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Laughing Gas for the “Pulpit Clown”?



Nicknamed the “pulpit clown” by his detractors, Reverend Doctor Thomas De Witt Talmage (1832–1902) was a clergyman whose fiery sermons and theatrical gestures “entertained” parishioners and visitors by the thousands on Sundays in Brooklyn, New York, from 1869 to 1894. In this illustration from the irreverent American magazine *Puck*, the “pulpit clown” is seen preaching to congregation members dressed more as if they were attending the opera. In the lower right, a mischievous cherub is depicted releasing a bag of laughing gas from behind the curtain. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc.)

George S. Bause, M.D., M.P.H., Honorary Curator, ASA's Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology, Schaumburg, Illinois, and Clinical Associate Professor, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio. UJYC@aol.com.