

## INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

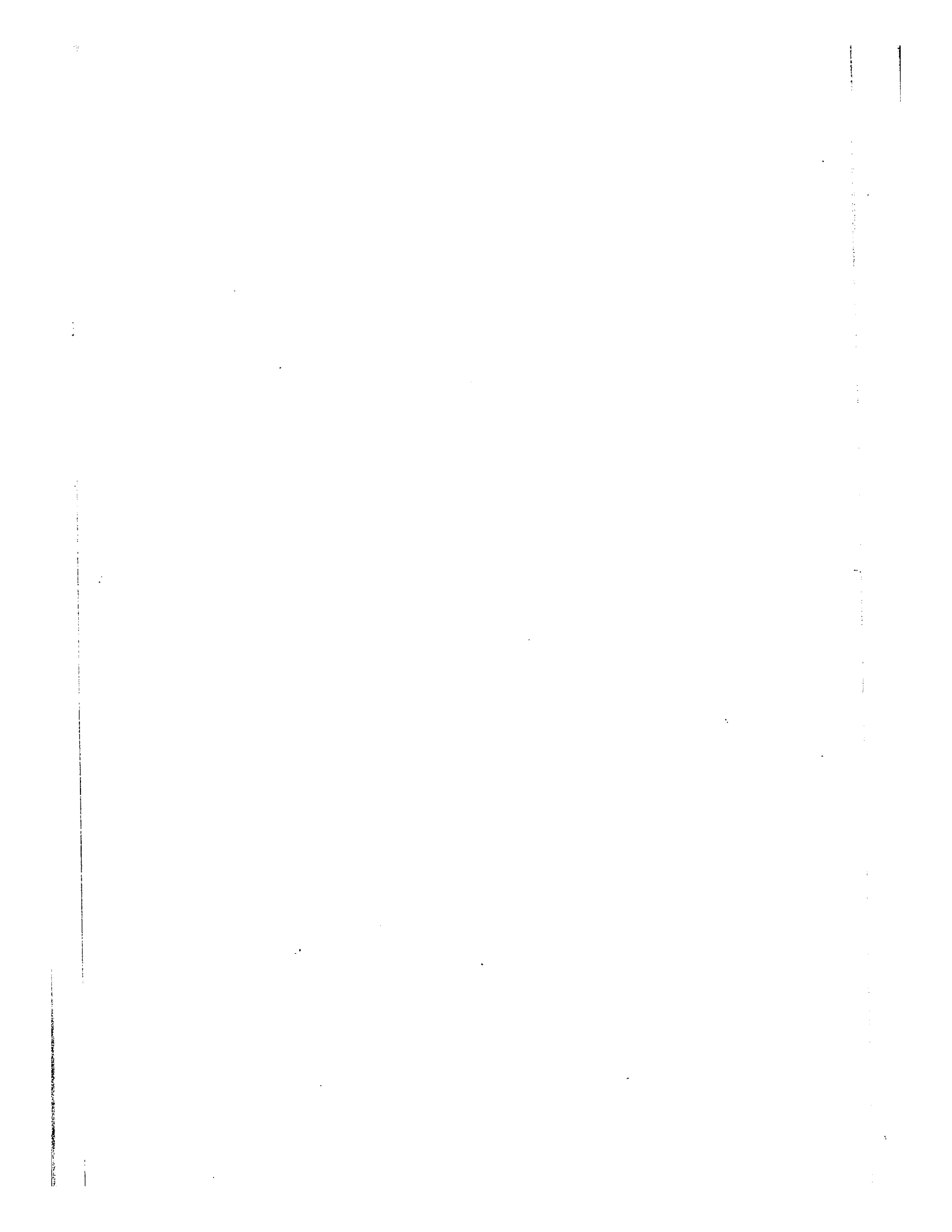
**The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.** Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

ProQuest Information and Learning  
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA  
800-521-0600

UMI<sup>®</sup>



ENGLISH AND AMERICAN WIT AND HUMOR.

THESIS PRESENTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE THESIS

ARE WE FREE?

FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

ON THE EIGHTEENTH DAY OF MAY 1933

by

PIERRE BANCE.



UMI Number: EC52059

### INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

**UMI<sup>®</sup>**

---

UMI Microform EC52059  
Copyright 2007 by ProQuest LLC  
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against  
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

---

ProQuest LLC  
789 East Eisenhower Parkway  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

Université d'Ottawa  
Ottawa, Canada



L. J. C. & M. I.

University of Ottawa  
Ottawa, Canada

I have read Mr. Bance's essay: English and American Wit and Humour, and find it worthy of the note Probatus. Some parts of the thesis are open to debate, and the author would do well to modify them if he contemplates publishing his work. The style is good.

ENGLISH AND AMERICAN WIT AND HUMOR.

OUTLINE OF THESIS.

- 1 - General introduction. (page 1)
- 2 - Body.
  - a-Man, having to repress his natural impulses and suffer disappointments, is frequently pessimistic. (page 2)
  - b-Man is an animal ridens. (page 4)
  - c-Benefits of laughter to man. (page 5)
  - d-World made up of all kinds of people. (page 8)
  - e-Men drawn together by bond of commonly shared ideals. (page 10)
  - f-Each country has its own way of looking at things including wit and humor. (page 13)
  - g-Definition of wit and humor and their different types. (page 14)
  - h-The Englishman. (page 19)
  - i-English wit and humor. (page 27)
    - Elizabethan times. (page 28)
    - Swift. (page 30)
    - Thackeray. (page 34)
    - Dickens. (page 38)
    - Lamb. (page 41)
    - Chesterton. (page 44)
    - Jerome. (page 47)
  - j-The American. (page 50)
  - k-American wit and humor. (page 59)
    - Twain. (page 60)
    - Ward. (page 69)
    - Quad. (page 70)
    - Irving and Holmes. (page 71)
  - l-Debt of world to American humorists.
- 3 - Conclusion:-let us try to develop our sense of humor. (page 74)

## ENGLISH AND AMERICAN WIT AND HUMOR.

"The progressive renouncement of constitutional impulses," Freud tells us, "the activity of which affords the ego primary pleasure, seems to be one of the basic principles of human culture."

Such a statement if made to the stranger with whom one casually opens a conversation to while away the time in a waiting room, or in any other similar circumstances, would quite probably be greeted with the succinct yet so significant expletive 'nuts'. Even a man versed in arts and letters may wonder what on earth such a strange psychological utterance has to do with a dissertation on wit and humor and so, in order to reassure our readers, may we hasten to add that there is indeed a method in our madness and that Freud's words are most appropriate to begin a treatise of this sort. If our assurance still leaves them sceptical then all we can do is ask them to suspend their judgment until they have read a few more pages.

No matter how far from the truth the Austrian philosopher may have been on other questions, it seems that in this instance he so to speak hit the nail on the head.

We who are living in society have but to look back at our ancestors to confirm his statement for, far more civilized than

the cave men of old, are we not in a position to understand that the more a man is cultured the greater is the repression of his natural impulses? Sylvia H. Bliss states this fact so clearly and so convincingly in her comparison of brute and man that we cannot do better than to quote her:-

"The animal is perfectly natural. It follows instinct, hiding and repressing nothing. It may growl, roar, fight, give chase, plunder and, subject to certain limitations, feed and reproduce when it wills. Indecency and shame are words without meaning....

The human being from childhood up must curb, repress, skulk, hide, control. From the mother's 'no, no' to the thundering 'Thou shalt not' from Mount Sinai, there is constant denial of instinct.... Nature confined is not entirely quiescent; with all the outlets which physical and mental activities afford, there remains still a large residue of repressed primal instinct...."

No man, regardless of what his social or financial status may be, is foolish enough to claim that life is a stream of continual bliss. We have but to analyze our own feelings to realize that our sojourn on this earth is by no means the quintessence of happiness. There are times when each and every one of us feels depressed and discouraged and that the whole world is conspiring against us.

Our fondest hopes more often than not are dashed to the ground, everything seems to go wrong, and we conclude that each pleasure we enjoy in life is purchased at the price of a hundred disappointments.

When a man gets into this frame of mind he feels like starting a fight or perhaps even committing suicide and, since we all feel this way at one time or another, it would appear that a cloud of gloom, disgust, and truculence should always hang over the world. Such though, is not the case; there is not an overabundance of pessimists but on the contrary an atmosphere of optimism surrounds us. Some people in fact are so wildly optimistic as to believe that the depression will end within the next fifty years. What explanation can one offer for this, other than the once-in-a-while-pessimistic man changes his mind about everything being wrong and, discarding his scowl for a smile and feeling a trifle ashamed of himself, admits that it is not such a bad old world after all?

Whence this transformation? Can it be merely that the force of gravity has temporarily suspended operations and no longer exerts a downward pull on the corners of his mouth? Can this possibly be the reason of his lightheartedness? Our knowledge of physics and physiology, sketchy as it is, tends to upset this hypothesis and we are forced to seek an

explanation elsewhere. Though we have no intention of duping our readers to see things in the same light as we do,(the Scotchman who made his mule wear green-colored glasses and then fed it shavings is no kin of ours) we feel reasonably assured that the change of opinion is wrought by the wand of Wit and Humor in the delicate hand of the Goddess of Fun.

This brings us to the realization that man is capable of laughing. Philosophers, in order to distinguish between man and brute, define the former as a reasonable animal but would it not be just as logical to define him as a laughing animal? Of all living beings is not man and man alone capable of laughing?

Can you imagine a bird having wings and not using them? Such a question borders on the ridiculous but it is no less ridiculous to suppose that man who is an 'animal ridens' should never laugh. Yes, God wanted the masterpiece of his creation to laugh and, as God never acts without a purpose, what could His purpose have been?

A little arithmetic will come in handy here. One dignified person plus a rickety chair will certainly give a total of laughter if the chair is rickety enough to collapse when sat on. Why does one laugh at such a spectacle? Sages from the time of Aristotle to this very

day have tried to solve this riddle yet the answer has always eluded them. Whether laughter is due to subconscious satisfaction, to economy of psychic expenditure, to physiological clarification, or to any other cause that requires five syllable words to describe it, is of no great concern to us. We confess our ignorance and humbly admit that if Aristotle was unable to find a solution our chances of doing so are extremely remote. We merely observe that man laughs and that laughter is of more varieties than Heinz' products, but the fact that we wish to emphasize is that laughter is the best relaxation that God has ever given to man.

It does not require great perspicacity to realize that a child of three or four years is not exactly crushed with worries, and that unless it is sick or abnormal it is nearly always laughing. Only pain, sorrow, and worry, prevent laughter from being its constant companion. Did you ever see a baby take its first steps? If so, you must have noticed how laboriously and painstakingly the tot places one foot in front of the other, all the while wearing an expression as if it had the cares of the entire world piled on its young shoulders. Then when it has made a few steps and is once more safely snuggled in its mother's arms, what happens? Worry forgotten, it smiles and

coos and looks back over the yard or so it covered with all the pride that welled up in the breast of Christopher Columbus on completing his memorable voyage.

Just as in a child laughter is the accompaniment of the absence of anxiety and uncertainty, so also may we conclude that in the adult it is the accompaniment of the release of inner tension. Yes, laughter is a form of escape from the anxiety, uncertainty, and worry of everyday life. It is a relief from strain and tension; it serves as relaxation, as rest. It is the safety valve by which we all let off steam occasionally. There is no better way of smoothing over an awkward situation than by a good, hearty, infectious laugh, for do not people who have quarrelled and wish to make up again laugh the whole thing off? Merriment is man's best tonic; it tingles through his veins and permeates his whole being with its glowing warmth. There would be far fewer cases of chronic indigestion if man seasoned his meals with a dash of laughter instead of smothering them in a large helping of ill temper. As Lamb expresses it "a laugh is worth a hundred groans in any market."

No maxim could be more true. Everybody dislikes a pessimist and in any sort of social gathering he is left strictly to himself. There are some men who seem to delight in being lugubrious. If you happen to mention the weather

they are sure to predict downpours, storms, thunder, lightning, and hurricanes. Talk about a doctor you intend to consult for some minor ailment, and in less than five minutes conversation you will be firmly convinced that you are at death's door, and that it would be suicide to have anything to do with such an incompetent physician. No matter what topic you bring up this type of individual is determined to squelch you, and when finally you pry yourself loose from him, (he is usually harder to get rid of than a case of athlete's foot) you feel about as comfortable as you do after having an infected molar removed. Small wonder then that this sort of person is shunned as a plague.

On the other hand the man who is always ready to smile is seldom without a host of friends. He is popular wherever he goes and people are anxious to meet him for no other reason than because he has a cheerful disposition.

Byron tells us that

"All who joy would win

Must share it, -happiness was born a twin,"

and it certainly does seem that happiness is easily diffused. It spreads like wildfire notwithstanding the damper of Pessimism and, if we may trespass on the domain of electricity to express our thought, a cheerful, happy man is both the ground by which a pessimistically charged fellow man

instantly loses his electrons of gloom, disgust and hopelessness, and the coil by proximity to which happiness is induced into the man no longer weighed down by dejection, who then once more becomes a normal human being.

Since laughter has such a beneficial effect on man, since it is not only a relaxation but also the best means of making life more pleasant, think of what an extraordinary power it wields over the entire human race.

The world is made up of all kinds of people: the imperturbable Englishman, the excitable Frenchman, the stolid German, the sleepy Canadian, the industrious American and numberless others. They differ from one another in religion, politics, custom, language, and in a thousand other ways, yet from the icy wastes of the Arctic to the burning sands of the Sahara laughter is always ringing out. Yes, all men laugh because it is in their very nature to do so, but do they all laugh for the same reason? Here the philosopher would make another of his well known distinctions. Yes and no, is the reply: -they all laugh because something strikes them as funny, but that which appears funny to one man need not necessarily seem so to another.

Did you ever hear the East Indian fable of the blind men and the elephant?

"Once upon a time there were four blind men. One day they heard the people in the village talk about a large elephant that had been caught by some hunters. 'Take us to the elephant,' they begged. 'Let us feel it with our hands. Then we shall know what an elephant is like.' Their friends led them to the elephant. The first blind man put his hand out and touched the elephant's broad side; the second took hold of a leg; the third grasped a tusk; and the fourth clutched the animal's tail. 'Now do you know what an elephant looks like?' asked a friend. 'Yes,' cried the first, 'the elephant is broad and flat like a barn door.' 'What,' exclaimed the second, 'the elephant is big and round, like the trunk of a tree.' 'Not so,' cried the third, 'the elephant is hard and smooth, like a polished stone.' 'What are you all talking about?' stormed the fourth, 'the elephant is just like a piece of rope.'"

Now all these men were honest and believed what they said yet they had different conceptions of an elephant's appearance. Each one considered the pachyderm from a different standpoint so how could their opinions be anything but divergent?

If we turn back the scroll of history we cannot help but notice how long nations and empires have existed, and

from all indications they shall no doubt exist until the world returns to the nothingness whence it came. If one happens to be of an inquisitive turn of mind, one is inclined to wonder why human beings have grouped themselves into nations. Are we not all living in the same world, are we not all brothers under the skin? Why then should we divide into groups, why should we call ourselves citizens of France or England rather than citizens of the world? It would seem that from the very dawn of creation Adam's descendants went their way in little groups, settled in a certain portion of the land, and founded a community. Why did they not all live together instead of separating as they did? If it be permitted to judge our ancestors by present day standards, the answer is very simple. They parted principally because they disagreed on certain questions, those sharing the same views being drawn together by the stout bond of common interest. Whenever one sees an aggregation of men living together and constituting a nation, one may safely say that they all have a great deal in common. Different nationalities can never get along; there is always cause for friction because the same ideals are not shared by them.

The Provinces of Quebec and Ontario, for instance, are

at the extremes of discord because of religion, language, and politics. The inhabitants of one province share certain ideals and those of the sister province are imbued with others totally different, the result being that each province has a very low opinion of its neighbor. Any man who expects a kindhearted, easy going French Canadian to get along with a sour, prohibitionistic, madly patriotic, psalm-singing, fanatical Orangeman, is no doubt of the opinion that the moon is made of green cheese.

No better example of the cementing bond of common ideals can be found than in a heretical religion. As soon as a group of heretics breaks away from the Church, it sticks together with amazing vigor because of its common hatred of everything pertaining to Rome. When its ardor cools down, however, one reads of pastors being ousted, of churches being locked to prevent a certain bishop from officiating, and of a certain bishop breaking into his church to conduct services in spite of the will of the congregation. It is impossible to peruse a newspaper without running across at least one of these disgusting and scandalous episodes, but one need not be surprised at their occurrence, for when heretics are no longer united by the bond of hatred of Rome and its priests, they begin

to pay attention to the society they have founded. They are logical enough to lay down laws and try to put some order in their ceremonies, but it nearly always happens that in doing so they ruffle the feelings of their co-religionists. What happens? The bond of common ideals is broken and they separate into other groups. It is for no other reason than this that there are hundreds of heretical sects to-day. In fact we may safely say that there are as many different sects as there are individual heretics, and if it were not for the bonds of language, politics, and other common interests, each heretic would be living by himself because, as no two share the same beliefs, there would be nothing to hold them together. Few present day heretics are of the opinion that priests conceal horns under their birettas and tails under their soutanes, and this fact, incidentally, accounts for the collapse of heresy.

Beyond a doubt then men group together because they share common interests; that is why nations exist and does it not naturally follow that the older a nation is, the more pronounced will be the views shared by its inhabitants? If you evaporate three quarters of the volume of a salt solution will not the remaining portion be far more concentrated than the original? This occurs because only the

water evaporates and the salt is left behind. The same thing happens in a nation: the individuals pass on but their convictions remain, and when nations have existed for centuries and the citizens of these nations have married their own kind, the views shared by these people become more and more identical and are attributed to the nation as such. Why is it that one can tell a Jew a mile off? Is it not by his hook nose, his untidy beard, his peculiar accent, and his characteristic gestures? Why is the typical Frenchman an excitable little fellow who (when he loses his head and most of the time even when he does not) gives one the impression that his arms are on roller bearings and talks at such a speed that a machine gun sounds like a dirge by comparison? Who are John Bull and Uncle Sam? Could they possibly exist if each nation had not its own individual characteristics?

All this brings us to the realization that each country, like each of the blind men in the fable, has its own way of looking at things. Generally speaking, each nation has its own view on language, religion, and numerous other topics, and humor, it so happens, is one of them. Yes, all men laugh but not at the same things, and thus we come to the very interesting question of the gaiety of nations.

Each land has its own particular kind of humor which is extremely difficult to analyze. There is one point, however, upon which we all agree, namely that it is a deadly insult to be told that we have no sense of humor. Inform your friend that he can never see a joke; will he not immediately deny it even though for love or money he cannot explain what humor really is? Even the definition of humor has yet to be established, and the difference between wit and humor is indeed very hazy in the minds of most of us. In the first place wit and humor are totally different. Humor is always the absolute truth while wit is always an exaggeration, but even so we are still in the dark as to the meaning of humor.

Though no man has yet dared to define it under pretext that it defies synthesis or that an attempted definition destroys its essence, we feel no qualms whatsoever. It may be that 'fools rush in where angels fear to tread,' but if every one adopted the angel's attitude very little progress would be made, and furthermore any man - whether he rushes in or not - who tries to write a treatise on humor without explaining what he means by the word, would certainly not impress his readers by his logic. At any rate Cooper's cheerful suggestion that 'a fool must now and then be right by chance' overcomes any

hesitation brought about by Pope's ponderous aphorism, so we feel quite justified in giving our conception of humor. In plain language it appears to be that trait in man which enables him to see the funny side of things. To use a very exact philosophical expression nothing can be 'undequaue funny'. There is always an angle from which the comical incident is not comical at all. If you force a shy, sensitive, and gawky individual to make a speech, his mumbling and blushing and stammering may be very amusing to the onlookers, but if the man's humiliation and acute discomfort are taken into consideration, the incident is no longer comical. Things then like the philosophical 'bonum particulare' are only partially funny and a sense of humor, according to our way of thinking, is the rose colored glasses which shut out all sadness and allow only the comical to reach man's eye.

A humorous writing then is the droll but true description of scenes and incidents that have really occurred, while a witty writing is a comical but fanciful description of scenes and incidents which only occur in the mind of the writer. The time honored and universally known example of a man searching for his collar button would make excellent material for either a humorous or a witty writing. So long as the story teller sticks to

the truth in his attempt to provoke laughter his tale will be humorous. Suppose he pictures a man crawling around on his hands and knees, bumping his head on an open drawer, getting covered with dust and perspiration and finally remembering, on discovering the elusive button and completing his toilet, that the function at which he must be present is to take place the following night, his story will be humorous. While if he shows us the man tearing his hair out with rage and rending a stuffed owl in his attempt to locate the missing button, then his story will be witty.

Wit and humor, however, are not two cut and dried classifications to one of which everything comical belongs. Quite on the contrary they blend into each other, and manifest themselves in a number of forms such as satire, ridicule, and repartee.

Strictly speaking a humorist need not necessarily produce laughter, for pathos is also considered a form of humor. Laughter and tears after all come from the same fount and some sentimental people, women especially, seem to enjoy one as much as the other. How many women dote on a good cry. They read a sad love story and shed barrels of tears, but nothing could persuade them to leave the story unfinished. How many men revel in de-

scriptions of sadness and misery and when asked why they do so reply: "It's life, isn't it?" Life it is no doubt, but is there not sufficient sorrow in the life of each and every one of us without adding to it by reading about it? For this reason a man who has the morbid mania of depicting grief should, in our estimation, be classed as a lunatic rather than a humorist.

Dickens, for instance, was extremely poor in his youth and had to earn his living in a most unpleasant manner. It is quite natural then that his works should be tinged with pathos, as exemplified in Oliver Twist asking for more porridge, and that he should be considered a humorist by those who place pathos in the category of humor.

Satire constitutes yet another brand of humor and is no doubt the strongest weapon a man can wield in an argument. Far better, instead of defending one's own opinion, to satirize that of one's opponent such as Swift did in his Tale of a Tub, which was so bitingly sarsactic as to change the political aspect of the whole of England.

Then we have ridicule which is pure wit and is closely allied to satire. Not quite so bitter as satire, it merely consists in exaggerating a man's statement so as to make it appear ridiculous. A good example of

ridicule is afforded in the following conversation between an enthusiastic vegetarian and a friend.

"Do you see these hands?" commenced the vegetarian, "see the blood run into them. There's health for you, and all this comes from a vegetable diet. No meat for me. I eat nothing but vegetables. Vegetables make muscle, sinew, strength, manhood."

"Yes," replied the friend who was tired of having the merits of vegetables extolled, "you are right. Meat is weakening. I notice that all strong animals live on vegetables. There's the weak lion and tender panther, they never eat vegetables; and there's the sturdy sheep, the hardy goose, the savage calf, the wild and ravenous jackass, they live on vegetables entirely. There's -"

But the vegetarian was walking off muttering something about talking to fools.

Repartee is a quick reply that has the same effect as ridicule - it ends the conversation then and there.

"Have you seen my Descent into Hell?" inquired an author, a great bore, who had written a book with a fiery title.

"No," replied the other man, "but I should like to."

To consider in all their aspects the wit and humor

of each of the different nations of the world would be an extremely interesting task, but one so gigantic as to require at least a lifetime to go into the matter with any degree of thoroughness. Most writers have neither the inclination nor the leisure to devote their lives to so unremunerative an undertaking, and consequently treat of wit and humor as considered in one nation or another. Having no wish to create a precedent, we shall follow in their footsteps and single out for comparison the wit and humor of England and the U.S.A..

If two white civilized nations could possibly be more different than England and the United States we have yet to hear of them, and it is precisely because there is so little in common between the typical Britisher and the typical American, that the subject of English and American wit and humor furnishes us with an inexhaustible supply of contrasts.

The Englishman and the American differ in many ways - none though is more striking than the way they take jokes. Eli Perkins relates the following story of a railroad trip with an Englishman:- "I told him the old story of the Indian who wanted a receipt for money paid to a white man. Said I, 'The Indian insisted that the white man should give him a receipt.'

'What do you want a receipt for?' asked the white man,

'you've paid the money and that's enough.'

'But me must have receipt,' insisted the Indian.

'Why, what for?' asked the white man.

'Because,' said the Indian, 'Injun may die.'

'Well, suppose you do die, I certainly can't collect this money from you then.'

'But,' continued the Indian, 'me may die and go to Heaven. The Lord he ask Injun if he good Injun. Injun say yes. He ask Injun if he pay white man. Injun say yes, yes. Then the Lord he say where is the receipt? What Injun do then? Injun can't go looking all over Hell after you.'

After I got through, the Americans laughed as they always will even at an old joke, but the Englishman looked me straight in the face without a smile. You would think he was viewing the corpse at a funeral. Then he put his front finger solemnly on the palm of his hand and said argumentatively: 'Now I don't see why an Indian is not entitled to a receipt as well as a white man. I entirely disagree with ---'

But a roar of laughter from the Americans drowned his sentence. It so confused the poor Englishman to have his honest opinions laughed at, that he turned his back on us and solemnly waded through the dreary columns of Punch."

Whether Perkins' story is true or not is of no great importance. Its purpose is merely to emphasize the already well known fact that the Englishman is the slowest person on earth to see a joke, and that the American is the very opposite. This statement of course is a general one, and we by no means wish to maintain that each and every Englishman must have a joke explained to him, or that each and every American grasps the point in a flash. There are exceptions to all rules but nevertheless it is universally admitted that in quickness of perception the American far excels the Englishman. That it could not possibly be otherwise is very plain to understand, if one takes into even the slightest consideration the characteristics of the two races.

If our theory that men grouped together because they shared common ideals can be relied upon, we have but a step further to go in our theorizing to conclude that the forefathers of the present marmalade eaters must have been drawn together by the bonds of dignity, coldness, and intellectual atrophy.

For a reason yet to be discovered, every Englishman is firmly convinced that he is the finest fellow in the world. To him anything but another Englishman is no more than

scum, and it is a great effort indeed for His Lordship to condescend to speak to a mere foreigner. Suppose a typical horse-toothed, monocled Englishman, clad in much worn checked tweed and with an opera glass hung around his neck, gets into a train for a long journey, do you imagine that he will enter into friendly conversation with his fellow passengers? If so you are greatly mistaken, for no matter if the voyage required six months, he would never dream of talking to anyone without being ceremoniously introduced. Such a ghastly faux pas would be unpardonable in his eyes. Again if the temperature in the coach were a hundred degrees in the shade, the Englishman would never think of loosening his collar or unbuttoning his waistcoat. Why? Because it would detract from his dignity and, in his opinion, suffocation would be preferable to so disgraceful an exhibition. If, however, he did take part in the conversation, he would feel that he was conferring a high honor on his fellow travellers, and can you not just picture that smirk of superiority that would play about his mouth? "What is so rare as a day in June?" asks Lowell. The answer is easy: an Englishman with an inferiority complex. Such an individual is scarcer than the proverbial hen's teeth.

The Britisher then, is dignified - no one has ever found out why, but it is a fact - and since being dignified

is his main object in life, does it not necessarily follow that he must cast aside anything that would upset his dignity? Can you imagine a police court judge laughing uproariously at some blunder made by a witness, or breaking down and weeping over a sad story? Hardly, for as we all know, a serious countenance is essential to dignity. As a consequence then, the Englishman hides all his emotions if by chance he ever feels any - we doubt very much if he does, for he is such an expert at smothering them that he must do it unconsciously. He has turned himself into a human Frigidaire or a walking corpse. If you ever happen to attend a moving picture performance and are unfortunate enough to have an English film thrust upon you, notice how the actors portray emotion. At the most romantic part of the play when the hero declares his undying love for his wooden-faced sweetheart, observe how he kisses her with all the passion of a wild clam attacking a soft boiled egg.

The Britisher's coldness, however, is not entirely due to his pride; the geographical location of the country in which he lives and the austerity of the religion he professes also play their part.

The English climate is sufficient to wipe the smile

off any man's face permanently. Nine tenths of the time it is foggy or raining, and everlastingly dreary weather cannot but have a depressing effect on a man's spirits. While plowing through fog that can be cut with a knife, the dampness chills the Englishman to the very bone even when he is wearing a hat. His coat is nearly always buttoned up to his chin, and so accustomed is he to rain, that he carries an umbrella when the sun is shining. He is so waterlogged and numbed that even when the sun blazes in all its glory there is no sunshine in his heart. No cheery smile, no hearty laughter, no life - the Frenchman who visits England feels that he has stepped into a morgue.

To make matters worse and intensify his coldness his religion also has its say. From early childhood he has been taught that it is a sin to amuse oneself on the Sabbath. A Sunday game of cards will elicit gasps of horror from any English person, for they all have been taught that the day must be spent reading the Bible and looking holy. What is the result of this? Simply that the Englishman has become the most accomplished hypocrite in the world. Like every other human being he has a natural leaning to pleasure, and since Puritanical religion frowns on pleasure whether it be innocent or not, it follows that

he must choose between religion and pleasure. His austere religion, however, suits him perfectly; even if it did not, his pride would prevent him from returning to Rome because he could never survive the humiliation of admitting that he was wrong. On the other hand it is in his very nature to seek happiness, so what can he do but try to serve two masters by means of his inherent gift of hypocrisy? His sham, however, is all the more revolting when one considers the great deliberation with which he makes his decisions. If he became hypocritical on the spur of the moment it might be excusable, but what a sad state of affairs when it is a man's second nature to be a Tartufe.

Being firmly convinced that he is perfection personified, the Englishman must necessarily be of very mediocre intelligence. He never strains his brain because if he cannot understand a problem he puts it aside as unexplicable, not realizing that his failure to grasp it may be due to his own stupidity. We all know that it requires exercise to develop a muscle; the brain, though not a muscle, is no exception to this physiological rule, and mental exercise or a heavy flow of blood through its tissues is essential to the production of grey matter. The typical Englishman, however, through his ridiculous

pride, gives his brain very little exercise, with the result that his mental activities have become so slow and dull that the whole world makes fun of him.

The Britisher then is proud, unsympathetic, and heavy in spite of the fact that each and every Englishman would promptly deny the truth of our assertion. He would immediately point out world famous authors and scientists to confound us and imagine the matter closed.

May we be permitted to explain, however, that we refer to the typical or average Englishman, and that we realize as well as anyone that there are exceptions to every rule. Suppose, dear reader, that you had been born on a Chinese ship. Would you really be a Chinaman at heart? Just because a man is born in England then, is no reason to call him a true Englishman, and you may be sure that any Britisher who ever made a name for himself, had foreign blood in his ancestry and had as yet escaped the pall of English lethargy.

If one gives the matter any consideration whatsoever, it is not at all surprising that the haughty and stiff Englishman who spends his life enveloped in physical and mental fog, is dull and heavy. No one should be or in fact ever is astonished when he invariably misses

the point of a funny story or laughs for no apparent reason, because nothing more is expected of him.

Bearing these characteristics of the Englishman in mind, let us now turn to his conception of wit and humor.

Priestley, who innocently remarks how curious it is that so few foreigners have noticed that the English are a humorous race, goes on to say that the English people have always adored clowns and comedians, never for a moment suspecting that his statement contains the answer to the problem.

"As soon as the stage was set up in this country," he asserts, "there was fooling. Even in our mediaeval mysteries humor is forever breaking in. The Deluge turns Noah's wife into a shrew who refuses to enter the Ark and belabors the Patriarch. The Trial of Joseph and Mary is full of low comedy and Doomsday is turned into a roaring farce. Once the Elizabethan theatre came into existence there was no suppressing the comedian. What the ordinary playgoers liked was a mixture of blood, thunder, and clowning. All historians of Elizabethan drama have recognized this fact and pointed out its significance. The attitude of the ordinary Elizabethan playgoer is exactly set forth in

a speech by Simon the Tanner, Mayor of Queenborough, in Middleton's comedy of that name.

'O, the clowns that I have seen in my time. The very peeping out of one of them would have made a young heir laugh though his father lay a dying; a man undone in law the day before (the saddest case that can be) might for his twopence have burst himself with laughing and ended all his miseries. Here was a merry world, my masters.'

What a charitable thought - a young heir laughing at a clown though his father lay a dying. Any man who has to go to such an extreme to be comical, and any person who could smile at such a low attempt at jesting could certainly never claim to be elevated in heart and mind.

With the Reformation the bulwark of the Church was weakened and things went from bad to worse. "Most of the Elizabethan dramatists," Jenkins tells us, "lived irregular and unbridled lives, given up almost unre-servedly to improvidence and passion." As a natural result coarseness and indecency became so rampant that the Government had to intervene and ordered the London theatres closed.

Such then were the beginnings of English wit and

humor - licentiousness and impropriety. With such a foundation to build upon, one could hardly expect a delicate flower of wit and humor to blossom forth from root and stem of filth and obscenity and, low as our expectations are, the wit and humor of England fall short of them. Grossness, it is true, is no longer the characteristic of English comedy yet the dam placed in the current of vulgarity by Government censure is not exactly watertight, as was shown in a local theatre five years or so ago. On that occasion an English actor was widely advertised and highly praised for his interpretation of 'Burlington Bertie'. His first words as he came out on the stage and gazed up at a cardboard imitation of Big Ben were: "Well, look at the old lady's ass up there with a clock on it." Stony silence welcomed his statement. Perhaps thunderous applause would have warmed his heart in his beloved England - no doubt it would, for unless such an ex-abrupto introduction had been appreciated in England, he certainly would not have begun his performance with it in this part of the world. Had there been any wit in his words the audience would quite probably have laughed in spite of the vulgarity, but plain unadulterated vulgarity, as the Englishman found out, is neither humorous nor witty

outside his own country.

Consequently when coarseness was wiped out by Parliament in the seventeenth century, English wit and humor was ipso facto eradicated, because as everyone knows, the words were synonymous at that time. After the clean-up, however, a new type of wit and humor arose from the ruins of filth and obscenity, but since a brief span of three hundred years was far too short a time for the English mind to think up anything original, it necessarily followed that the new type of British wit and humor could not be anything but puerile, and puerile it is indeed. Fun is John Bull's actual idea of humor and there is no intellectual judgment in fun. To study English humor one must look to the school boy. It begins with the practical joke and unless there is something of this nature about it, it is never humor to an Englishman. English wit and humor will no doubt evolve to a higher form some day or other, but it would be unwise to expect any signs of evolution before, say, eight centuries or so.

The transition from filth to fun, however, was not accomplished instantly, and of that period no writer was more in the public eye than Jonathan Swift, one of the most cruelly sarcastic men that ever lived. His humor is

nothing but satire and irony.

His Meditations on a Broom parodying Robert Boyle's Meditations on Religion are brimming over with biting sarcasm that one would not dream of attributing to an Anglican clergyman, and give one an idea of his distorted way of seeing things.

This is what a harmless little broom puts into his head:- As his thoughts dwell on the broom standing mournfully in a corner, he recalls that not long ago it proudly took its place in the forest, full of life and beauty. He pictures it now cleaning other things and becoming dirty itself, until, completely worn out, it is cast aside or perhaps used to light the fire.

Such a trend of thought leads him to compare man to a broom. Man too, he ponders, was created strong and vigorous but just as a tree loses its branches, so also man loses his hair and becomes a dried up stick who attempts to hide his loss under a wig.

The gloomy Dean then brings out the fact that the broom would immediately be condemned were it to become proud of its bristles and glory in its dust, even though the dust were from a beautiful lady's room, and from this concludes that because man is a broom with his feet where his head should be and that in him the animal faculties

are always lording it over the intellectual ones, he has no more right to criticize his fellow men than the broom has to revel in its dust. Man, according to Swift, raises a cloud of dust by exposing corruption and trying to correct abuses; but, like the broom, he covers himself with the dirt which he pretends to clean up, spending his days at the feet of profligate women until, completely worn out like his brother the broom, he is cast aside and forgotten.

What a meditation full of pessimism, predetermination, and gloom. It certainly does not convey the impression that he has a very high opinion of his fellow man's moral worth and it is the nec plus ultra of sarcasm in itself, but when one realizes that it is a parody of another man's meditations on religion, the sarcasm becomes even more biting.

In Gulliver's Travels, his best known work, the Reverend Gentleman vents forth his irony on all that is most noble and most sacred. In particular he aims his shafts at matrimony and paternity. Like the fox in the fable raging against the unattainable grapes, he rages against a family because he himself could never have one.

In his Modest Proposal to prevent the poor Irish children from being a burden to their parents, he suggests

to his readers that a young healthy child, well nursed, is, at a year old, a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled. Such a revolting insinuation, such horrible irony, even in fun, takes one's breath away and leads one to conclude that a monster and not a man must be responsible for it. Still, tastes are not to be disputed and no doubt Margaret Sanger, had she lived some three hundred years ago, would have pressed the Dean to that which, in a moment of enthusiasm, she refers as her bosom, and gathered up his words as pearls of wisdom.

So ingrained was his proclivity to rail and scoff that, even in his poem on his own death, he pictures himself being made fun of and 'his friends trying to find their private ends'. Yes, death itself was powerless to awe Swift into making a final *beau geste* by which humanity could remember him kindly. Many writers have mellowed with age but not so Swift. Just as vitriolic when he lapsed into idiocy in 1742 as he was when he presented his *Tale of a Tub* forty years previously, the Dean is a prototype of the Englishman, proud, austere, cold, and heartless from the dawn to the dusk of his life.

So much for Swift and his humor which was typical of the wit and humor of the eighteenth century.

In the following century however, English wit and humor toned down a bit and neither Thackeray, Dickens, nor Lamb can be accused of stooping to gross immorality.

Thackeray resembled Swift inasmuch as he also was a biting satirist. His irony nevertheless had a noble motive. Unlike the lugubrious Swift who saw the wrong side of everything and was firmly convinced that man was beyond redemption, Thackeray, by means of ridicule, brought to light all the foibles of British society in a most realistic manner.

Being a very outspoken man, as are all realists who depict life as they see it, Thackeray detests hypocrites and delights in making fun of them as he does in his Book of Snobs. No realist could be more realistic than Thackeray in this particular work. He describes a social gathering in its most minute details and without departing one iota from the truth. He pictures the guests in a jam at the door, stepping on the ladies' trains and poking their elbows into one another. On entering the drawing room the guest tries to attract the attention of the hostess, an old battle-axe who smiles coyly and expresses her delight at seeing him. True to life, Thackeray paints the picture of two social leaders who hate each other as only women can hate, meeting there and

calling each other 'my dear' and 'darling',and the rage of one of them on learning that her rival is to entertain such and such a celebrity on such and such a day.

During this time a hungry looking individual is singing in the corner accompanied by the famous pianist Thumpenstrumpff. Their audience consists of old ladies horribly thin or fat, several bored looking lords, distinguished strangers covered with diamonds of doubtful value,effeminate dandys,and bald,fat old men who would not miss such a delightful performance for anything.

Thackeray does not forget to mention the giggling type of female who bursts into laughter no matter what is said to her,and continues to heap more ridicule on the hostess who is still receiving with the indelible smile on her lips,and the embryonic Caruso who thinks that he has made a name for himself by singing before the elite. How on earth,wonders Thackeray,can a person who has gone through such an ordeal Wednesday night,accept an invitation to a similar one the following Friday.

Although few people realize that it is so,this little gem of Thackeray's might well be taken from the life of a great many people - English or not,in his day or at the present time. Life to a great many is nothing

but sham. Instead of attempting to develop their minds and acquire further knowledge of the really important things of life, the vast majority of human beings - and women more than men - seem to believe that they were created to impress their neighbors. How many men do we not meet who boast about the amount of money they earn in a year. They look down with contempt on a poor but plodding scientist who can barely keep body and soul together and spends every minute of his time in his laboratory attempting to discover a new serum for suffering humanity. Yes, the scientific experimenter is just a fool to this type of man, for no other reason than because he cannot make large sums of money and appears to be wasting his time in useless research.

One may well imagine what type of wife this loud-mouthed, empty-headed dolt will have. Even more empty-headed than her husband, this sort of woman will have no other ambition than to be the leader of her social set. Her one passion will be entertaining and her balls and receptions must be the most lavish in the city. She must have the loveliest gowns and the largest diamonds of all. She must have more servants and a more gorgeous home than anyone else, and she entertains people not because she likes them, but because it will better her

social standing and make all her rivals jealous.

Though it is scarcely believable, such is the absolute truth and the superficiality of a great many people is indeed amazing. No wonder Thackeray, like any right thinking man, was disgusted by such behavior and openly rebelled against it. Irony and sarcasm constitute powerful weapons and no one can find fault with Thackeray for using them to condemn such ridiculous behavior, but it is doubtful whether his denunciation had any effect for, as he himself says, the Englishman is so convinced of his superiority that criticism has about as much effect upon him as water on a duck's back.

If one does not happen to like sarcastic humor, there is nothing left to do but turn to the type of humor of Dickens or Lamb who, according to more than one English critic, were the greatest humorists that ever lived. Perhaps they were in their day, in the eyes of the English people whose conceit prevented them from appreciating the wit of other nations of the world, but they were no doubt placed on a pedestal because of the fact that 'in the kingdom of the blind, one-eyed men are kings'. They were probably a trifle less morose than their compatriots who, for that reason, considered them the greatest of humorists. How any one else possibly could is difficult

to understand from a perusal of their so-called humorous works.

Dickens' main bid to fame is his David Copperfield. In that work one may glean a few passages of the second type of English humor, namely the puerile type, in distinction to the vitriolic type of Swift and Thackeray.

David has just married his gentle, sweet, and charming Dora (the original dumb Dora, no doubt). One morning he meets his friend Traddles and invites him to dinner. At the dinner table Traddles is so cramped for space that he can barely use his knife and fork and when David makes excuses for the size of the room, Traddles insists that it is quite spacious enough (funny). Dora has a dog Jip of which she is very fond, and David is so much in love with his young wife that for fear of hurting her feelings, he does not say a word when the canine walks around the dining table, sticks its paws in the butter and salt, messes up everything, and barks long and loud at Traddles (very funny).

Then Dora serves oysters but the poor little thing has never served oysters before and does not know what is the matter with them until Traddles discovers that they have not been opened (screamingly funny). They have no oyster knives though, so Dora brings in the good old

English dish, leg of mutton with capers, which Traddles would have eaten, raw as it was, with apparent pleasure for old friendship's sake. David, however, will not allow him to be a savage, so they dine on cold pork, and Dora is bubbling over with happiness at having a husband who is so good to her (nec plus ultra of English humor).

The greatest English humorist, though unaware of the fact, is undoubtedly Priestley who states that 'Dickens' supremacy as a humorist remains unchallenged' and then wonders why so few foreigners have noticed that the English are a humorous race. If Dickens is the greatest English humorist, one may well imagine to what heights of brilliance a mediocre English humorist would soar. If he were a kite, there would be no difficulty to fly him under a duck. Incidentally such humor as Dickens' is ideally suited to the English mind, for it requires no mental effort whatsoever to appreciate it and consequently English people and children of all nationalities enjoy it immensely. It is difficult for any mentally alert person to see anything funny in the puerile type of English humor, for most of us enjoy the pleasure of grasping the point of a humorous story. Our appreciation of humor is all the greater when we discover for ourselves the ambiguous meaning, unforeseen development, or other

factor that makes a story humorous, but the English brain does not function in that way. As discoverers the British leave much to be desired (they have yet to discover why the rest of the world is always poking fun at them), and unless everything is written down in black and white, unless everything is mentioned and nothing is left to the imagination, the Englishman will never see anything comical.

In Dickens' humor, as one may notice, nothing is left to the imagination. He is careful to tell his readers that the leg of mutton is not sufficiently cooked for, were he merely to state that Copperfield did not allow Traddles to eat the meat because he did not want him to turn savage, it would never strike an Englishman - though anyone else would immediately grasp it - that there is any relation between raw meat and savage. Had Dickens merely said that Copperfield did not want his friend to lapse back into barbarity as far as his eating habits were concerned, he would have been humorous to most people for they would have taken pleasure in discovering for themselves that cave man table manners imply raw meat, but the average Englishman, not seeing the relation, would have been completely lost, saying to himself after a terrific mental effort: "I wonder why Copperfield did not want

Traddles to turn barbarian?"

While on the subject of meat it might be wise, in order to provide variety as well as to avoid indigestion, to turn our attention to something less tough than mutton say, for instance, to Lamb.

Charles Lamb, we are happy to note, was not quite as insipid a humorist as Dickens. Although most of his essays, as one may rapidly discover from a perusal of his *Elia* and *Last Essays of Elia*, are very feeble attempts at humor - we have yet to discover anything more inane than his Chapter on Ears or his Praise of Chimney Sweepers - there is nevertheless a pleasing vein of wit in one of his Popular Fallacies: Love me, love my dog.

He begins it with the story of two men who want to become friends. "We have long known your excellent qualities," says one man to the other, "we have long been looking for such a friend. Quick let us disburden our troubles into each other's bosom," and while he is speaking his pretty piece, the fleshy part of his leg is suddenly pierced by the sharp teeth of a cur.

"It is my dog, sir" interposes the prospective friend. You must love him for my sake. Here Test-Test-Test."

"But he has bitten me," protests the first man.

"He is apt to do that till you are better acquainted

with him," is the reply in unruffled tones. "I have had him three years and he never bites me."

Just then the dog again bites the man who becomes extremely annoyed and swings a kick at the brute.

"Oh sir, you must not kick him," remonstrates the dog's owner. "He does not like to be kicked." (This no doubt for English readers or anyone else idiotic enough to believe that dogs enjoy being kicked.)

"I expect my dog to be treated with all the respect due to myself."

"But," inquires the thoroughly bitten man in amazement, "do you always take him out with you when you go a friendship hunting?"

"Invariably," is the reply. 'Tis the sweetest, prettiest, best conditioned animal. I call him my test, the touchstone by which I try a friend. No one can be properly said to love me who does not love him."

"Excuse us, dear sir, if upon further consideration we are obliged to decline the otherwise invaluable offer of your friendship. We do not like dogs."

"Mighty well, sir - you know the conditions - you may have worse offers. Come along, Test."

The particular merit of the essay 'That you must love me and love my dog', lies in the fact that Lamb

cleverly draws a very practical conclusion therefrom. He shows a philosophic turn of mind when he brings out that the tooth that severs the bond of friendship need not necessarily be canine but rather, like the ameba, manifests itself under a variety of forms.

No one who realizes what is going on around him can hesitate a moment to agree with Lamb, for there is hardly a person in the world who has not at one time or another felt the pressure of the metaphorical tooth.

Here is a man whom you would like to have for a friend. You go to spend an evening at his home and find that he is in mortal dread of fresh air, keeps his house hermetically sealed, and would hesitate to open the window even in case of fire.

Another prospective friend has several young children who, like inveterate scientists in their attempt to disintegrate the atom, swarm over you and make a systematic analysis of your person both organically and inorganically. (No wonder Lamb liked them boiled)

Yet another friend-to-be has a wife who suspects you of nefarious designs on her innocent spouse and under her icy stare, the flower of friendship soon withers and dies.

And so it goes - always something grating on your nerves, one tooth after another. It is indeed unfortunate that figurative toothlessness is not as prevalent as the every day variety, for then we should realize more and more with Emerson that 'a friend may well be reckoned the masterpiece of Nature'.

Having considered mutton and Lamb what could be more natural than to take up beef in the person of G.K. Chesterton? After our ascent from the filth, satire, and insipidity of Elizabethan and modern times, it is indeed a pleasant surprise to discover that a few contemporary Englishmen have finally evolved into ordinary human beings, and that their humor is immeasurably superior to that of their ancestors.

Chesterton is perhaps the best known of present day writers. Many and varied are the fruits of his labor and besides his studies on Dickens and Browning, he has turned out a large number of essays. Most of them are just what one would expect from an Englishman, yet in his Advantages of having one leg he certainly outdid himself, and it is with astonishment one learns that such a witty excerpt is from the pen of a dashing Britisher.

Following in the footsteps of Lamb he begins his tale with a funny story but strangely enough, unlike Lamb,

his story is really funny.

A friend trying to console a woman in bereavement remarked: "I think one can live through these great sorrows and even be the better. What wears one is the little worries." - "That's quite right," answered the widow with emphasis, "and I ought to know, seeing I've had ten of 'em." (A meticulous search for a foot note fails to reveal that G.K. refers to children, so no doubt the pun passed unnoticed to the majority of his readers.)

Chesterton proceeds in a very methodical manner. He first asserts that the maxim that the smallest worries are the worst is abused by most people, because they have nothing but the very smallest worries. "We may concede that a straw may break the camel's back," he remarks, "but we like to know that it really is the last straw and not the first", and then he adds that those who have serious wrongs have a right to grumble, so long as they grumble about something else. After a few clever comments on mountains and molehills, he claims that he ought to know all about it because of having been confined to a chair with a sprained foot, and only being able to stand on one leg like a stork.

Then he so to speak comes to the proof of his thesis.

"To appreciate anything we must always isolate it," he claims. To admire a man or a house he or it must be separated from other men and houses. Is it not far more easy to admire a man when he is standing alone than when he is jostled about in a crowd? How can one enjoy the architectural beauty of a home when its lines are broken and attention is attracted away from it by other dwellings? "One sun is splendid: six suns would only be vulgar." Granted that a man, a house, or the sun must be absolutely isolated to appreciate their beauty fully, why should it not be so with a leg? Chesterton consequently concludes that 'to express complete and perfect leggishness, the leg must stand in sublime isolation, like a tower in the wilderness.'

He continues in the same vein but we shall take leave of him here for we already have an adequate idea of his thoughts.

"Absolute nonsense," some will exclaim on laying down the essay, "Chesterton must be crazy." They are, we admit, entitled to their opinion in the matter, but any serious man who can read between the lines and does not base his opinion on a superficial glance, will agree with us that this particular essay is a master-

piece in more ways than one.

Chesterton shows himself to be witty, philosophical, and a very able writer. That the essay is witty none can deny, but that for which he particularly deserves commendation is the lesson that we should not grumble at our misfortunes but rather accept infirmities and tribulations with resignation. His style is simple yet elegant; he does not try to awe his readers with a bombastic display of rhetoric - his only aim is to produce laughter and do good.

Chesterton though is by no means the only luminary in the constellation of contemporary English humorists, for Jerome K. Jerome has also hewed out a niche for himself in the hard hearts of his countrymen. No one, even an Englishman, can read through his *Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow* without breaking into a smile. The best of these papers is perhaps the one *On Babies* in which he is extremely humorous, and his humor, incidentally, is based on sound psychology.

Is it not true that there is nothing more difficult than to tell the sex of a baby and that its mother always seems amazed, not to say insulted, when asked to elucidate so obvious a fact?

"By some mysterious law of nature," says Jerome, "you

invariably guess wrong and are thereupon regarded by all the relatives and friends as a mixture of fool and knave, the enormity of alluding to a male babe as 'she' being only equalled by the atrocity of referring to a female infant as 'he'.

And, as you value your fair name, do not attempt to get out of the difficulty by talking of 'it'. There are various methods by which you may achieve ignominy and shame. By murdering a large and respected family in cold blood, and afterwards depositing their bodies in the water companies' reservoir, you will gain much unpopularity in the neighborhood of your crime, and even robbing a church will get you cordially disliked, especially by the vicar. But if you desire to drain to the dregs the fullest cup of scorn and hatred that a fellow human creature can pour out for you, let a young mother hear you call dear baby 'it'."

Jerome's description of the ordeal of seeing baby is so comical as to be quoted in full.

"A cold shudder runs down a man's back at the mere proposal, and the sickly smile with which he says how delighted he shall be ought surely to move even a mother's heart, unless, as I am inclined to believe, the whole proceeding is a mere device adopted by wives to discourage the visits of bachelor friends.

It is a cruel trick, though, whatever its excuse may be. The bell is rung and somebody sent to tell the nurse to bring baby down. This is the signal for all females present to commence talking 'baby', during which time, you are left to your own sad thoughts, and to speculations upon the practicability of suddenly recollecting an important engagement, and the likelihood of being believed if you do. Just when you have concocted an absurdly implausible tale about a man outside, the door opens, and a tall, severe-looking woman enters, carrying what at first sight appears to be a particularly skinny bolster, with the feathers all at one end. Instinct, however, tells you that this is the baby, and you rise with a miserable attempt at appearing eager.... You stand staring at the child in dead silence and you know that everyone is waiting for you to speak. You try to think of something to say, but find, to your horror, that your reasoning faculties have left you. In a moment of despair, glancing around with

an imbecile smile, you sniggeringly observe that 'It hasn't got much hair, has it?' Nobody answers you for a minute, but at last the stately nurse says with much gravity - 'It is not customary for children five weeks old to have long hair.' Another silence follows this, and you feel you are being given a second chance, which you avail yourself of by inquiring if it can walk yet, or what they feed it on.

By this time, you have got to be regarded as not quite right in your head, and pity is the only thing felt for you..."

So realistic are Jerome's papers and so natural is the behavior of his characters, that the reader either squirms or rejoices with them in their vicissitudes, and it is with something of a start that he comes down to earth and realizes that the tale is not based on his personal experiences, and has been written by another man.

Jerome K. Jerome is indeed a real humorist and might even be compared to the inimitable Mark Twain, but most unfortunately there is a dearth of this type of English humorist. Leaving aside the filthy beginnings of British humor, up to the present day when men like Chesterton and Jerome are in the public eye one had to choose between vitriolic vaporings a la Swift and inane prattle a la Dickens. Small wonder then that so few foreigners have noticed that the English are a humorous race. Small wonder indeed that the British have acquired the reputation of being dull and heavy.

If they are to be judged by their fruits what other conclusion can possibly be reached?

As wits they are still worse - repartee is a word without meaning to them and anyone who refers to the British as wits is no doubt half right. We wonder if Carlyle had not anticipated the modern vernacular meaning of the word when a hundred years ago he exclaimed: "The English are a dumb race."

Luckily, however, there are less than forty million Englishmen spread over the surface of the globe, but perhaps it would be just as bad if the majority of the world's inhabitants were of any other nationality, for would we not as soon tire of the exuberance and effeminacy of the Frenchman as of the phlegm and petrification of the Englishman? Most fortunately this sad state of affairs does not exist, and there is a nation on earth to-day in which one finds combined the good points of all other races with their unpleasant peculiarities eliminated, a nation whose influence reaches to the four corners of the world, a nation justly acknowledged as the greatest of all, The United States of America.

Did you ever notice how stupid and proud a thoroughbred dog is and, on the other hand, to what heights of cleverness and friendliness the mongrel attains? The same comparison

holds good for human beings and it cannot be denied that the children of parents of different nationalities are far more intelligent than those whose parents are of common stock.

The U.S.A. is known as the melting pot of the world. Immigrants swarm there to such an extent that Congress had to pass laws limiting the number to be admitted into the country during a year. Yes indeed, all nationalities are represented in the U.S.A., and there are few Americans who can trace their family tree back a generation or two without finding that their ancestors were of different descent.

The result of this human melting pot is just what might be expected. Suppose for instance that a Frenchman marries an English damsel; the children will neither be particularly vivacious nor phlegmatic, in fact the chances are that they will turn out to be normal human beings. This sort of thing has been going on in the great country to the south of us for two hundred years or more - blood has been mixed time and again, so it is not at all surprising that through this process of refinement, the average American has had the rough corners rubbed off, and has become the type of man which is the envy of all his fellows.

The typical Yankee is a splendid chap. He is ridiculed

by many who, jealous of his attainments and of his efficiency in business, give vent to their feelings by referring to him as an Almighty Dollar slave, but these self same scoffers would give their back teeth to possess his shrewdness and acumen.

The American is intensely alert. Not content to sit back and let others do his thinking for him, he is the most energetic and ambitious man in the world to-day. Most men who have a fairly good position are content to drift along and are perfectly satisfied provided their whims are pampered, but not so with the American. His ambition is to get ahead, he is continually trying to increase his efficiency or that of his business - sometimes at no little sacrifice.

Take the case of Walter P. Chrysler, for instance. He began his career as an oil wiper for the American Locomotive Co. and was steadily promoted until he became manager of the concern, at a salary of \$10,000 a year. He had a strong leaning to automobile mechanics, however, and bought an expensive car while working for the Locomotive Co. so that he could take it to pieces and see how it worked. He had been on the pay list but a very short time and the mere fact that his salary was so low that it was all he could do to pay for the car, did not deter him in the least from

making the seemingly extravagant purchase.

Most men would consider promotion from oil wiper to manager a wonderful achievement, but Chrysler was not satisfied. True son of Uncle Sam, he wanted to get into business for himself instead of working for someone else, so he went to an automobile manufacturer and sought employment. When informed that he would not be paid more than \$6,000 per year, he eagerly accepted the position. By dint of hard work he became head of the company and to-day is the owner of one of the largest automobile manufacturing plants in the world. One of the most imposing sky-scrapers in New York points a mighty finger to the heavens, asserting that great ambition and determination were essential to Chrysler's success.

How many other men would have been sufficiently ambitious voluntarily to accept a \$4,000 cut in pay? How many men would have been self confident enough to consider the goal of any average man's life merely as a stepping stone to something bigger and better? Very few, it must be admitted, outside the U.S.A. yet Chrysler's career is by no means anything extraordinary, for dozens of Americans have risen from poverty to riches and from obscurity to fame through the prompting of their insatiable ambition. Al Smith once sold papers on the

street corners, Henry Ford was once an unknown mechanic, the great Lincoln was deprived not only of a college education but even of a rudimentary one, still these disadvantages which would appear unsurmountable to an ordinary man, only spurred them on to greater efforts.

The average American, ambitious as are all other men to a certain extent, differs from them, however, in having sense enough to realize that hoping and wishing will not get a man to the top, and that one reaches the pinnacle of success by making oneself worth more to one's employers. He understands that to earn more money he must be able, so to speak, to 'deliver the goods', and it is for this very reason that he has become the most efficient man in the world, as even his bitterest enemies are forced to admit. Until recently it was only in the United States that such invaluable institutions as Correspondence Schools could exist and prosper. The wonderful advantages of these establishments have become so evident that the other nations of the world are beginning to sit up and take notice, but an organization of this kind, may we add, has been bringing knowledge and success to ambitious Americans for the past forty years.

The Yankee goes further than merely realizing that his mind should be improved; he understands that he also has a

body and that if his body is in poor shape his mind is unable to function properly. For this reason he keeps himself in good physical condition (as the numerous world championships in all branches of sport held by American athletes attest), and the blood that flows into his brain is rich and clean instead of watery and filled with impurities. Ventilation, the mere mention of which brings pallor to the Canadian's cheeks, holds no terrors for him, and it would indeed be difficult to find an office in an American business house reeking with stale smoke and foul air.

Only a few years ago when the Metropolitan Insurance Co. established its Canadian head office in Ottawa, the citizens of the great metropolis were amazed at the way business was conducted. Physical exercises morning and afternoon, most extraordinary. Sending female employees home in taxis in a rainstorm, unheard of. Why, nothing but a waste of time and money.

It would no doubt be too much to expect them to understand that the company did not lose a cent by this apparently unusual way of carrying on business, but on the contrary greatly benefited thereby. The little break in routine is most welcome; the exercise takes the employees' minds off their work for the time being, and when they go

back to their desks they are invigorated and attack their task with enthusiasm. Which is cheaper? - to spend a quarter for a taxi or to have the employee in bed with a cold. Anybody ought to be able to figure that out.

Yes indeed, the American keeps himself in condition and he is always neat looking into the bargain. Seldom do you see him with a three days stubble on his chin or wearing trousers that have not come in contact with the tailor's iron for weeks. No wonder then that he is competent after going to such great trouble to acquire his competence, no wonder also that in a land where there is so much competition the American should be absolutely wide awake.

To foreigners he appears a strange individual and not infrequently offends by his gruffness and nonchalance, but in reality he is neither gruff nor casual and only appears so when compared to a flowery and ceremonious European.

If a Spaniard writes you a letter it will probably be somewhat of a jolt to learn, on reading the closing lines of his communication, that he considers himself your devoted and attentive servant who has the honor of kissing your hand if you happen to be a man, or your foot if you belong

to the weaker sex. Such protestations of devotion, as we all know, mean absolutely nothing and if, having taken the letter seriously, on meeting your Spanish correspondent, you curtly ordered him to fetch you a glass of water, you would probably be challenged to a duel. The American, as we have said, is an essentially practical man, and does not waste his time by saying things he does not mean. Naturally, he will not be gushing in his business letters but is nevertheless as polite as the next man, when politeness is considered in the light of common sense.

All Europeans without exception adore ceremony. If a man has a little gold braid on his coat, they will trample one another in the rush to lick his boots. If refraining from such ridiculous conduct may be considered boorish, then the American is indeed a boor and proud of it into the bargain. He is the most democratic of men; he takes a fellow man for what he is worth, and whether he has a string of university degrees or whether his ancestors came over on the Mayflower makes no difference whatsoever, the principal thing is that the man knows his business, for inefficiency cannot and will not be tolerated.

In spite of his numerous attainments, the American is the most unassuming man one could meet. No matter how high a position he may occupy, he never considers himself

too good for anybody and is as approachable as if he were the most insignificant person. He knows that only a fool puts on airs and for that reason there are few snobs in the U.S.A. Pride has no place in his heart unless it be pride for his country or the achievements of his fellow men. He has the highest opinion of his nation but himself he considers a very ordinary individual. Strange anomaly, is it not, that the Englishman should be so proud while the American who has every right to be proud, is among the most humble of men.

Pride, as we all know, is the root of evil and the humble man consequently is far more likeable than his conceited brother. The American then, wide awake, practical, efficient and thorough as he is, nevertheless has time to remember that he is a human being and that other people have feelings. He is the easiest person in the world to get along with. He minds his business and, unlike the ordinary man, does not dote on arguing. If you do not happen to share his views on certain questions, he will not attempt to ram them down your throat, and will think just as highly of you as if you were of the same opinion. He is the most friendly of persons and makes you feel perfectly at home with him: in fact a few hours after meeting, you are under the impression that you have known him all your

life.

The American in a word is friendly, sympathetic, alert, patriotic, capable, sensible, thorough, self-confident, ambitious, and modest and it is not very difficult to understand that his wits have been so sharpened that he has one of the keenest minds, perhaps the keenest mind in the world. Remembering these characteristics of the typical American, one must immediately realize that they have no small amount of influence on American humor which, as might be expected, is cosmopolitan and therefore complex.

American humor has a universal appeal, for if humor is to give pleasure to people having impulses and inclinations inherited from a great variety of ethnic stocks, how could it possibly be otherwise? Small wonder, after all, that it should have such a universal appeal, for what other nation has so good an opportunity to draw from so many sources? The American melting pot has made a human amalgam with a composite mind but with an appreciation of wit and humor that far outstrips any other. An inhabitant of, say, Edinburgh, is Scotch, and Scotch only. He is not familiar with the foibles of other nationalities that furnish material for wit and humor in the United States. He cannot see anything funny in the jokes the Yankee tells about the

obtuseness of the Englishman, the parsimony of the Scotchman, the ludicrousness of the Irishman, because he is too much a Scotchman and too little a citizen of the world.

The American, on the other hand, has an enormous breadth of vision. He is a citizen of the whole world. The whole world has come to him. He recognizes the various nationalities he sees about him and has learned something of each one. He is acquainted with English humor, Scotch humor, Irish humor, German humor, Italian humor and negro humor. Try to fool an American by telling him a Hebrew joke and making the actors Irish. Or tell him a chicken-stealing joke and make the principals Germans. In other countries of the world such jokes might pass but not in the U.S.A.

Yes indeed, Americans are aristocrats in their fun-making. Bored by the stolid humor of the Germans, the rollicking fun of the English, the serious humor of the Scotch, they demand something piquant, sparkling, subtle, imaginative. And they get it.

Who can think of wit and humor, American or any other kind, without thinking at the same time of the one and only Mark Twain? He is humor personified and his particular type of wit which characterizes the whole American race, has earned him such a world wide reputation that a

large number of his works have been translated into many foreign languages. We may therefore consider Samuel Clemens as America's representative in the field of wit and humor, and an analysis of his writings will indeed give one a very good idea of American wit and humor.

Yankee fun, to a large extent, consists in exaggeration and a perusal of Mark Twain's works confirms the truth of this assertion. Its ingredients are facetiousness, burlesque, the unexpected, and the absurd all mixed up together and seasoned with a dash of speed in such a way as to leave the astounded foreigner gasping for breath.

How Mark Twain got rid of an interviewer by pulling his leg is extremely comical, and the story certainly contains all the constituents of American humor.

On seating himself the young reporter informs Twain that he has come to interview him.

"Come to what?" asks Twain.

"Interview you."

"Ah, I see. Yes-yes. Um. Yes-yes."

Twain gets up, walks over to the bookcase and after browsing around for a few minutes, exclaims: "How do you spell it?"

"Spell what?"

"Interview."

"Oh,my goodness. What do you want to spell it for?"

"I don't want to spell it. I want to see what it means."

"Well,this is astonishing,I must say. I can tell you what it means,if you - if you -"

"Oh,all right. That will answer,and much obliged to you,too."

"In,in,ter,ter,inter -"

"Then you spell it with an I?"

"Why,certainly."

"Oh,that is what took me so long."

"Why,my dear sir,what did you propose to spell it with?"

"Well,I-I-I hardly know. I had the Unabridged;and I was ciphering around in the back end,hoping I might see her among the pictures. But it's a very old edition."

"Why,my friend,they wouldn't have a picture of it even in the latest e-- My dear sir,I beg your pardon,I mean no harm in the world;but you do not look as-as-intelligent as I had expected you would."

Having made the poor reporter explain what an interview is and after informing him that he has a very bad memory,the following dialogue ensues:-

"How old are you?"

"Nineteen in June."

"Indeed. I would have taken you to be thirty-five or six."

Where were you born?"

"In Missouri."

"When did you begin to write?"

"In 1836."

"Why, how could that be if you are only nineteen now?"

"I don't know. It does seem curious, somehow."

"It does indeed. Whom do you consider the most remarkable man you ever met?"

"Aaron Burr."

"But you never could have met Aaron Burr if you are only nineteen years--" - "Now, if you know more about me than I do, what do you ask me for?"

"Well, it was only a suggestion; nothing more. How did you happen to meet Burr?"

"Well, I happened to be at his funeral one day; and he asked me to make less noise, and--"

"But, good heavens, if you were at his funeral he must have been dead; and, if he were dead, how could he care whether you made a noise or not?"

"I don't know. he was always a particular kind of a man that way."

"Still, I don't understand it at all. You say he spoke to you and that he was dead?"

"I didn't say he was dead."

"But wasn't he dead?"

"Well, some said he was, some said he wasn't."

"What do you think?"

"Oh, it was none of my business. It wasn't my funeral."

Then the reporter asks him about his relatives and, after receiving many more extraordinary answers, enquires why he considered Burr such a remarkable man.

"Oh, it was a mere trifle. Not one man in fifty would have noticed it at all. When the sermon was over, and the procession all ready to start for the cemetery, he said he wanted to take a last look at the scenery; and so he got up and rode with the driver."

The young man reverently withdrew.

If anyone can read the first few lines of the interview without laughing, there must be something lacking in his make-up. What could be funnier than a famous man looking in a dictionary for a picture of an interview? Imagine, if you can, the reporter's amazement at such a procedure without wreathing your face in smiles, and you are indeed an extraordinary person. Twain was so funny that even when he wanted to talk seriously, his audience was convulsed with laughter.

His wit and humor were at times a little coarse, but it must be remembered that his career as a humorist was begun

in the rough mining camps of California and Nevada, and one could hardly expect him to use the language of an English Lord. His description of Scotty Briggs trying to make arrangements with a parson for the burial of his pal is in this tone, but is extremely comical. The parson is a man who uses big words beyond Scotty's comprehension and Scotty, whose language is exclusively slang, is altogether unfathomable to the cleric.

"Are you the duck that runs the gospel mill next door?" asks Scotty.

"Am I the - pardon me, I believe I do not understand."

"Are you the head clerk of the doxology-works next door?"

"I am the shepherd in charge of the flock whose fold is next door."

"The which?"

"The spiritual adviser of the little company of believers whose sanctuary adjoins these premises."

"I reckon I can't call that hand, pard. Ante and pass the buck."

"I beg pardon. What did I understand you to say?"

"You have raised me out, pard."

"I still fail to catch your meaning."

They go on like this for several pages but finally make arrangements for the funeral and, as he takes his leave,

the cowboy exclaims: "I think you're a square man, pard. I like you and I'll lick any man that don't. I'll lick him till he can't tell himself from a last year's corpse. Put it there. (Fraternal handshake and exit)

Twain shows himself to be not only a humorist but a wonderful judge of character. One can hardly believe, on reading this Nevada funeral, that Scotty's conversation and that of the clergyman were written by one and the same person. It is hard to understand that a man who can use the excellent English of the parson could possibly know the slang that Scotty spoke, or that a man who knows as much slang as Scotty could ever talk good English.

Twain indeed lived his characters. He knew their every whim. Nothing could be more realistic than the words he puts into their mouths; in fact his dialogues would not be more realistic even if the characters were picked out of their every day life and spoke their own inmost thoughts in their own way. Twain's versatility is little short of marvelous and he is equally at home when speaking through the mouth of a king or of a laborer, of a professor or of a gambler, of a dude or of a cowboy. Moreover, no matter what language he speaks, he is always extremely comical and even the gruff vulgarity of some of his characters cannot hide his kind heart and his

noble sentiments.

One cannot of course pronounce a judgment on the Nevada funeral after reading the first few lines, but nevertheless a glance at them is sufficient to show that the theme presents an opportunity for innumerable misunderstandings, and Twain does not let a single one of them escape without squeezing all the possible comedy out of it. After reading the whole story one cannot help but feel that Scotty hid a warm heart under his rather forbidding exterior, and consequently not only does Twain amuse his reader - he also elates him.

If anyone were to try to pick out Mark Twain's most humorous work the task would by no means be easy, and his sides would be so sore from laughter that he would not be able to complete it. The story of the Jumping Frog, which everyone knows by heart, furnishes Twain with a double occasion of curling up his readers with laughter. The tale in itself is extremely funny but a French review that did not share this opinion published it and then tore it to pieces. As one may well imagine, the Yankee was not exactly overjoyed and no doubt smarted under the criticism. His revenge though was prompt and witty. The story of course had been published in French, so Twain retranslated it back into English very literally and

showed that it was not his story at all.

For instance as Twain wrote it .. Smiley had a mare - the boys called it the fifteen minute nag - but that was only in fun you know, because she was faster than that, and he used to win money on that horse for she was so slow and always had the asthma, or the distemper, or the consumption, or something of that kind....

(She won the race, incidentally, because she was willingly given a two or three hundred yards start yet always was able to make a last frantic spurt to bring her in ahead of her rival)

When Twain translated the above lines back into English, this is what he got:- Smiley had an animal which the boys called the nag of the quarter of hour, but solely for pleasantry, you comprehend, because, well understood, she was more fast as that. And it was custom of to gain of the silver with this beast, notwithstanding she was pousseive, conarde, always taken of asthma, of colic, or of consumption, or something of approaching....

Needless to add, his laborious retranslation justified him in the eyes of the American nation as he whimsically asked 'could iconoclasm further go?' And the French critic found out through sad experience that it did not pay to try to make fun of Twain, for any

criticism hurled at him always turned into a boomerang.

Charles Farrar Brown, better known under the nom de plume of Artemus Ward, was famous for his typical Yankee wit. He wrote in deformed English and his spelling was as funny as the stories he told. His tale of the Free Lovers of Berlin Heights could not be more comical, and his extraordinary wit is well set forth in the following anecdote that Mark Twain tells of him. -

It seems that on one occasion when Ward was travelling in a train, he felt particularly miserable and had no desire to talk to anyone. Along came a loquacious fellow and asked him what he thought of a certain prominent man. "Who is he?" said Ward.

His questioner was quiet for about five minutes, then he asked Ward his opinion of another man who was making a row in England. "I never heard of him" said Ward solemnly.

This ignorance kept the garrulous one quiet for about fifteen minutes and then he asked Ward if he thought a certain presidential candidate would be elected. "Hang it all, man," said Artemus, "you appear to know more strangers than any man I ever saw."

The man was furious. He walked off but at last came back exclaiming: "You confounded ignoramus, did you ever hear of Adam?"

Artemus looked up and and said:"What was his other name?"

Another story of typical American wit is told by M.Quad.

A deaf old lady walked into a Main street store and asked for ten cents' worth of soap.

"We don't sell ten cents' worth," said the polite clerk.

"Yes,I want the yellow kind," replied the old lady.

"You don't understand me, madam," said the clerk,"I said you can't buy ten cents' worth in this store."

"Sure enough," replied the aged customer,"soap isn't what it used to be in my time;they put too much rozum in it these days."

"Oh Lord," exclaimed the now distracted clerk,"will you just hear this old lunatic?" and,placing his mouth to her ear,he fairly screamed:"We don't sell ten cents' worth of soap here."

"Yes," said the old lady,"you may put it up in paper and tie a string around it,if you like."

The clerk rushed to a box,took out a bar of soap,and almost threw it at the poor old woman,exclaiming:"Take it and get,you old haridan of thunderation."

"The old lady carefully laid her dime on the counter, and as she did so remarked to the clerk:"You're the politest and accomodatin'est young man I ever seed,and I'll call again when I want some more soap."

We could go on indefinitely in our enumeration of American humorists because most of the inhabitants of that great country could be classed in that category. No matter where one may turn in his search for pure wit, it would be impossible to assemble a more scintillating constellation than Twain,Ward,Billings,Perkins and Nye.

These men did not have the repute of certain famous foreign authors,it is true. They were not great litterateurs

with the picturesque style of a Bossuet or of a Chateaubriand. Their utterances were not eagerly awaited by philosophers, statesmen, or moralists, and in these various respects they were undoubtedly inferior to many other writers, but when it comes to pure wit there is no exaggeration whatever in stating that no other nation of the world has ever been able to produce their equal.

One need not imagine, however, that all American humorists were men of little or no literary merit, for many of them have been warmly acclaimed for their work even by English critics. Washington Irving's Rip Van Winkle, for instance, is of the highest calibre and as a word painter, Irving can hold his own with any man, yet all through his tale there is a charming trickle of humor which appeals to everyone. No less famous is Oliver Wendell Holmes for his beautifully written Breakfast Table series, and Mark Twain was awarded the degree of Doctor of Literature by Oxford. And so it is. In the U.S.A. there are and have been both humorists and men of letters, but American literature is still so young that one cannot reasonably expect to find the names of dozens of famous men of letters on the pages of her history. It is indeed remarkable that in so short a period of time

the names of Poe, Longfellow, Cooper, Hawthorne, Holmes, and Irving have become as well known in the field of letters as they are to-day.

Whether or not American humorists are men of world wide literary repute does not enter the question at all, for it is by no means necessary that a humorist be ipso facto a Shakespeare or a Hugo. A man can be an excellent lawyer and still have but a hazy knowledge of cosmic rays and their properties, so why should a humorist have to be a man of letters to be a good humorist?

The humorist's task is to make his readers or hearers laugh, and in this respect American humorists are far beyond comparison. They have been responsible for more aching sides than all the other humorists rolled up together. What a relief to get away from the intensely vulgar wit of the French and the surd like humor of the English, and be able to enjoy the essence of wit and humor from Twain and his successors. What they wrote in itself is unimportant, but what they have done for mankind can never be justly appreciated, even though all they did was to make the world laugh. Yes, from the brains and imaginations of these men come flashing streams of wit and humor which run along the dusty pathways of the world's every day drudgery and toil and help us keep up our courage. The

ripples of laughter soothe us and the blossoms of good nature brighten our weary way. Like Goldsmith's lone traveller, we sometimes feel that 'wilds immeasurably spread seem lengthening as we go', and then a flash of humor, 'the hospitable ray of the taper', cheers us on.

Undoubtedly the human race knows no greater benefactor than the humorist, and for this reason the world owes an immense debt of gratitude to the Yankees. Inspired by the extraordinary wit and humor of Twain and many others, and natural born humorists in their characteristics and inclinations, the Americans have kept the lamp of humor burning with such a strong flame that it sometimes dazzles the poor foreigner; and any impartial observer who makes a study of wit and humor ut sic must acknowledge that to enjoy the flower of wit and humor, one must go to the land of the Stars and Stripes.

All Americans naturally enough are not in a class with Mark Twain, but each and every one of them is endowed with the flash of repartee. It seems to be in their very nature; they delight in sharpening their wits in verbal duels of this sort and seldom it is indeed that an American is completely rendered hors de combat by a sarcastic remark.

Although wit and humor, as we have seen, bear the

earmarks of the different countries in which they may be considered, nevertheless, like thought, they are the exclusive property of no one nation, and it is indeed fortunate that such is the case. All humor, even the English variety, is precious. Think of what a dreary old world this would be if only a few of its inhabitants were blessed with a sense of humor, but think of how much happier we all would be if we always tried to see the bright side of things instead of criticizing and complaining about everything. We have merely to cast an eye at our neighbors, or perhaps even at ourselves, to realize what a lot of grumbling is going on and after all, what good does it do? How much more pleasant would it not be if we all passed our troubles off as a joke and did our best to spread sunshine in the lives of others. Not a bad idea, is it? How about putting it into practice?