

## 25 QUOTATIONS



### O. Henry

(William Sydney Porter)

(1862-1910)

William Sydney Porter published hundreds of short stories in magazines, reducing the form to a formula derived from Poe emphasizing (1) plot; (2) single effect; and (3) a surprise ending, usually with an ironic twist, as in his most famous, "The Gift of the Magi." His formula proved so popular magazine editors defined the short story in his terms until the emergence of Sherwood Anderson and other Modernists after 1919. He wrote on the side while working as a pharmacist, bank teller, and journalist. As a bookkeeper for the First National Bank of Austin, Texas he kept such poor records he got convicted of embezzlement, spent 3 years in prison and adopted the pen name O. Henry:

ORDER OF TOPICS: writing, love, women, Democracy, morality, New York, America, last words:

#### WRITING

When one loves one's Art, no service is too hard.

We are grown stiff with the ramrod of convention down our backs.

Write what you like; there is no other rule.

There are stories in everything.

He studied cities as women study their reflections.

A story with a moral appended is like the bill of a mosquito. It bores you, and then injects a stinging drop to irritate your conscience.

## LOVE

He wrote love stories, a thing I have always kept free from, holding the belief that the well-known and popular sentiment is not properly matter for publication, but something to be privately handled by the...florist.

It is said that love makes the world go round... It's wind from the dinner horn that does it.

## WOMEN

History is bright and fiction dull with homely men who have charmed women.

There are two times when you can never tell what is going to happen. One is when a man takes his first drink; and the other is when a woman takes her latest.

She plucked from my lapel the invisible strand of lint (the universal act of woman to proclaim ownership).

What a woman wants is what you're out of. She wants more of a thing when it's scarce.

If men knew how women pass the time when they are alone, they'd never marry.

A large amount of reminiscence is, by common consent, conceded to the drowning man; and it is not past belief that one may review an entire courtship while removing one's gloves.

She was like the air he breathed—necessary but scarcely noticed.

Perhaps there is no happiness in life so perfect as the martyr's.

## DEMOCRACY

A straw vote only shows which way the hot air blows.

We may achieve climate, but weather is thrust upon us.

## MORALITY

A burglar who respects his art always takes his time before taking anything else.

Whenever he saw a dollar in another man's hands he took it as a personal grudge, if he couldn't take it any other way.

There is no well-defined boundary between honesty and dishonesty.

## NEW YORK

You'd think New York people were all wise; but no, they can't get a chance to learn. Everything's too compressed. Even the hay-seeds are baled hay-seeds. But what else can you expect from a town that's shut off from the world by an ocean on one side and New Jersey on the other?

The ant is of a lowly station, but he will often reach home and get his slippers on while you are left at your elevated station.

## AMERICA

You can't appreciate home till you've left it, money till it's spent, your wife till she's joined a woman's club, nor Old Glory till you see it hanging on a broomstick on a shanty of a consul in a foreign town.

## LAST WORDS

Turn up the lights; I don't want to go home in the dark.

