

The element of exaggeration, which is so characteristic of American humour, may be explained by the rapid success of the Americans, and the immensity of the continent which they inhabit. Everything is on a grand scale, or suggests hugeness. Then negro humour is mainly exaggeration, and has no doubt added its quota to the compound which, as I said just now, completely staggers foreigners.

Governor Hoard was telling me to-day that a German was inclined to be offended with him for saying that the Germans, as a rule, were unable to see through an American joke, and he invited Governor Hoard to try the effect of one upon him. The Governor, thereupon, told him the story of the tree, "out-west," which was so high that it took two men to see to the top. One of them saw as far as he could, then the second started from the place where the first stopped seeing, and went on. The recital did not raise the ghost of a smile, and Governor Hoard then said to the German: "Well, you see, the joke is lost upon you; you can't see American humour."

"Oh! but," said the German, "that is not humour, that's a *tamnt* lie."

And he is still convinced that he can see through an American joke.

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Grand Rapids, 24th April.

Have had to-day a lovely, sublime example of that preposterousness which so often characterises American humour.

I arrived here this morning from Chicago. At noon, the Grand Rapidite, who was "bossing the show," called upon me at the Morton House, and kindly inquired whether there was anything he could do for me. Before leaving, he said: