

# Chautauqua-ing--A Great Game

**C**HAUTAUQUA-ING is a great game. The pastime of statesmen, the delight of reformers, the opportunity of faddists, and the occupation of elocutionists, bellringers, jubilee singers, and an assorted lot of entertainers, it is twice profitable; it profiteth him who goes Chautauqua-ing and him who is Chautauqua-ed, the latter at least theoretically.

The word Chautauqua-ing may not be found in the dictionaries, but like a lot of other good words not written there, it is useful because it furnishes a short cut for the expression of an idea. If you haven't already guessed its meaning, here it is: Chautauqua-ing—Furnishing instruction, entertainment or amusement to Chautauquas; it may be applied to those who organize and conduct Chautauquas, but it is more especially used relative to anybody or anything, from a frock-coated statesman to a trained goat, who or which travels about the country, doing anything from spellbinding to cutting monkey shines for the edification or diversion of Chautauqua audiences. Once upon a time it was the occupation for intellectual highbrows alone, but now even the brute beast is eligible, providing only that it be known as "educated" and under the personal direction of a "professor." One of the hits of a western Chautauqua circuit this summer is such a brute—an "educated" horse; therefore this horse may be said to be "Chautauqua-ing."

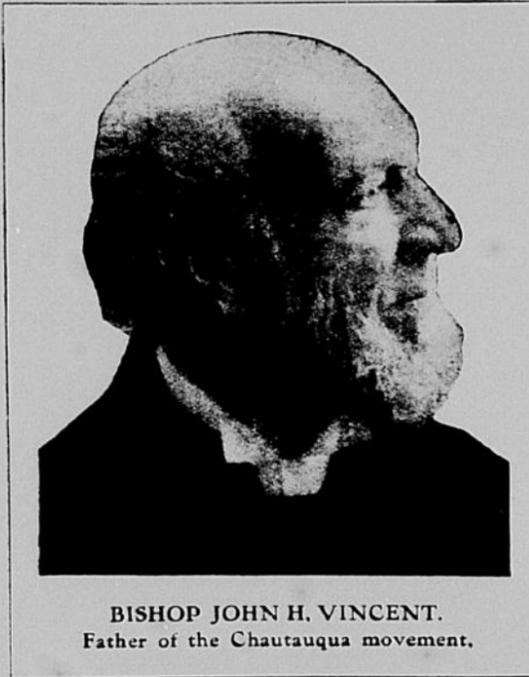
The word is pronounced as though it were spelled, "Shaw-talk-wing," but that gives no suggestion as to its original meaning, which is shrouded in mystery. Nobody knows that—not even Bishop John H. Vincent, founder of Chautauqua. Once upon a time he said that to find the original meaning was a "foggy problem," and then he concluded that "interpret it as you will, Chautauqua is Chautauqua, a place of clear light, of uplift, of abundance, of even balance, of truth and righteousness, of faith, hope and charity,"—a very Chautauqua-esque statement. All of which, however, may be a surprise to the visitor to some of our modern Chautauquas.

But, regardless of its etymology or philology, Chautauqua-ing is a great game.

### The statistics of the game.

**I**T is a great game because it has grown so that today it involves many millions of men and women, and adds to the gaiety of the nation in dog days. With the beginning of every summer some thousands of men and women start out Chautauqua-ing, and during the season some millions of men and women sit and swelter for a good many times that many million hours, listening to words of wisdom or nonsense. This year probably six hundred different Chautauquas were conducted; one state alone, Iowa, had a hundred. It cost at least an average of \$2,000 to furnish the programs for these Chautauquas, and \$1,000 more for other expenses, making the total cost of the 600 pretty close to \$2,000,000. The average program runs ten days, with an average attendance of not less than 1,500 a day. A little multiplication discloses that something like 9,000,000 people are concerned in the game, as players or spectators.

With a little experience, you can tell a Chautauqua-ing gentleman as far as you can see him. He usually wears that all-wise look that gradually comes to a man who is accustomed to talking, or Chautauqua-ing, to a crowd for an hour at a stretch without anybody talking back or disputing him. Also, he most always wears a Prince Albert coat and he does it without worrying about it. His voice is an orotund bass, and if you let him get the jump on you when you approach him, he is likely to be very dignified in manner, and impressive in his conversation; but if you go up to him unafraid, and as if you knew he were just human like yourself, you can jolly him without giving offense and talk with him as one good fellow to another. If you get very chummy with him, he may



BISHOP JOHN H. VINCENT.  
Father of the Chautauqua movement.

## By Fred W. Beckman

tell you that he wears his dignity and his Prince Albert for the benefit of the local committee; also that he likes to play with his babies at home.

The game used to be rather exclusive, but anybody can get into it nowadays, providing he has what in the business is called "talent." In Chautauqua-ing "talent" is an elastic term and is stretched to include most anything that will keep the people interested for an hour or an hour and a half. Once upon a time, only the select were presented upon Chautauqua platforms—those who had great calls to teach or preach or to lead political reforms and moral crusades. But now—well—

If you are a statesman with a mission, or an ex-bandit turned moralist, or a preacher with a message, or a savage become civilized, or a spell-binder with an oration, or a magician with a new box of tricks, or a reformer with an axe, or a showman with an educated brute, or a traveler with a stereopticon, or a humorist with new stories, or a professor with a fad, or an elocutionist with a new piece or anybody with any stunt that will produce thought or the semblance of thought, or laughter, or diversion throughout an hour period, you are eligible to go Chautauqua-ing.

### No high brow monopoly now.

**O**NCE upon a time the Chautauqua managers of the country demanded that a man be learned before he appear on their platforms, also religious and they insisted that he discourse of lofty themes of art, literature, philosophy, history, science; he must be strong on culture and have a message and a mission. But today a little learning goes a long way; the American people have become infected with a fun germ and they demand, first of all, to be entertained rather than instructed. Chau-

tauqua managers have yielded to this demand, because it pays, and the intellectual highbrows no longer monopolize the game of Chautauqua-ing, as a glance at some of the "talent" for the present season will show.

Of course there are such men as William Jennings Bryan, United States Senators Dolliver, Beveridge, La Follette, Governors Folk, Johnson, Hanly, and the Reverends McArthur, Gunsaulus, McDowell and others of their class and distinction on the Chautauqua lists. They are retained as a concession to the original purpose of Chautauqua. But also there is Cole Younger, former notorious bandit, who started out the season to exhibit himself as a horrible example and to point a moral to people that bank robbery doesn't pay. Caleb Powers, of Goebel assassination notoriety, is a feature on numerous programs, a considerable distance from Kentucky, of course. When the veteran Chautauqua speaker of the old school descends from the platform, he sometimes meets Carrie Nation, of saloon smashing fame. Mrs. Nation appears with or without her hatnet, according to the wishes of the local committees. She will also make the rounds of the saloons on the morning before her address, if desired, to give due publicity to her presence at Chautauqua and to bring the crowds. Her lecture is sensational, if not elegant and learned. Irl R. Hicks, self-styled weather prophet, has also found a place in the game; his almanacs may be found on sale after each performance, or rather, lecture. An educated horse is making the rounds of the western Chautauquas this summer doing extraordinary mathematical stunts—for a horse—and exciting the marvel

of many who refuse to be interested when some learned doctor of science deals with the mathematics of the stars. There are also other beasts in the game and in another season the famous "educated" ape, Consul, who is stirring New York, may go Chautauqua-ing. There are near vaudeville acts in abundance, and the usual lot of entertainers who do everything from bell ringing to "polyphonic imitation," whatever that is.

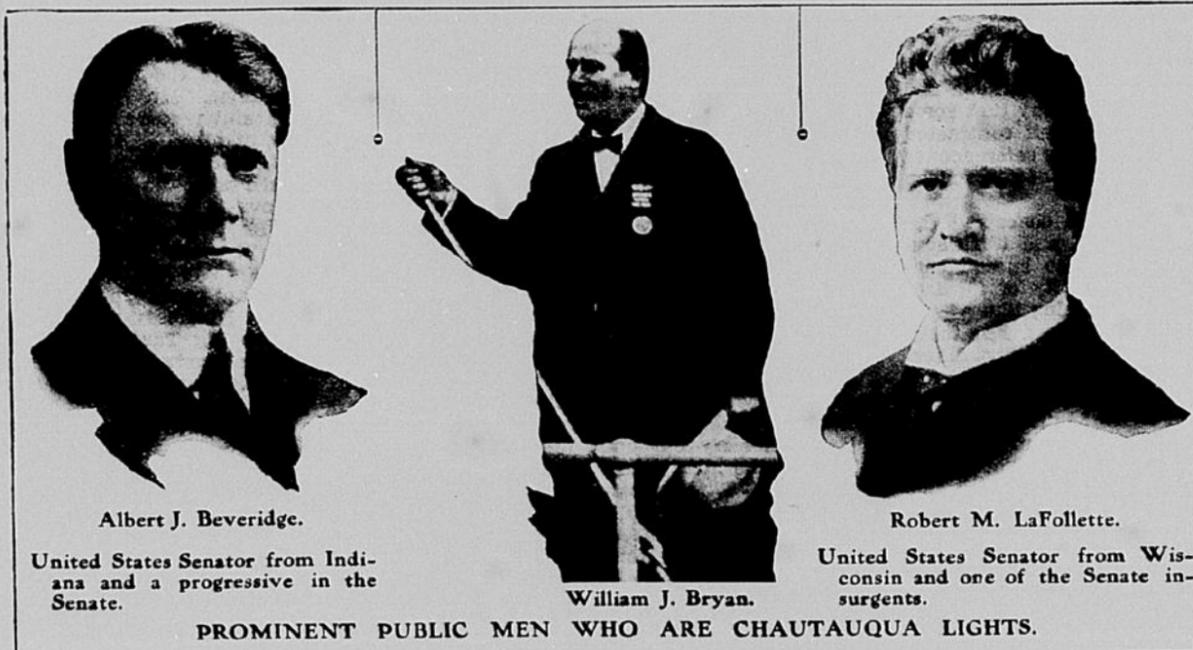
### Using a borrowed talent.

**W**HILE Chautauqua-ing requires a "talent," only one will do and that may be a borrowed "talent." If you cannot write an oration or a sermon of your own, you may borrow one with the consent of some one who can, and use that. One young man is doing that this year, delivering Sam Jones' lectures with as close an imitation of Sam Jones as he can muster, and his audiences howl with delight at his fun or weep watery tears at his pathos.

Not only is Chautauqua-ing a unique business, profession, industry, art, or whatever it may be called, but it is also very profitable. William J. Bryan's modest fortune is based on his efforts on the Chautauqua and lecture platform. While nobody knows just how much he makes every year out of his addresses, yet a very fair idea was furnished by a prominent Chautauqua manager of the midwest. Mr. Bryan's best terms for a Chautauqua engagement are \$250 spot cash, and in addition one-half of all the gross admission receipts above \$500. So he never gets less than \$250 for every address, and sometimes he gets as much as \$500. His average is probably not much less than \$350 or \$400. At the beginning of the season the prospect was that Mr. Bryan would deliver about

100 Chautauqua lectures. Sometimes he makes two engagements in a day. It is not without reason, therefore, to estimate that this summer Mr. Bryan will earn from \$35,000 to \$40,000 Chautauqua-ing. Inasmuch as he is in just as great demand for winter lecture course engagements, and he delivers just as many addresses then, a good year of lecturing means somewhere in the vicinity of \$75,000 for Mr. Bryan.

There is one man with a greater potential earning power as a Chautauqua attraction than Mr. Bryan, and that is—of course anybody can guess



Albert J. Beveridge.  
United States Senator from Indiana and a progressive in the Senate.

William J. Bryan.

Robert M. LaFollette.  
United States Senator from Wisconsin and one of the Senate insurgents.

PROMINENT PUBLIC MEN WHO ARE CHAUTAUQUA LIGHTS.