

**MR. PUNCH'S  
AFTER-DINNER  
STORIES**

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Mr. Punch's after-dinner stories by Various

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MR. PUNCH'S  
AFTER-DINNER STORIES





PROGRESS.—“I maintain that the race has improved in physique since those days. Now *we* couldn't get into that armour!”

# MR. PUNCH'S AFTER-DINNER STORIES

*WITH 155  
ILLUSTRATIONS*

BY

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## POST-PRANDIAL WIT



THERE is a sense, of course, in which everything from the pages of MR. PUNCH might be regarded as coming into a collection entitled "After Dinner Stories." All good stories are really for telling after dinner. Somehow or other one seldom associates wit and humour with the breakfast table, although the celebrated breakfast parties of Rogers, the banker, were doubtless in no way deficient in either. Over the walnuts and wine, when men have feasted well and are feeling on the best of terms with themselves and their fellows, the cares of the

day put past and the pleasures of the gas-lit hours begun, that is undoubtedly the ideal time for the flow of wit.

It must not, therefore, be thought that the present volume is in anywise distinguished from the others of the series to which it belongs in the appropriateness of its contents for the dinner party. No more than any of its companions is it designed to that end; but as it is concerned almost exclusively with the humours of dining, with stories of diners, it will be admitted that its title is not without justification. Private dinner parties, public banquets, the solitary dinner at the restaurant, the giving and accepting of invitations, these and many other phases of dining come within its scope, and if it be noticed that a considerable amount of its humour has something of the fragrance of good old port—to say nothing of the aroma of wines that are

## Mr. Punch's After-dinner Stories

bad!—it can only be retorted that Mr. Punch's duty has ever been to mirror the manners of the changing time, and in his early days the wine flowed more freely than it does to-day. For our personal taste we could have wished less of this humour of the bottle, but throughout this library an effort has been made to maintain in some degree a historical perspective, so that, in addition to the prime purpose of entertainment, each of these books in MR. PUNCH'S LIBRARY might be a faithful picture of the manners of the Victorian period in which most of his life has been passed. If to-day these manners seem to us just a trifle coarser than we esteem the social habits of our own day, surely that is a comforting reflection and one not lightly to be lost!



## MR. PUNCH'S AFTER- DINNER STORIES



*Mrs. Jones.* And pray, Mr. Jones, what is the matter now?

*Jones.* I was only wondering, my dear, where you might have bought this fish.

*Mrs. Jones.* At the fish-monger's. Where do you suppose I bought it?

*Jones.* Well, I thought that, *perhaps*, there might have been a remnant sale at the Royal Aquarium!



EXCUSE FOR DRINKING BEFORE DINNER.—To whet the appetite.