

ON THE TRAMP.

Is there any more enjoyable feeling in life than to be under a bright morning sky, comfortably equipped, on the tramp through a pleasant country; a world of meadows—a rocky dale—a stretch of brown, billowy moorland? The pulse beats freely, thoughts chase each other like summer butterflies, and you seem to annex every pretty or wild bit of scenery, every quaint homestead, every living thing about you, with an enlarged and conquering individuality. Crowds oppress, cities tire, books weary; but on the tramp, you are free to enjoy, to receive, and to romance. The junior tramp, however, is a limited individual, and he never gets far away from society and civilization in our island home. The senior tramp, on the contrary, takes ship over sea, and has a wider range. He is everywhere at home. This older brother is justly entitled a traveler; the junior has to be content with the less ambitious and sometimes shady designation of a tramp. Wandering and little-known tribes are not for him. He foots it at home, with good hope of reaching railways and hotels somewhere, if he turns his back upon them with fine scorn, and a philosophy warranted to endure for twelve or fourteen hours, but good enough while it lasts and renewable with morning light.

Alas! there are others on the tramp, whose philosophy has little warrant at all, and whose burdens are ever pressing, not gayly left behind! Apart from fine scenery, freedom, and rude health, it is in chance meetings with such specimens of the junior tramp, bright or dull-eyed, that an observing man will find much of the romance of his revolt against acres of bricks and mortar and the elbowing of crowds. The division just made is an induction from a pretty large experience.

The bright-eyed tramp is always a man with an object and character. He has either a home before him or behind, to reach or to brighten. He will converse freely with you, tell you his history, and accept little kindnesses in a manly spirit. The dull-eyed man does not like you to look him in the face too closely. Scenery seems to oppress him. He ambles along through the finest bits as if he were passing down a back slum. He is a waif; he has no home—only a native parish. He begs, whines, bullies, and I fear he also steals; so true is it that home has its subtle effect on the eye, the character, and the conception of nature. Meeting such men on a lonely moor, we ask ourselves what restrains them from robbing, and perhaps murdering? The answer comes clear:

"The other idea that sways their minds, the law!" Cruel nature, and almost omnipresent law—these are the only two ideas that rule them.

Walking across a lonely moor, the white road winding ribbon-like over distant brown hills, I was once thinking, in a dreamy way, over some scenes in Scotch history, wherein the sound of a pibroch suddenly filled an apparently deserted hillside with human life, when two men, who had been lying on the dry roadway, making a pillow of their boots, started up, and sent my heart into my mouth. I was never so startled in all my life, for it seemed as if my thoughts had been heard. Looking straight into their steady eyes, and noting there a hopeful look, though the men were almost as startled as I was, I said:

"Good morning. How's work, mates?" It was a policeman's hint I was acting upon. To know anything about a man, he had told me—his name, occupation, object—always gives you a certain command over him in a critical moment. Exchanging glances, the tramps answered:

"Bad—awful bad! Do you know of a job, gov'nor?" I wished I did. They are making a new road seven miles off at P—; they might inquire there.

Work-seekers' stories are often most pathetic.

"What, you on the tramp?" was my remark one day to a young fellow, out at elbows, and with frayed garments, who visited me at home, handing me an envelope addressed to him in my own handwriting.

Yes; he had lost his situation in a cotton mill in Lancashire, and had tramped southward through many counties round to London, and then, through the Midlands, without getting a single job. Of late he had not tried; his clothing forbade it. He was clever; a hard, philosophic student; an original man in every way. Yet he had been herding with the meanest, sleeping anywhere, mostly out-of-doors, living in aboriginal fashion on raw vegetables, and occasionally sharing what others begged. His wife and child had gone home to her friends, and he had never heard of them for nine months, though he had written to his wife at first regularly. She might be dead.

How had he endured it all? He could scarcely say. He dare not think. Then followed a charming bit. As he had tramped along, it had been his custom to recite all the prose and poetic passages he could remember from his favorite authors—and he had a well-stored memory—to preserve his "identity," to prevent him from sinking to the low conversational level of his queer and casual companions. Occasionally others would repeat the little poems they had learned as children at school; sometimes "flash" ballads, bought in penny sheets at fairs. One companion had stuck to him for months, and whenever my friend seemed to be dull, or the way was dreary, or people were unkind, this seedy-black-coated "chum" would say to him:

"Give us a bit of poetry, mate." Can we ever tell to what uses we may put the verses and passages we learn at school and in early youth? They may perhaps save our sanity and self-respect. Here is another story. A tanned face, unkempt hair, intelligent eyes, clothes worn into a fluffy softness of texture, boots with loose soles, obviously never made for the wearer, hands dirty and large, announced to me, as I looked at them, a broken-down specimen of the work seeker. His companion, a suspicious, furtive-looking tramp, a sailor, and not unlikely the inspirer of the journey.

Condensing what it took me a couple of hours to learn, this was his story:

"Respectably connected, had never learnt a trade; had been a shop porter, married a pretty seamstress, lived happily together for years on their joint earnings. No children—didn't want them—hadn't a care. Wife's work fell off, food lessened; she became ill; bit by bit furniture sold, her heart broken at parting with what she had painfully won by her labor. When we had to sell the sewing machine, I could see 'twas all over—she clammed and died. Aftér her funeral, started off. Friends had left the place. I couldn't stand the work. No more happiness for me, sir. Whither bound? To S—. Worked there once—might get a job. T—the only man I knew. Had, sir—very hard!"

During this fragmentary conversation, I saw the man greedily grasp at a fragment of newspaper, lying upon the ground, which had evidently been wrapped round something.

"Might have an advertisement on it, you know!"

The sight of a sewing machine always suggests his touching history, told me along a road skirting the sea one misty spring day.

Tramps are mainly men with no definite trade at their finger-ends. There is always a chance for them somewhere, and they lose nothing by not asking for it. The skilled men on the road are much rarer now, since railway traveling has become so cheap, and unionism has developed. A crisis or a strike will, however, act in two ways—sending men out, and drawing them in. A bundle of clothing or tools is generally carried by the skilled tramp, and his gait is more energetic.

To show how gait betrays, here is an odd story. Meeting two brave navvies in Cornwall one day, I said to my companion:

"Two well-set men. See how they swing in step; ex-soldiers or policemen, likely."

Two days afterward we were near one of the barrack-gates at Devonport when, behold, our two tramps coming along in custody. An acute rural policeman had, so we learned, noticed their military step and bearing and gone up to them, saying, with a bold guess:

"You are deserters from Devonport?"

Taken aback, as much as persons are if you can show you know anything about them, and possibly suspecting the man had a description of them, they admitted they were, and offered no resistance, discipline once more asserting its power. They belonged to a kilted regiment; they had only been five days from barracks; and finer fellows I never saw. They were navvies by occupation.

Foreigners on the tramp are not very common, except on the coast-roads, and they are mostly sailors. They are not communicative, and know little English. The oddest specimen of a foreigner I remember was a German clock-mender I met in the midlands, who puzzled me greatly. He walked like a drilled man; had well-kept side whiskers, and a bag over his shoulder. We passed and re-passed several times. He called at roadside houses, and as I slackened pace, generally overtook me, but I failed to get him into fair conversation.

"Going far? To?—? Long way yet."

His peculiar German accent was coming out more strongly.

"Seeking work?"

"Yes, as he went along."

For several minutes we kept step in silence. Taking out a newspaper I began to read. The man's face relaxed.

"Any news of Garibaldi?" was the sudden question that startled me. A Garibaldian, I said to myself at once. It was just at the time the Italian hero made his last armed venture. I read him the news, and he broke out warmly:

"Ah, bad man—very wicked man! He became more of a puzzle than ever—a nut I must crack."

I waited on his movements, diverted from my intended walk, and devoted myself to getting his story. He became too excited to be very connected, and his German came grinding out at intervals with orchestral effect. A friend had beguiled him into associating with Republicans; he had been in some trouble in the movement of 1848; he had been imprisoned for opinions he did not hold; he was an absolutist and a skeptic. He had lost all his friends, and had come to England. He was a clock-mender, good at Americans or any other make, and he tramped a district from a center, earning about 10 shillings a week. Our conversation became lively; he forgot to call at roadside houses, and to my defense of Garibaldi, all he could splutter was, "Bad man—very wicked man!" The chat seemed to excite him very much, and at last he ambled into a little shop, got a job, and I went forward.

Beggar tramps are the honest juniors' aversion. They are full of tricks, and sometimes smart in speech.

"I never give to beggars on the road," I remarked to one of this class, airing a young man's general principle, perhaps with some self conceit.

"Will yer honor oblige me with yer name and address, and I'll call on yer?" was the prompt retort.

Between Coventry and Kenilworth swarms of beggars had formerly a fine harvest. I once counted twenty. Some were blind and lame; others were singing vagrants, humming snatches of their wailing ballads. One elderly man, with his legs in the dyke—a true tramp's way of sitting—was conning written testimonials, or begging letters, written on dingy yellow paper, that Chatterton might have envied. He had a tiny black pipe in his mouth, the kind of thing a tramp carries in his waistcoat pocket, and he was studying his papers with an author's self-admiring interest. I fear he was marking down some country parson for a victim.

"Dear Sir—the bearer —" was all I could see before he slipped the paper into a pocket in the lining of his waistcoat.

A dingy haversack and dirty garments may make even an honest junior seem like a beggar. Calling at a house in a lonely part of a well-known Yorkshire dale, to ask where I could get refreshment, the girl shut the door abruptly, and said nothing.

To a second knock it opened again, and two timid women appeared, the elder in the rear shouting, "Seven miles further on!" A more civil shepherd's wife, to whom I told my story an hour later, said they were not "particular at Beggar-mond" (Beckermonds), whereat I smiled, for the woman was evidently not punning, though at first I thought she was. Over the moor I should soon see "the Settle"; she meant a large viaduct on the Settle & Carlisle railway.

With food and tobacco, a junior's heart can always be reached. On one occasion, meeting a hungry specimen, I gave him some of my bread and cheese without any request or word from him.

"Thank you, sir," was all he said, in a cold tone; but after he had gone a pace or two, and begun to eat, he turned round, saying, "Bless you, sir, bless you!" as if some new or old chord of feeling had been reached.

The better tramps are often amusing company, and even the worst compel you to moralize anew on the old theme of the universe and the individual. "Chats with a roadside stone-breaker—the true conqueror, because he always rises on the ruins he makes," as a witty prince said—are often pleasant. The turf-cutter, with his long spade pushed before him under the soil, is also an interesting object. Pleasant, too, it is to watch a dalesman thatching his hay with green rushes; to come across strange birds and animals; to note the old village mills, and sun dials, churches and meeting-houses; to get glimpses of heavy antique furniture through cottage doorways; to be mistaken for a wool-buyer, an artist, "the new exciseman," as I was on one occasion; to spread news of big deeds; to find everywhere that home is sacred, be it ever so small or so lonely. He scarcely lives, in fact, who always carries with him the burden of society, who never tempts the unknown, except over sea, and who has never enjoyed the full and exquisite pleasure of being "on the tramp."—Edward Goadby, in Chicago Ledger.

In the Retail Dry Goods Trade.

The people that take up the time of the clerks without buying are called "skanks," and if any of our lady readers when shopping should overhear the word "skank" used from time to time by the clerks that are near to the one who is waiting on her, she may take it for granted that she is not regarded by the clerks as a probable purchaser.

To "swap" a clerk is to leave him without buying, a great many "swaps" during the day exposing him to discharge. To "gouge" is for one clerk, at the approach of a customer to the counter, to run ahead and wait on her before the other clerks. To have the reputation of being a "gouger" is not an enviable thing.

Dickens found humor and romance in all walks of life. The writer has failed in finding any in the retail dry goods business. From 8 o'clock in the morning until 7 o'clock at night—10 o'clock on Saturday nights—the poorly paid clerks stand on their feet, putting up with the whims and eccentricities of all that choose to patronize the establishment, only waiting for marriage or death to release them.—New York World.

Peculiar Structure of Musical Sands.

The investigation of savants in the matter of the musical sands of Kauai, Cal., which have excited so much interest on the part of geologists and others, shows that they possess a peculiar microscopical structure. The grains are found to be chiefly composed of small portions of coral and apparently calcareous sponges; they are all more or less perforated with small holes, in some instances forming tubes, but mostly terminating in blind cavities, which are frequently enlarged in the interior of the grains, communicating with the surface by a small opening. There were also in the sand small black particles, formed principally of crystals of augite, nepheline and magnetic oxide of iron imbedded in a glassy matrix. The structure of these grains explains, it is thought, why sound is emitted when they are set in motion.—Scientific Journal.

Dangerous Heat of Wet Zinc Dust.

It has long been known that shippers are unwilling to carry large quantities of zinc dust in their vessels, owing to the danger of its getting moist and becoming heated to a dangerous extent. Mr. Greville Williams, F. R. S., has recently made some researches which throw light on this matter. He finds that wetted zinc dust, after drying, gives off nearly double the hydrogen that unwetted dust gives. Hydrogen is absorbed from a moist atmosphere at moderate temperature by zinc dust. It has, in fact, the power of occluding hydrogen after the manner of spongy platinum.—Chicago Herald.

Why the Piano Needs Tuning.

This is the heavy season for piano tuners. The heating up of a house untunes in a short time its piano. This is not due, however, to expanding or contracting of the strings under the variations of temperature, but to the variations produced in the sounding board under the influence of the increased dryness of the air when furnaces and stoves are burning. The sounding board is always made of spruce, because of the superior resonance of the timber; but spruce is the wood most affected by changes in moisture.—Boston Budget.

The Oil of the Wool Clip.

Mr. Edward Atkinson states that nearly the whole wool clip now comes to market unwashed, and that out of the 320,000,000 pounds of domestic wool used there must be 25 per cent. at the least, or 80,000,000 pounds of a very valuable oil thrown into the rivers and wasted. When the "stunt" is refined a thick, viscous oil is obtained, which is absolutely free from oxidation, and which is therefore the most valuable oil for curries' use that can be found.

Limit Fixed at Sixteen Feet.

Professor Landmark, chief director of the Norwegian fisheries, asserts that salmon sometimes jump perpendicularly sixteen feet.

Mr. W. M. Vanlandingham, of Lancaster County, has disappeared from home.

BILL ARPS OPINION OF FLORIDA.

The Philosopher of The Atlanta Constitution Relates Some of His Experience.

I believe that I would like Florida pretty well if I could get away from it. But to be here a prisoner throws a cloud over its attractions and makes one restless and sad. I don't believe that a paradise would be welcome if there was a high wall round it. Like the sick boy who lies near me, I want to go home, and so does his mother. If we had the lamp of Aladdin and could use it for only a single wish, we would all say: "Now take us home." For sixty-five days this boy has been lying here lingering and languishing with Florida fever—a fever that has no other name—a fever that has no remission, no crisis of fourteen days nor twenty-one, but is a fever by the year, and runs its course from sixty to ninety days, with privilege of extension, and is only aggravated by quinine and defies acornite and arsenic and eucalyptus and all the known remedies, and the poor victim has to lie still and burn and see his flesh consumed and his bones work through. His mind becomes deranged and his speech affected and his limbs drawn up like grasshopper legs. We hear of many such cases and we know of one, and the doctors confess their helplessness. Now here is a field for science. The Florida fever.

People get restless and want to move somewhere and try a new country, but if any of your folks have got the Florida fever at home they had better stay at home until they get well of it, or they had better wait until Doctor Pasteur or some other doctor discovers what kind of poison to vaccinate with so as to keep the fever off or shorten the time. But still I like Florida, and would not be afraid to spend my winters here, but I wouldn't come down here in the summer to work on a railroad until I had been acclimated. I reckon the people here are as generally healthy as they are anywhere. They look like a healthy people, but it is very certain they have got a bad climate for fever. It is rarely fatal, but it cuts a good big notch in a man's time and flattens out his pocketbook in various ways.

We think now that our boy will get well with careful nursing, and the doctors say we may take him home about next June, and so we are comforted. But if another one gets down with Florida fever I shall move him home at all hazards, or else rent a house and move the family down. A visitor that is so affectionate and stays so long when it comes must be entertained. I see a Rome boy here who recently arrived from Texas and he is pale and sallow and looks like he had been living on gully dirt, and comes from the Brazos bottoms to get well in Florida. He took the Texas fever in Rome and went to Texas and took it again when he got there and was down for six months, and now he says he can't be worsted and is ready for anything.

But after all it is generally imprudence and exposure that precipitates the fever here or anywhere. It breeds in the malarial swamps of any state and hence has a good chance at the boys who are surveying these railroads and the laborers who work on them and have to wade through them and drive piles and build trestle work. The highland country is not subject to it. The negro laborers are more subject to it than the whites and the railroad hospital here is liberally patronized with them. I saw some of them who were convalescing and their skin was as rough and scaly as an alligator's and all their joints were stiff out "They will get well," said the doctor. "Ah, yes, they all get well. We have had 800 patients, and never lost but one." "What cures them?" said I. "Ann Dominic," said he. "It is just like the fellow who had a sick mule, and he gave him castor oil and whisky and lye soap and turpentine and everything else that the neighbors told him and then rubbed him with a rail and went off and left him for dead. But after awhile the mule kicked around a few times and got up and shook himself and went to eating shucks, but nobody knows to this day what cured him."

Seven Cities of the Chico Valley.

A traveler in New Mexico gives a glowing description of the country through which a new road passes, and tells of the Seven Cities of the Chico valley that almost reads like the romantic explorations of the members of the Smithsonian institute. He says that there are to-day in that valley ruins of large buildings five stories high, and some of them in such an excellent state of preservation that the masonry and plastering are looking as new and fresh as though done but a few years instead of centuries ago. These buildings are popularly supposed to be of Aztec origin, but, strange to say there is at present no historical account of them or their builders.—Exchange.

Proposition of a Philanthropist.

A New York philanthropist proposes to organize a land company which shall furnish homes to deserving young men in small cottages costing \$2,500 apiece. By a novel plan, in case the tenant dies after the close of a year, the property will be deeded to his wife as a home. The company will not lose, because its plan is the insuring of the young man's life for the amount of the mortgage on the property, and if he dies his wife takes the property and the company the insurance.—Chicago Times.

Manufacture of Iron Jewelry.

What the old alchemists failed to do modern mechanics have accomplished, in effect at least. They have not exactly transmuted base metal into gold, but they are making polished iron jewelry that is as attractive in appearance as gold filigree. The iron is highly polished and reflects light like a diamond.

Mad-Dog Epidemic Twelve Years Ago.

New York had a mad-dog epidemic about twelve years ago, when several persons were attacked with hydrophobia. Many alleged cures for the malady were published in the papers, but the record of trustworthy cases shows that all ended fatally.

An expression of endearment current in your gone by was "to bite the ear."

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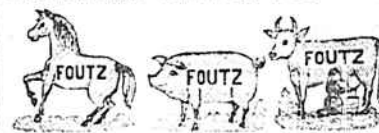
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