

A Corn Carnival.

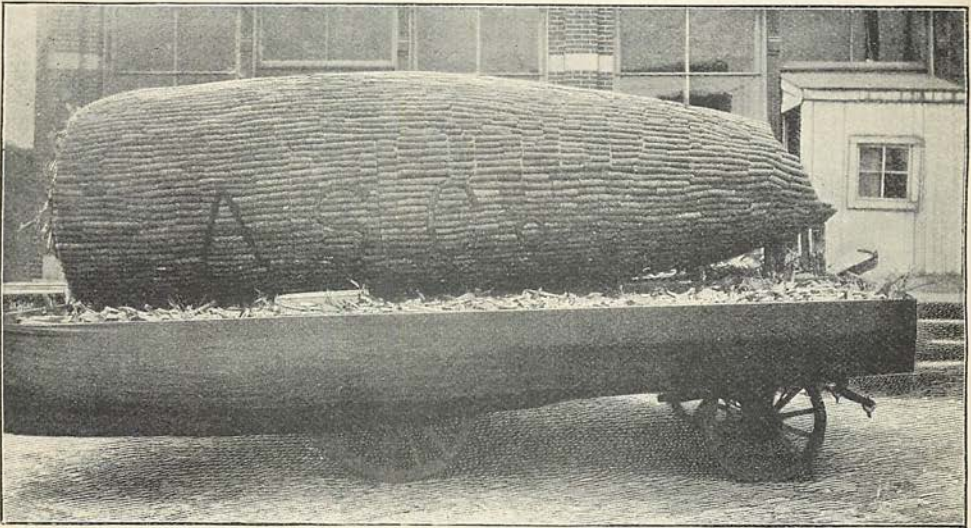
BY ARTHUR HARRIS.

PEOPLE who can raise 160,000,000 bushels of corn in a season have a right to throw some of it away, if they want to. That is what the people of Atchison, Kansas, do once a year, and the occasion upon which it is thus lavishly squandered is the Atchison Corn Carnival, one of the greatest of *fêtes* of the kind to be seen in the great and merry West.

It lasts a day and a night. During that time King Corn is supreme. He reigns undisputed in all parts of the city. He fills

till the rich bottom lands of the Missouri, and harvest the crops with regularity and despatch. The corn fields that reach away from the highways are among the largest in the nation, and are a beautiful sight in summer.

The father of the Corn Carnival is Mr. E. W. Howe, editor of the *Atchison Globe*. His proposal, some years ago, that Kansas, "the sunflower State," should celebrate annually the glory of its corn crop, was eagerly taken up by the citizens, and much of the success which has attended the carnival has been due to him.



From a)

GIANT "FLOAT" MADE OF CORN.

[Photograph.]

the streets with processions of waggons and triumphal cars made and decorated with corn. His subjects walk and dance in costumes made of husks—pretty costumes, too, as we may see if we turn to the last page of this article, and he himself rides in a car drawn by corn-decorated horses. Corn, in fact, is everywhere, and the jubilation is wonderful to see.

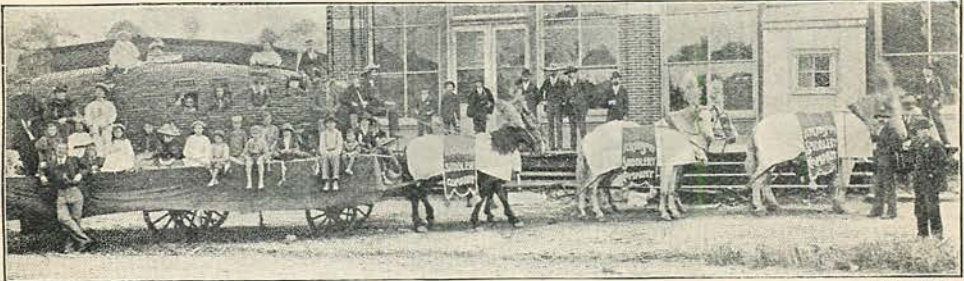
North-eastern Kansas, in the vicinity of Atchison, is the greatest corn region of the West. The fields never know a failure, and the people are settlers who own their farms, and have been there for many years. They

A few of the best things of last autumn's carnival are shown in our illustrations. Next to the decoration of the town, the chief event is the procession, in which all the leading commercial companies take part. They construct expensive "floats," as they are called, and display them in the procession on large waggons, drawn by decorated horses. A remarkable "float" was contributed by the Atchison Saddlery Company to last year's procession. The illustrations on this and the top of the next page show this curious and ingenious structure. It was made in the form of an ear of corn, and contained thirty-

six bushels, being 20ft. long and 6ft. high, and weighed 5,000lb. Hollow inside, it gave an opportunity for the presence of bright-faced children, who peeped through little windows in the sides.

The parade is, of course, headed by a

the bridles covered with flowers. In last year's carnival one represented white roses, others poppies, crimson roses, morning glories, violets, sunflowers, etc., while the ladies who drove the beautiful turn-outs were the handsomest of the city, and their rich



From a)

THE GIANT FLOAT, AS USED IN THE CORN CARNIVAL PARADE.

[Photograph.

band, and this band is specially augmented for the occasion. Then comes a corps of bicyclers, all rigged in corn costumes, and these riders are followed by the handsomely-decorated carriages, tally-ho coaches, buggies, phaetons, traps, surreys, and carts—all of which are entered in competition for a prize. They are decorated with flowers, made of tissue paper and corn husk, thousands being used on each vehicle; the entire buggy—top, box, running-gear, and everything—being covered with cloth the colour of the flower, while the harness on the horses is wrapped in bunting and ribbons of the same, and

costumes were in harmony with the colour of the flowers.

Some of the pretty rigs were driven by little girls and boys with satin ribbons for lines, coloured boys leading the horses. To give an idea of the beauty of the flower parade, and the work it necessitated, it may be mentioned that 4,000 chrysanthemums were used on one buggy; 7,000 red roses and 600 white ones were used on one float; 3,500 roses on one buggy; 1,650 on another; 2,400 poppies on another; and 45,000 violets on another. The prize carriage which is shown on this page was the property of Mrs. F. M.



From a)

FIRST PRIZE DECORATED CARRIAGE IN THE PARADE.

[Photograph.



From a Photo. by]

THE CHARIOT OF THE CARNIVAL KING.

[David Lukens.

Baker, the wife of the largest corn-dealer in Kansas, and was decorated with 5,000 pink poppies, consuming thirty quires of paper, 1,000 yds. satin ribbon, 75 yds. cheese cloth, twenty-five papers of pins, and 20 yds. white jute.

The principal point on which the most stress is laid is the decoration of the town, and it is made very beautiful. The stores use hundreds of ears of corn in making odd designs that will attract the attention of the passers-by, and there are on the side-walks strange creatures made out of the grain that seem impossible to the novice. The young ladies make out of the husks the most bewitching bonnets and capes, and wear them through the day, and the young men even get up jackets and hats that rival those of the fair sex for ingenuity and attractiveness. Even the horses are decorated, and one might think that the town was all in the corn business, so generally is the place given up to the festival.

The King of the Carnival rides in state behind four horses with head-dresses of corn husks, and sits high on a flowered seat under a dais of gorgeous colour. Our illustration shows plainly the curiously-decorated harness of the horses

and the King enthroned.

One man who went to the carnival last year said he began to realize what a "carnival" meant when he was 100 miles out of the city. Corn was thrown through the doors and windows of the trains, and from that time on it was corn, corn, corn everywhere. In Atchison, everything in the shape of corn was prominent. Old "darkies" sold corn-stalk canes, coloured "mammies" peddled shell corn, the

buildings were splendidly decorated in every imaginable way with corn stalks, corn tassels, corn leaves, shelled corn, ear corn, popped corn, coloured corn, and there might have



DECORATED BICYCLE IN THE PARADE.

From a Photo. by Kleckner, Atchison, Kans.

been places where corn juice was found. Everybody, men, women, and children, old and young, white, yellow, and black, celebrated by throwing shelled corn in each other's faces, rubbing it down their necks, whether friends or strangers made no difference, and one had to be good-natured and take it. The freer and more familiar people became with each other, the better they were liked. By night the streets and sidewalks were covered an inch deep with corn, most of it ground into meal under the crunching heels of the people. The bands, eight of them, played the official tune of the carnival, "A Hot Time in the Old Town"; people sang it, whistled it, and tooted it on thousands and thousands of tin horns.

Many women, young and old, wear dresses, hats, neckties, and even shoes of corn, corn husks, and tassels. There has been great rivalry over the possession of the most remarkable corn costume. Mrs. H. J. Cusack, an Atchison woman, whose corn millinery has attracted a good deal of attention, recently sent a hat trimmed entirely with corn and husks to Mrs. William McKinley, wife of the President. The bonnet can scarcely be distinguished from a Paris pattern. It was voted the most unique and dainty production of the carnival.

So tasteful and original have been Mrs. Cusack's productions in corn costumes that her delighted townspeople have dubbed

her the "Corn Milliner of Kansas." The most peculiar feature of the corn hat is that the corn, having been treated by some special preparation, shines like ivory, and makes a most attractive head-dress. Worn at night, it would cause a sensation as one of the prettiest and most striking hats ever devised, and few would guess that the wonderful and costly-looking head-covering was made of corn husks.



LADY'S HAT MADE ENTIRELY OF CORN.
From a Photo. by J. C. Hill, Atchison, Kans.

The "Corn Doll" is in evidence throughout the carnival. She is a pretty little creature, with dress and hat of corn husks and a dainty parasol in her right hand. Thousands purchase her during the *fête*, and keep her as a *souvenir* of this unique festivity.

Much of the fun comes at night, and in the following manner. When the lights are ablaze and the streets are shining in the glory of corn decorations, the young people—and the old for that matter—go out with pockets full of corn kernels, and woe be it to the passer who is not ready to take his own part. Where in the Mardi Gras there is a shower of confection or flowers, here is one of corn, and the handfuls that are thrown among the crowds soon make the streets a crackling pandemonium. There is a prize offered to the farmer who will drive down the street with his waggon filled with corn and have any of it left when he arrives at the opposite end. So far, no one has been able to claim the prize. There is license of



A CORN DOLL.
From a Photo. by J. C. Hill, Atchison, Kans.



BADGE USED IN THE ATCHISON CORN
CARNIVAL. [Photograph.]

the fullest sort during the night, and the police are theoretically locked up until morning. With horns and corn the parade goes up and down, laughing and shouting, and the corn decorations begin to suffer. One after another they are pulled down and used to amuse the people, and there are few stores that have the trouble of taking down their decorations in the morning. The streets become veritable mills for the grinding of the corn, and after the crowd has been on them all the evening, the corn is ground into flour. Bushels are gathered in the morning, and many of the poor are glad to get this corn for food.

On this page is shown the badge worn during the carnival. It is ornamented with buttons, containing the inscription, "Stand up for Kansas," and a fairly good portrait

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of Mr. E. W. Howe, who has made the carnival what it is. We also show on this and the next page two of the corn costumes worn by men and women during the festival. There is a suggestion of Nansen and his Arctic dress about this corn costume, but its cost is slightly less than that of furs. The clothes, moreover, are very striking, and often remarkably pretty—when a pretty lady wears them.

The greatest fun is over the red ears, for the young men insist that the good old custom that they shall be allowed to kiss the girls under the red ear is still in force—and they abide by its rules, too. One grain buyer last autumn bought a large load of red ears at a fancy price to sell again to the young men, and they were all disposed of.

At the first carnival three years ago, the girls wore red corn in their costumes with impunity, but at the last carnival a few men became bold enough in the morning to kiss the girls with red corn, and the idea spread



GENTLEMAN'S CORN DRESS.
From a Photo. by Kleckner, Atchison, Kans.

rapidly. By noon, every girl in town with a red grain of corn on her costume had been kissed repeatedly. In the evening a few girls still wore red corn.

Nine-tenths, it is said, of the people who attend the Corn Carnival are personally entertained. Every lodge, wholesale house, and

interesting contest at a corn-fair in the interior of the State between the yellow and white ears of corn. The silver advocates were supposed to be the favourites on the white-corn day, and no one was admitted unless he brought to the gate a white ear. The corn was piled up, and made several large



LADY'S CORN DRESS.

From a Photo. by Kleckner, Atchison, Kans.

church opens head-quarters for the reception of visitors. The churches usually charge twenty-five cents for meals, but at other places food and refreshments are absolutely free. Hundreds of visitors come by special invitation from private individuals. Everyone takes a hand, and the big celebration is of comparatively little expense. Five or six hundred dollars are collected for fireworks, and to pay the salary of a secretary, but the event is handled without any organized effort.

In other parts of Kansas, the bounteous gift of corn is celebrated in different ways. Last year, during the contest between the "Goldites" and "Silverites," there was an

waggon-loads for the poor. The speeches were for the white metal, and the bands played for the orators. Then, on the next day, the yellow was in the ascendancy, and the admission was an ear of the yellow corn, and the speakers made talks for the gold standard. This was a day of rejoicing, too, and the excitement ran as high as on the one preceding. The people came from all parts of the country on both days, and the addresses were by the best talent on both sides of the question. Nothing was decided, but the corn was given to the poor, and many a family was glad that there had been the lively rivalry.