughing day and night. At last, he decided on getting a remedy for

this cough, but as he did not remember this English word, he looked it up in his French-English dictionary. There he found that the English for "la toux" was "cough". Unfortunately, his dictionary did not tell him how to pronounce it. Remembering, however, the pronunciation of the word "plough" [plau], he naturally concluded that "cough" must be pronounced [kau].

So he entered a chemist's shop and said: "Will you, please, give me something for my cow!" The chemist, thinking he had misunderstood him, asked politely: "I beg your pardon, sir?"

The Frenchman repeated his request for some remedy for his "cow." "For your cow, sir?" replied the chemist. "Are you a farmer then?"

"A farmer?" answered the Frenchman rather indignantly. "What in the world makes you think so? O no, I come from Paris, from beautiful Paris!" he added haughtily.

The chemist now almost began to think that he was dealing with a madman. In great bewilderment he asked again: "But your cow, sir? Where is your cow?"

"Here!" cried the Frenchman, coughing very loud and pointing to his chest. "Here it is! I have a very big cow in my chest!"

Luckily, the chemist understood and gave him the remedy he wanted.

● 1411

An American in London was having a terrible time with his pronunciation. It was bad enough to learn that Worcester was pronounced "Wooster," and that Chumley was spelled out as Cholmondeley. Then he saw a marquee on a picture house. It read, "A REVIVAL OF CAVALCADE: PRONOUNCED SUCCESS."

"That settles it," said the American. "I'm going home."

● 1412

"Pa, what's phonetic spelling?"

"It's a way of spelling that I often got whipped for when I was your age."

● 1413

No wonder foreign students of English complain.

"Though the tough cough and hiccough plough me through

O'er life's dark lough my course I still pursue."

● 1414

Experienced German girl or woman, cooing and housework. (Lawndale (Pa.) paper)

● 1415

Why is the letter S likely to prove dangerous in argument?

(Because it turns words into s-words)

● 1416

Why is a young lady dependent upon the letter Y?

(Because without it she would be a "young lad")

● 1417

A retired printer went into the restaurant business.

"This is an outrage — there's a needle in this soup!" cried one of his customers.

"Merely a typographical error, sir," said the aforetime typo suavely. "Should have been noodle."

● 1418

Doctor — "Why, how is this, my dear sir? You sent me a letter stating you had been attacked by measles, and I find you suffering from rheumatism."

Patient — "Well, you see, doctor, it is like this: there wasn't a soul in the house that knew how to spell rheumatism."

● 1419

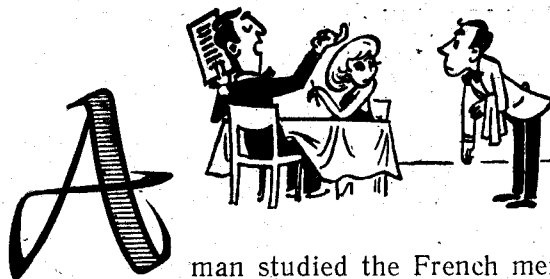
The Governor of Iowa has a name that makes rather a neat mouthful: Bourke Blakemore Hickenlooper. He himself tells about a drugstore clerk who refused to charge ten cents' worth of asafetida to the Hickenlooper account. "Take it for nothing, boss," said he clerk. "I wouldn't write both asafetida and Hickenlooper for a dime."

See also 190, 882, 892, 908, 921, 977, 1040, 1073, 1150, 1294, 1447.

## SECTION XIII

### Foreign Languages

*Never completely masters of their own language, people are even more insecure where the knowledge of foreign languages is concerned. Misunderstandings resulting from insufficient knowledge of a foreign tongue and the humorous situations in which a non-native speaker may find himself are the subject of many linguistic jokes. Some of these, among them short stories about actual events in which unhappy mistranslators (nowadays they can have electronic brains) are involved, are brought together in this concluding part of the volume.*



● 1420 man studied the French menu in a restaurant for a time, and then not wishing to appear ignorant before his best girl, said:

"I think we'll have some of that, waiter."

The waiter looked where the man was pointing, and said: "I'm sorry, sir, but that's what the band's playing."

● 1421

Mother praises her son: "Bobby wishes to study Russian. He already knows some Russian words."

"Which words?" asked her neighbour.

"Blip, blip, blip."

● 1422

An American on a visit to France upon reading the comprehensive claim on a restaurant window, "Ici on parle toutes les langues," said to the waiter:

"You must have a whole battalion of interpreters here,"

"Not one," was the reply.

"Well, who speaks all the languages?"

"The customers, monsieur."

● 1423

*Constable (to speeding foreigner)* — "'Ere, you mustn't go rushing abaht like that. What's yer name?"

*Speeding Foreigner* — "Je ne comprends pas."

*Constable* — "'Ow d'yer spell it?"

● 1424

The call-sign of Tokyo Radio broadcasting propaganda programs to the American forces was JOAK. Everybody laughed except the Japanese. Eventually they were told the joak (joke) and they changed the call-sign but the propaganda was still just as funny.

● 1425

During World War II Admiral Canaris, then head of the nazi intelligence service, received a report from his Spa-

nish agents on a conference of F. D. Roosevelt and W. Churchill to be held in Casablanca (a city in Northern Africa) in 1943.

The linguistically-minded nazi master-spy thought that Casablanca was just the Spanish for the White (blanca) House (casa) and concluded that the meeting would take place in Washington, USA and consequently out of reach of nazi agents.

● 1426

An American travelling in Europe engaged a courier. Arriving at an inn in Italy, the man asked his servant to enter his name in accordance with the police regulations of that country. Some time after, the man asked the servant if he had complied with the orders.

"Yes, sir," was the reply.

"How did you write my name?" asked the master.

"Well, sir, I can't pronounce it," answered the servant, "but I copied it from your portmanteau, sir."

"Why, my name isn't there. Bring me the book." The register was brought, and, instead of the plain American name of two syllables, the following entry was revealed: "Monsieur Warranted Solid Leather."

● 1427

No man fully capable of his own language ever masters another.

(George Bernard Shaw)

● 1428

A young Frenchman in the sophomore class of an American college was invited to a musical entertainment given by his classmates, where there were sung, in honour of the foreigner, a number of French songs, and they were given in the best American-French.

"I say, old man," observed one of the sophomores, after the entertainment, "I suppose those French songs made you feel a little homesick, eh?"

"No," responded the Frenchman, "only sick."

● 1429

When a young lady, filling her application for overseas duty with the Red Cross, in a US overseas Army Command, came to the question asking if she were prepared for the journey, she wrote: "I can say 'No' in 12 languages."

● 1430

A Frenchman on the *Normandie* who was assigned to a table where a bushy-browed stranger was already in the midst of his dinner. The Frenchman bowed and said, "Bon appétit!" The stranger also bowed and said, "Ginsberg." This happened every night for four nights. On the last night of the voyage, the stranger came to the table and said, "Bon appétit!" The Frenchman got up, bowed himself, and said, "Ginsberg."

● 1431

In pre-Hitler days, in Berlin, Herr Remarque, the author of "All Quiet on the Western Front," was talking to an American girl.

The American, speaking in German, asked Remarque why he had never visited the United States. His answer was that he knew only a few sentences in English.

"What are the sentences?" inquired the girl.

Whereupon Remarque, speaking slowly in somewhat guttural English, said: "How do you do? I love you. Forgive me. Forget me. Ham and eggs, please."

"Sakes alive!" ejaculated the American girl. "Why, with that vocabulary you could tour my country from Maine to California."

● 1432

A report reached unit headquarters that a dump had been captured with toxic agents. A group of chemical warfare experts were rushed to the place. They saw many drums marked with the word "gas". A drum was opened with great precautions by gas-masked specialists who found it contained — gasoline.

● 1433

"Waiter," commanded a big shot in a little restaurant, "bring us two orders of guiseppe verticelli." "Your pardon," said the waiter gently, "but that's the proprietor."

● 1434

A man entered the bar and called for 'a Martinus'. The barman observed as he picked up a glass, "You mean Martini, sir!" "No indeed I don't," the man replied; "I was taught Latin properly and I only want one."

● 1435

A firm experimenting with an electronic brain designed to translate English into Russian fed into it the words: "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak."

The machine immediately responded with a sentence in Russian which meant, a linguist reported: "The whisky is agreeable but the meat has gone bad."

● 1436

Two Americans were travelling in Spain. One morning they came into a little restaurant for lunch. They did not know Spanish, and their waiter did not know English. They wanted him to understand that they wanted some milk and sandwiches. At first they pronounced the word "milk" many times. Then they spelled it. But the waiter could not understand them. At last one of them took a piece of paper and began to draw a cow. He was finishing his drawing, when the waiter looked at it and ran out of the restaurant.

"Do you see," said one of the travellers, "what a pencil can do for a man who has difficulties in a foreign country?"

The waiter was back again some time after, but he brought no milk. He put down in front of the two men two tickets for a bull-fight.

● 1437

During World War I a French division was to relieve some British units on one sector of the front. According to the translated copy of the British operational order received by the French, their troops were to meet guides at crossroads to lead them to the forward positions. But there were no British guides at crossroads and, as a result of the confusion, some French troops went astray and came under heavy fire, suffering many casualties.

It turned out that the French interpreter thought very simple such a phrase: "Guides will be found by the French." Whereas in this case, the verb "to find" means "to furnish, to detail". ("Guides will be furnished (sent out) by the French").

● 1438

And here's an example of how language idioms may be put to use to cover up the real meaning of a message to foreigners.

A prisoner of war in nazi Germany wrote a letter from a POW camp to his relatives in the States, and the letter, having passed through the hands of fascist censors, was delivered to the address indicated.

The letter ran as follows: "I'm in a POW camp in Germany. The camp is excellent. We are having a fine time. We have fine food. We are in fine shape. We want all the people to hear about this. Tell it to the Army! Tell it to the Air Force! Tell it to the Navy! Tell it to the Marines!" Unaware of the actual meaning of the phrase "Tell it to the Marines!", the censors let the letter pass.

● 1439

A lady gave a reception to a group of college students. Among those present was a foreign student who had studied a book of etiquette. Handed a cup of tea, he said:

"Thank you, sir or madam, as the case may be."

● 1440

A producer recently imported an alien star.

"She's a nize goil," he announced, "and I'm gonna loin her English."

● 1441

In 1942 an American naval vessel patrolling in the Med off the Italian coast intercepted an Italian ship. The Italian crew was taken aboard the U. S. destroyer and the order was given to sink the ship by gun fire, despite of the desperate cries of the Italian skipper who kept repeating the word 'ore'. There was no interpreter at hand and nobody could understand the word. When the destroyer arrived at her base it turned out that the word meant 'gold' and the ship sent to bottom carried a big part of the Italian national gold stock.

● 1442

*Mrs. Newrich* — "I want you to teach my son a foreign language."

*Professor* — "Certainly, madam, French, German, Russian, Italian, Spanish —?"

*Mrs. Newrich* — "Which is the most foreign?"

● 1443

The French Canadian endeavoured to explain his bronchitis, but the confusion of the English language was almost too much for him. At last he said:

"I don't feel ver' good, I half a horse on t'roat; in fac', I half a colt."

● 1444

*Tommy* — "Madge, what's 'necessitas', masculine or feminine?"

*Madge* — "Why, feminine, of course."

*Tommy* — "Why?"

*Madge* — "Why, she was the mother of invention."

● 1445

"The other day I met a French gentleman in New York City who thought he had mastered the English language.

"How do yo do?" I said, on accosting him.

"Do vat?" he asked, in a puzzled manner.

"I mean, how do you find yourself?"

"Saire, I never lose myself."

"You don't understand me; I mean, how do you feel?"

"How I feels? Oh, I feels smooth; you shust feel me."

● 1446

*Judge* — "And you say you were attacked by a crowd of hoodlums?"

*Latin Professor* — "Hoodla, your honour."

● 1447

A foreigner was relating his experience in studying the English language. He said:

"When I first discovered that if I was quick I was fast; that if I was tied, I was fast; and that not to eat was fast, I was discouraged. But when I came across the sentence, 'The first one won onedollar prize' I gave up trying."

● 1448

Translation wonders



See also 871, 916, 1038, 1410.

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