

NATIONAL HUMOUR

His poor flock loved him very, very dearly, and when his funeral was over they got up in a body and came out of the restaurant with tears in their eyes, and saying to one another that he was a good tender missionary, and they wished there had been more of him."

The extent to which burlesque has become a favourite and characteristic element in American literature has been made a ground for charging the Americans as a people with lack of depth and earnestness. But if this charge is regarded as valid against the Americans, the keen and widespread appreciation of American wit in this country, and the enormous sale here of books like those of Artemus Ward, Mark Twain, and Mr. Dooley, means that the same charge can be brought against ourselves.

But it has to be remembered that the very seriousness of life, and the fierce competition that makes life in these days more than ever a struggle for existence and for the supply of continually enlarging wants, create a new necessity for anything that affords amusement and provokes laughter, as a relief from new and manifold cares.

It has also to be remembered that if America laughs a good deal even at herself, it is partly because she feels that she can afford to do it—that under all the faults and foibles that are seized upon by her satirists, and made fun of in so extravagant