

d'Antimoine's love. Perceiving that the force of fate inexorably was pressing upon her, Madame Carthame — still in her night-cap — bestowed upon Rose and Jaune the maternal blessing in a manner that, even allowing for the night-cap, was both stately and severe.

At Vandyke Brown's wedding Jaune d'Antimoine was radiantly magnificent in "The Marquis Suit," adding splendor to the ceremony and rendering himself most pleasing in the eyes of Rose Carthame. And a month later he was yet more radiant when he wore the famous suit again, in the church of

Saint Vincent de Paul, and was married himself.

Conté Crayon brought Mr. Badger Brush down to the wedding, and the groom came too, and the tailor got wind of it and came without being asked — and had to be implored not to work it up into an advertisement, as he very much wanted to do. Mrs. Vandyke Brown, just home from her wedding journey, was the first — after the kiss of Madame Carthame had been sternly bestowed — to kiss the bride; and Mr. Badger Brush irreverently whispered to Conté Crayon that he wished, by Jove, he had her chance!

Ivory Black.

AMERICANS AT PLAY.

If the future social historian of America shall put much trust in the propositions about the character of the American people of today that are current in essays, newspaper leaders, sermons, and elsewhere, he will miss the mark. Some false theories, from frequent repetition, gain an authority equal to that of the Apostles' Creed. Since the first seed of the English race germinated in these shores, several theories about them have been accepted as generally true. The most of these have been false. It was very early believed that Americans were shorter-lived than their English progenitors; the falsehood is so vital that even life-insurance experience cannot quite kill it. It was long held, and I suppose it is yet held, that Yankees love money more than any other people; but does an American like a dollar any better than an Englishman or Scotchman likes four shillings? Will not the generous-hearted son of Erin higggle for a half-penny in a bargain? Isn't a franc very dear, also, to the Frenchman? In one breath Old World writers dub the people of the United States a nation of "dollar-hunters," and in the next berate them for an excessive liberality that "spoils travel." Most Englishmen hold to the opinion that Americans sit up of nights to corrupt the English language. But the most curious of fallacies about Americans are those which they hold themselves. One of these is that we are an overworked race, incapable of amusing ourselves. Over and over again the leader-writers — the only real *ex cathedra* preachers of our age — assure us that we are incapable of merry-making, that our attempts at fun are cumbrous failures, and that, as a people, we are quite incapable of play. The best of the joke is that we all believe this, and feel sorry for ourselves accordingly.

To one of the most refined and fastidious of New England scholars I once remarked that the American writer best known in Europe was Mark Twain. "He ought to be," was the reply. "Anybody who can make our melancholy people laugh deserves the highest honor." The foundation for this belief in that American melancholy, with a college man leading a life of scholarly seclusion, is easy to find. He reads of May-poles in old ballads, but we have none; he sees merry-makings from a distance as he travels in Europe, and sees them through the atmosphere of old poetry — all the rudeness and brutality in them fail to reach him. He only knows that our people do not dance on the village green, or kiss their sweethearts under the mistletoe, or carry in a grinning boar's head at Christmas. Our shepherds do not play upon any pipes but those that hold tobacco. Are we not, therefore, a lugubrious people?

But how even a college professor should get the notion that the American people are incapable of amusement, I cannot see. The gymnasium is rather more prominent than the library — in Harvard itself there is a professor whose business it is to teach athletics. What would the venerable founders, who adopted the solemn Latin motto which devotes the college to religious and ecclesiastical uses, have thought to see a member of the Harvard faculty taking the flying trapeze? Twenty years ago every well-informed man knew who were the great professors at the leading universities; now it is much if you can keep the run of the young men who row stroke in the boat crews, and who, with the base-ball, foot-ball, and lacrosse players, have somewhat eclipsed the renown of the great teachers.

I have been for some months involved in

all the toils of building in a place remote from supplies. When the Fourth of July came, my stone-masons, living for weeks in a tent away from their families, and consequently anxious to complete their work, agreed to work all day. But, like true holiday-keeping Americans, they could not stand it; the lake was too tempting; at noon all three "knocked off" and went a-fishing, after the ancient example of Simon Peter. The only man left on my hands was a Scotch tender, who would not lose his wages, though he had no masons to tend. The carpenters at work for me are men of about fifty years of age, who do not, it is true, dance on the green, or keep house-warmings, like ancient Englishmen, but all of them left me for a week at a stretch to attend the county fair, and the intelligent American "help" in the kitchen went also. My French-Canadian plasterer stood solitary at his post like another Casabianca; but the brick-mason couldn't lay the hearth,—his duties as village-fiddler detained him at the fair. I wonder if the social philosophers who are so sure that we have no holidays, just because everybody has always said so, ever considered what a great element in our rural life the so-called agricultural fair is, with its pumpkins and bicycle races, its big oxen, trotting-horses, gypsy fortune-tellers, needle-work, female equestrians, firemen's "tournaments," side-shows, dances, and other amusements. We have two of these in our county every autumn. Only last week I rowed five miles against a head wind in a hot September sun, on a pressing errand for my builders, and then found the steam-planing mill as still as death; proprietors and men had shut down and gone off to see the fair, six miles away,—except one fellow, who alone chose to amuse himself, in the way supposed to be congenial to our race, by attending a murder trial in the village hard by.

Living as I do on the lake that is preferred to all others in America as a resort, it seems ridiculous to talk of Americans as incapable of enjoyment. For thirty miles north and south, on both shores, Lake George is peopled in summer by many thousands who give themselves up to pleasure of every healthful sort—rowing, fishing, driving, bathing, mountain-climbing, boat-racing, canoe-racing, steam-boat excursions, moonlight sailing, lawn-tennis, base-ball, mooning on the piazza, and other outdoor recreations, to say nothing of indoor games. Nor are these all rich people; farm-houses and shell cottages are occupied by multitudes of people with little money who love recreation like good Americans, and who take vacations of a length unknown to Europeans in similar circumstances.

But these are not the peasants, you say.

Alas! we have no peasants to attend feasts given by patronizing lords-of-the-manor. But our country people have their own recreations. Joshua's Rock, within gunshot of where I write, is now inclosed and forbidden; but it has been a picnicing and chowdering place for the neighborhood probably ever since the land was inhabited by white people, and, from the relics we find, it appears to have been the scene of Indian fish-suppers for centuries before. A chowder was given a few weeks ago at the head of our little bay; there was no end to the carriages, wagons, row-boats, sail-boats, and little steamers that waked the resounding echoes of our usually quiet cliffs. There were perhaps a thousand people in the crowd, and not a city person among them. They were yeomanry from the rugged flanks of French Mountain, and from the fertile grain and grass country to the south and east, with mechanics, clerks, and store-keepers from half-a-dozen villages in a radius of fifteen miles. A horse ran away, and several persons were injured. One of them was thought to be fatally hurt, but when the wounded had been cared for, the irrepressible American went on with his merry chowder as though nothing had happened. Each comer paid twenty-five cents as his contribution toward the fish chowder, and furnished the rest of his provisions himself. There was no music, no dancing, no beer, no singing, no May-pole, no gracious lady-of-the-manor, but there was unintermitting enjoyment for all that.

In vain will the historian of the future look for any reflection of all this in the novels of society that graze the cuticle of our national life. Our novelists, for the most part, shirk the chowder and the county fair. If you should write of these things frankly, you are sure to be snubbed by the refined critic, who will accuse you of "a latent sympathy with vulgarity." But we shall never have a genuinely American literature so long as we shrink from the life of our common people. Isolation and exclusiveness is not a mark of superior culture, though it passes for something of the sort. There is no vulgarity so vulgar as that which feels itself liable to contamination by contact with people of no pretensions.

In estimating the capacity of Americans for amusement, it should be remembered that if they have fewer troupes of strolling players than other peoples, they compensate themselves with no end of church "entertainments." If we keep few ancient holidays, we take liberal vacations; if we buy few comic papers, we exact that our sober journals shall keep "funny men" as jesters to King Demos. The predominant quality in two-thirds of our most popular men of letters is either wit or humor. Even in

the pulpit the most popular men are amusing, either purposely or otherwise, and it is doubtful if any other nation ever had so many humorists among its legislators as we have had.

We are accused of grimness and lack of joyousness in our merry-making, but all merry-making is serious business when the observer is out of sympathy with it. One delicious late afternoon, in a town on the banks of the Lago Maggiore, six or seven years ago, I saw the pole of an acrobat set up in the street. The fellow performed some commonplace feats of agility, such as you may see on a summer's day at Rockaway when our city people, rich and poor, are airing themselves along the shore. But the Italian was jauntily dressed in colors, and aided by a clown; his two children, mere infants, were forced to perform with him, and his wife, bedizened with tinsel, showing off her meager ugliness in tights, solicited contributions by passing round a tambourine. The oldest little boy, of five years, after performing several dangerous feats, grew nervous, missed his hold, and fell heavily on his back. The father

cuffed him, and he ran, hurt and sobbing, to his mother. A charming gentleman and lady from Weimar, who had crossed the Simplon in the coupé of the diligence with me, stood by; I shall never forget the indignant emphasis of this gentleman's exclamation when the poor boy fell: "*C'est abominable!*" But the crowd of people took no notice; the tumbling and contortions of the actor, and the capers of the clown, continued to excite applause. The poor mother, in her ridiculous tights and furbelows, alternately fondled her frightened children and jingled her tambourine, praying the bystanders to contribute. I do not believe that our amusements are any more grim or disagreeable than this one which gave the common people of Stresa so much delight. Even the fun of dancing on a hay-barge towed slowly through the Kill von Kull on a moonlight night—which is so common a recreation with Manhattaners of a certain class—can hardly seem drearier to the observer than the Italian street circus did to three foreigners.

Edward Eggleston.

CHINESE GORDON.

I.

It is more than twenty years since General Gordon won the strange sobriquet which has clung to him amid all the vicissitudes of a singularly adventurous career. The story, familiar enough in the East, has been almost forgotten in the West; and, notwithstanding many biographies have appeared of late, there are probably few who could explain why the Governor-General of the Soudan is always spoken of as Chinese Gordon. Yet that Gordon is Governor-General of the Soudan is due to the exploit which won for him so unique a title. Twenty-one years ago the Chinese Empire, after submitting to a peace dictated by the allied powers amid the ashes of its imperial palace, was threatened with ruin by the rebellion of the Taipings. The heart of the empire had fallen into the hands of the rebels, who, under Chung-Wang, a kind of Chinese Mahdi, had routed the armies of China and menaced the dynasty with overthrow. For five years Shanghai itself was only preserved from capture and loot by the presence of a British garrison. Repeated attempts were vainly made by the Chinese authorities to win back their lost provinces; and as year after year passed by, it seemed as if this cancer, preying on the vitals of the empire, would eventually destroy it. At the

beginning of 1863 the Taipings, numbering one hundred thousand fighting men, occupied the whole of the country stretching from Shanghai to Nankin. They held every walled city for a distance of several hundred miles to the south and west. Inflamed with fanaticism, flushed with victory, they were in undisturbed possession of the garden of China. Their head-quarters at Soochow, a strongly fortified citadel, commanded the whole province. The towns and villages were in ruins, and vast tracts of country were depopulated. It was while affairs were in this position that Gordon, then a major in the British army, was appointed to the command of the imperial forces. They consisted of four thousand Chinese mercenaries, officered for the most part by foreign sailors with a turn for filibustering, undisciplined, and demoralized by repeated defeats. In addition to this rabble, Gordon had nothing to rely upon beyond a firm base, ample munitions of war at Shanghai, and a couple of steam-tugs. The situation seemed a hopeless one, and Gordon might well have despaired. But Gordon is a man not given to despair. As was said of another whom in many respects he much resembles, "Hope shone in him as a pillar of fire after it had gone out in other men."

This faith was justified by his works. In twelve months after he assumed command he