

THE CREATION OF *THE FOUR MILLION*:
O. HENRY'S INFLUENCES AND WORKING METHODS

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ABSTRACT

Though O. Henry's *The Four Million* was intended as an attack on Ward McAllister's idea of the Four Hundred, each man is mentioned only in passing in studies of the other. One chapter therefore contrasts the two men by bringing together readings of McAllister's memoir, accounts of his career, and the secondary literature on O. Henry. Another chapter examines the work of Anne Partlan, the writer that O. Henry said inspired him to write about the shopgirls of New York. This section focuses on "Among Themselves," the story O. Henry singled out as a special influence, and Partlan's other work for *Success* magazine around the turn of the century. A final chapter attempts to assemble material for a compositional history of *The Four Million*. While the results are necessarily inconclusive, some tentative conclusions are reached about how much O. Henry was involved in the selection and arrangement of stories for the book and how much was left to his publisher and others.

The results demonstrate that some established ideas about O. Henry—that he was in the vanguard in pushing back against the idea of the Four Hundred and that he moved in on Partlan's fictional territory—are not borne out by the facts and must be tested against original sources.