

WRITE SOMETHING FUNNY TO SUCCEED

SERIOUS BUSINESS OF DISCOVERING HUMOROUS TALENT.

BOSTON, Dec. 5, 1908.—The rarest thing in the world, as everybody knows who knows anything about the literary markets, is a new joke. The next rarest is an old joke so revamped that it looks new. The liveliest hunt among publishers of books and magazines today is for real humor.

"See that drawer," observed the editor of a big New York weekly to an aspirant for literary honors who felt sure he could write the right stuff if he only knew just what the editor wanted. "Nearly empty, isn't it? That's my honor drawer. Any one who can help me to fill it is persona grata in this office."

The editor, like every other, had discovered how rare genuinely funny writing is. To discover the humorous articles which now and then occur in the magazines, is the publisher's most serious occupation. Anything that contains a laugh a line is received giesfully in the editorial offices of half a hundred American publishing houses.

Both schools of American humor are in favor. Anybody who can be either broadly or delicately witty finds a hearing these days—as well as many who think they are able to be either and actually are neither.

The distinction between the subtle and the obvious groups of humorists was amusingly traced in a recent Harvard Phi Beta Kappa after dinner speech which introduced to the learned society Rev. Samuel M. Crothers, a publisher's "find," a Unitarian clergyman known mostly not so long ago as President Eliot's pastor but now duly qualified as a literary successor of Oliver Wendell Holmes, who is expected to produce something bright whenever he touches typewriter to paper.

The point was made in this address that most American humorists have belonged very clearly to one or the other of these schools; and consultation of such a manual as "The Early American Humorists," a handy reference book that gives selections from the writings of many, who famous in their own day are now in too great danger of being forgotten, disclose pretty clearly on the one side

the jokers who had buffon gifts like "Artemus Ward," "Orpheus S. Kerr," "Bill Arp," "Josh Billings," "Petroleum V. Nasby" and the "Danbury News Man," and on the other side the literary wits like Washington Irving, George William Curtis and N. P. Willis, whose quiet humor more closely resembled that of the great English writers of the eighteenth century. The discoveries of humorists by publishers in the last few years have not been so numerous, and many of them have been disappointments because the writer who has started in by being uproariously funny often conceives an idea of reforming the world through his humor and thereafter becomes deadly dull. This tendency of the jester to aim to be a preacher has been very apparent in the history of American humor.

Just as Dr. Brothers is perhaps the most valuable recent discovery among men who write, a woman whose humorous powers were quite unsuspected up to a short time ago, outside of a circle of personal acquaintance, has come to the fore. The literary world is still laughing over the failure of Mark Twain, himself the world's leading humorist, to recognize a professional hand in the first of the "Letters of Jennie Allen," which Miss Grace Donworth, a Providence woman, wrote as a practical joke.

The story is that while some good ladies of a San Francisco Relief Committee of the Rhode Island capital were engaged in assorting and packing clothing sent to them for the benefit of victims of the earthquake and fire one of their number received a letter signed "Jennie Allen" which requested that a certain garment should be returned to her since it had been forwarded by mistake. The spelling and phrasing of the communication were fearful and wonderful, and half from curiosity, it was answered. It was also shown to a number of people and a copy of it came into Mark Twain's hands, which he twice used as subject matter for more or less serious speechifying, as at an annual dinner of the Associated Press, and which later the Simplified Spelling Society gravely issued as part of one of its leaflets. The letter turned out, of course to be the production of Miss Donworth, who was a member of the committee. After the lady had admitted her guilt she amused herself and her companions by adding more letters gradually describing the entire "Allen" family and its acquaintances. Some of these were published in the Ladies Home Journal. Now that in their completeness they have been issued in book form the whole community is quoting Miss Donworth's witticisms, such as "Mr.

Spinney says you can't rise with the lark if you've been on one the night before." or "He is a Maine man, but a perfect gentleman. So is his mother." or again, "We are going to live close to my folks so I can help them when they need me, and his mother is going to live with us. My cup runneth over."

In spite of occasional broad touches the general quality of Miss Donworth's work puts her in the same class with the more subtle school of humorists like Mr. Crothers, Robert Grant, Witter Bynner, whose recent "Ode to Harvard" contains some of the brightest touches of fancy of any recent poem, Ralph Bergengren, in whom Collier's Weekly just now announces a combination of Lewis Carroll and Frank Stockton, and Agnes Repples, whose fund of brilliant wit accumulates steadily year by year. "Jennie Allen's" humor in some respects resembles that of Father John B. Tabb, the prevailing quality in whose delightfully funny verses, as in his "Quips and Quiddits," and "Child Verse" is one of subtlety, although he now and then breaks forth into something broad and dangerously near being unclerical, as in his often quoted quip:

"A pious prelate used to ride
A donkey which, alas—
His patience being often tride,
He called Eu-damid-as—
A name he emphasized or not
As grew his temper cool or hot."

It comparatively seldom happens that a humorist who is "found as belonging to one of these two distinct schools passes over to the other after he has been discovered, although among writers of comic verse and prose William F. Kirk was simple and delicate in his lyrics of "The Norsk Nightingale," while no one can accuse him of extreme delicacy as he records the discussions between the Manicure Lady and the Barber or reproduces the compositions of Little Bobbie.

No conspicuous find of the broad school of humor has been proclaimed by any publishing house in the present year. Probably the most noted humorist, indeed, of this stump who has come into prominence in recent ears is Ellis Parker Butler, whose "Pigs Is Figs" started a chuckle that extended from Atlantic to Pacific. Another of Mr. Butler's works representing his style at its best is his "Perkins of Portland," the story of the advertising man who performed commercial miracles with his catch phrases, such as "Murdock's soap is pure soap; if you don't believe it, bite, it," and his "Perkins' paper porous plaster." Makes all pains and aches fly faster.

Among the broad school humorists would probably be placed "Mr. Dooley"



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ley" (Peter Finley Dunne) who has successfully worked the same vein for now more than ten years. His two earliest books "Mr. Dooley in Peace and in War" and "Mr. Dooley in the Hearts of his Countrymen" were among the greatest discoveries ever made by an American publishing house. They now count among the classics of American humor, for which there is the same kind of continuous demand as for Mark Twain's works or for Stockton's "Rudder Gran." Another of course, is the versatile George Ade. In somewhat the same class though of more variable talent, is the prolific Holman F. Day, who lives in Maine and writes books of verse about Maine people with a mission—that mission being, according to a preface written for one of his volumes by his friend Congressman Charles Livingsfield, "to sell as many copies as possible." Other excellent humorists who belong with the jesters rather than with the graceful essayists are, of course, Gelette Burgess, of Purple Cow fame, whose "Gage of Youth" and "Vivette" have however shown him in more subtle light; Oliver Herford, author of "The Bashful Earthquake," "An Alphabet of Celebrities" and other thrillingly funny productions; Charles Battell Loomis, cheerful optimist and popular lecturer as well as author. All these have at one time or other been hailed as great discoveries, and the receipt of a manuscript from one of them is still an event in many editorial offices.

After Mr. Dooley perhaps the most remarkable and unhealed humorist of the past ten years was George Horace Lorimer, whose "Letters from a Self-Made Merchant to His Son," caught the popular fancy to an extraordinary degree resulting in the sale of nearly half a million copies of a book which is still among the good sellers. Mr. Lorimer up to the time of the appearance of his book had been known first as an excellent newspaper reporter, then as an accomplished editor, but it was not realized that he had gifts entitling him to a place among the foremost of American humorists.

Beware of Frequent Colds.
A succession of colds or a protracted cold is almost certain to end in chronic catarrh, from which few persons ever wholly recover. Give every cold the attention it deserves and you may avoid this disagreeable disease. How can you cure a cold? Why not try Chamberlain's Cough Remedy? It is highly recommended. Mrs. M. White, of Butler, Tenn., says: "Several years ago I was bothered with my throat and lungs. Someone told me of Chamberlain's Cough Remedy. I began using it and it relieved me at once. Now my throat and lungs are sound and well." For sale by Frank Hart and leading druggists.

The Daily Market Report

PORTLAND, Dec. 5.—The week ends with the poultry market on the whole in better shape than for more than a month past. Hens and chickens were in good demand today, and at prices approximately 2 cents higher than the quotations at the first of the week, while ducks also were actively active at the quotations that have ruled all the week. For geese and turkeys there has been but little inquiry this week, but fortunately for the market, little stock in these lines came in.

There will be little if any poultry of any kind to carry over to next week, and the outlook is for a good market for the remainder of the month. No shipments of turkeys for the Christmas trade are expected for a week or more, but in all probability there will be enough for the demand for it is known that a number of the turkey producers of the Valley at Thanksgiving time held back some of their birds for the later holiday trade. Storage stocks in the city will also be drawn upon to some extent.

WHOLESALE PRICES.

Grain, Flour, Hay, Etc.
Wheat—Track prices: Club, 89c; blue-stem, 95c; turkey red, 92c; red Russian, 87c; Valley, 91c.
Flour—Patents, \$4.80; straights, \$3.95@4.20; exports, \$3.70; Valley, \$4.45; 14-sack graham, \$4.40; whole wheat, \$4.65; rye, \$5.50.
Barley—Feed, \$26.50; rolled, \$28@25.50; brewing, \$27.
Oats—No. 1 white, \$31; gray, \$30.
Hay—Track prices: Timothy—Willamette Valley, fancy, \$15; do, ordinary, \$12; Eastern Oregon, mixed, \$16.50; do, fancy, \$17.50; alfalfa, \$11.50@12; clever, \$12.
Millstuffs—Bran, \$26.50; middlings, \$33; shorts, country, \$31; shorts, city, \$30; chop, \$22.

Meats and Provisions.
Dressed Meats—Hogs, fancy 7 @ 7 1/2c, ordinary 6@6 1/2c, large 5c; veal, extra 8 1/2@9c, ordinary 6@7c, heavy 5c; mutton, fancy 6@7c.
Bacon—Breakfast, 15@21 1/2c, picnics 10c, cottage roll 11c; regular short clears, smoked 13c, do unsmoked 12c; clear bellies, unsmoked 14c, do smoked 15c; shoulders, 11c.
Hams—10-12 lbs, 15c; 14-16 lbs, 15c; 18-20 lbs, 15c.

Butter, Eggs and Poultry.
Cheese—Full cream twins, 15c; full cream triplets, 15c; Young America, 16c; cream brick, 18@20c; Swiss block, 18@20c; Limburger, 18@20c.
Poultry—Mixed chickens 11@11 1/2c; fancy hens, 12c; roosters, old 8c, broilers and fryers, 12@12 1/2c; dressed poultry, 1c lb. higher; ducks, 14@15c; geese, 9@10c; turkeys, live, 17@18c; dressed, 20@22c.
Butter—Extras, 36@37c; fancy, 33@34c; choice, 30c; store, 18@20c.
Eggs—Extra Oregons, 40 cents; Eastern, 28@32c.

Fruits and Vegetables.
Potatoes—Buying prices, 80@85c; per hundred; sweets, \$2 per hundred.
Fresh Fruits—Oranges, \$2.50@3; lemons, \$4@5; grapes, \$1.25@1.65 per crate; pears, 75c@1.25 per box; quinces, \$1.25 per box; cranberries, \$12@12.50 per barrel; bananas, 5@5 1/2c per pound.
Onions—Buying prices, 90@95c, per hundred.
Apples—Best Oregon, \$1.25@1.50; common, 75c@1 box.
Vegetables—Turnips, \$1.25 per sack; beets, \$1.25; parsnips, \$1.25; cabbage, \$1.50; head lettuce, 50@60 dozen; cucumbers, hothouse, \$1.25@1.40 crate; celery, 75@85c dozen; artichokes, 75c dozen; beans, 12c pound; eggplant, \$1.50 crate; tomatoes, \$1@1.50 crate; squash, 1 cent per pound; peppers, \$1.75 per box; cauliflower, 75c@1 per dozen.

Oysters, Clams and Fish.
Oysters—Shoalwater Bay, per gallon \$2.25; per sack \$4.50; Toke Point, \$1.60 per 100; Olympias (120 lbs.), \$5; Olympias, per gallon, \$2.25.

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