

distinctively American in it. Saxe, for instance, one of the brightest versifiers the West has produced, set his ghost player on the stage of Drury Lane Theatre, and his Briefless Barrister had not "half-a-crown" in his purse. Now of late years there has been a tendency to introduce more of the new world air and spirit into the humorous verse—in fact, into the whole literature of America. There is more of the old log cabin and bush farm in the work of the present-day humorist than is to be met with in that of the writers of twenty years ago. Possibly this is because the poets of our time have the blessed privilege of seeing the swamp farm, with its fat pork and malaria, through the kind haze of vanished years, for a bush farm has very little enchantment indeed until distance lends it. But from the backwoods comes the kind of verse referred to as having no counterpart even a few years ago. This verse it seems to me is entitled to particular attention just now, for it has sprung into existence within recent years, and has become the most popular verse in America. It is a combination of quaint humour and homely pathos set in the simple, ungrammatical idiom of the country people.

The inhabitants of rural America are a peculiar people—a people richly imbued with an almost pathetic humour, and born to the knack of speaking