

A TRAMPS NEW SCHEMES

SOME OF THE MEANS THEY USE TO GET A SQUARE MEAL.

They Have Worked the Santiago Racket all Summer Until it was Found out—How the Weary Wanderers Sometimes Outwit Ladies—A Soldier's Cap Yarn.

'One of the newest schemes out this winter,' said a tramp, 'is to ask for a job of work for a pair of old trousers. It is only worked in the residence parts of the suburbs of a town when the men folks are off to business. You ring the door bell, ask to see the lady of the house, and then say to her: 'Lady, haven't you some shovelling or cleaning-up to do about the back yard? Any odd job for me. I need a pair of old shoes or trousers. Often they suspect you're a thief and slam the door on you. Other times they'll look soft-eyed and tender and say, 'Why, yes, you can help the girl to dust a Brussels carpet, and I'll give you a right good suit.' What is a fellow to do? Why, you bet not shake that carpet. I answer, thank's mam. I've a partner around the corner. I can get him to help. He'll take the shoes, and I the trousers, or coat; if you don't mind? She says all right, I go for my partner, and of course don't come back. But that's the exception. In most cases the kind lady takes pity on a fellow, and when she finds a man willing to work any odd job for a few second-hand clothes they give up a nickel or a dime and let you go, if they haven't any old clothes handy.

'Of course, asking for work is the trick of it. There's never any work in it. We're all out of business, generally, when it snows. People are willing to have their sidewalks shovelled off. The other day I asked a kind lady for work for an old pair of shoes. She said I should come around in the afternoon and wash off the sidewalk. I told her I was going out of town, but could do it right off if she'd allow. She said she was then going to the dentist's. I appeared anxious to get right at the job. Then she staggered me by saying: 'All right. I'll trust an honest fellow like you. Get into the yard for the broom bucket and hose. The girl will give you a pair of trousers and shoes when you've finished, what was I to do? Beat a retreat of course, I said, 'Kind lady, I can get my breakfast around to the soup house if I go right off. I will be back in ten minutes. I had nothing to eat since yesterday.' She says, 'all right; the girl will wait for you.' Of course I goes, but never comes back. It's too hard work doing sidewalk washing. Let the girls do it.

'My experience is that seven kind ladies in ten will rather give up a little good money to a fellow who asks for a job than be bothered with him. I had a good thing this summer out in the country. I was always wanting a dime to have just enough railroad fare to get to the next town where there was a recruiting station, for I was to enlist in the regular army. It worked well. Everybody wanted to see me get into the army. They called me a brave fellow. No: I never enlisted. I tried one other army scheme. No, it was a navy scheme. I was along shore one morning early and I found a cap some sailor from a United States ship had dropped while on a cantico, during night. I had a pair of blue trousers. I stopped at a front gate and asked a kind lady for just enough change for car fare to get down to the wharf, which was five miles off: that I had lost all my money or been robbed. Of course I thought it would yield a quarter and no questions asked of one of the heroes of Santiago in hard luck for the moment. Just then a bloomin' lass sang out to a man on the inside. 'Lieutenant, out here is one of the men of your ship.' I thought I was been played in a false alarm but I took no chances. So I walked off, and as I disappeared I heard the girl's merry laugh, and then I knew I was a chump. I took the sailor cap into a drug store and told the clerk to telephone for the owner. Before I left I asked the squills man for a jigger of brandy, as I wasn't well. He told me he didn't own that cap. I wouldn't think of trifling with the navy again.

'I tried an experiment during the recent storm. It wasn't half done snowing when I rang a door bell. The man of the house came out. 'Mister, give me the job of cleaning off your sidewalk? I'm nearly starved,' says I. Well, sir, that man had the gall to say. 'All right; go ahead.' In all that storm, mind you, and I a hungry man, shivering and no overcoat, he told me to go ahead. 'My partner's got my shovel around the corner,' said I, 'and I'll get it, I walked off in a hurry like, business you know, when I heard the man laugh. 'Come back, says he; 'use my shovel.' I knew he was on to me. He called again, louder than before. I went back. 'You can't work me like that, old man,' said he. 'Here's a dime, for luck.'

And I took it, with a smile, telling him he was gay. 'One day I heard of an order against allowing tramps in or near a big stable. I went there and asked a boss to let me work cleaning horses, as I was nearly starved. I expected him to give me a dime and order me away, according to the rules. He handed me a meal check, said 'Go eat; then come back. I don't work a hungry man.' He growled like a man eater. I took the check went to the eating house, filled up and then shied off toward the wharf. Hard luck! That man was there shipping thirty head of horses, bossing the job. He collared me with a whip, growling: 'Why ain't you at the barn?' I told him I was reportin' to him in person for that job. He didn't let fall that whip. Just then one of the horses got away. So did I. Talking about meal checks. I met them often out in the smaller cities this fall. Many saloon men have them. I was playing a bad burned arm game and it was surprising how easy I could get a meal check, good for a five-cent plate at a five and ten cent eating house. I never went hungry but was thirsty. The checks were no good for beer, and none of my acquaintances on the road had money to buy them because they did not need them. It was a common thing to stop a man on the street. To get rid of us he'd just hand out a five-cent meal check. But a man get's tired of eating. He's got to have drink and clothes. The new racket I told you about is to get clothes for work you never do. Of course a good deal of money naturally goes for rum. Happy? No. But there's thousands what has got more worry nor I. And yet I envy them. I covet. It is one of my sins.'

THE PRAISES OF WALKING.

Mr. Nobbleby, Just in from a Spin Adds a Verse or two to the Song.

'I have sung before,' said Mr. Nobbleby 'the praises of walking, and, when I come to think of it, I am but one of many that have chanted the same measure; but I wish I might be permitted to sing one more verse. 'To restore the mental equilibrium there is nothing like walking. It one is tired with work, and, if not just despondent, at least doubtful and depressed, let him drop his work right where it is and get out and walk. Fifteen or twenty minutes of it will do, will bring in a jolly, joyous, rushing tide of good spirits that will make the mental shores to smile. And when you go back and take up that same work that had seemed so dull and hard before you see it clearly and grapple it with the confidence born of strength. All due to fifteen or twenty minutes walk. And this right here in the crowded streets of our city. 'Perhaps, indeed, the crowd helps to divert the mind. But the main thing, the great thing, is to ease up on the tension a little. We get to holding down the spring and hanging on to it so hard that we numb both body and brain. We let up on the spring, let it go entirely, and take a little turn in the air and there's never a fibre in the body, nor a drop of blood, but what comes up and smiles at us and says: 'Ho! Ho! Old man! It's a fine day! 'They were tired, every one, and thus wanted a little rest; and now they're ready to go at it again. And with these in this mood to back you the work is easy. You see it with a clear brain and you tackle it with a sure and steady hand. 'This for a strength renewer in working hours. Who does not know the delight of the first turn of the day in the open air, after a night pent up in a room indoors, when, as he steps off briskly, his blood smiles in every vein with the fresh bright air of the morning! And think of walking just for pleasure, under lovely skies and by stream and forest! 'For rest and refreshment of body and mind try walking!'

The Jury Were Piqued.

A contributor narrates the following incident as illustrative of the manners and customs of the British jurymen:—

'At a certain court of law,' he writes, 'a decidedly suspicious-looking man was placed in the dock, charged with the theft of a gold watch. He was identified not only by the owner of the watch, but also by two constables, and the evidence seemed quite conclusive. The prisoner, however, showed remarkable astuteness in defending himself, and by a certain shallow trickiness induced the witness to contradict each other in some trivial details. He strongly emphasised the fact that the watch had not been found upon him (which was not surprising as it was alleged that accomplices were with him at the time of the theft). 'The jury, who were led by a dull and obstinate foreman, were evidently much impressed by the prisoner's defence. It did not seem to occur to their simple minds that his astuteness was not of a kind which one usually associates with innocence. 'In the result, therefore, they returned a verdict of 'Not Guilty,' to the intense disgust of everybody in court, except the prisoner and his friends. 'Nearly purple with indignation, the judge, taking up a paper at his side, read to the astonished jurymen a list of some seven or eight previous convictions against the prisoner for exactly similar offences to that of which the guileless jury had just pronounced him innocent. 'Deep humiliation settled among the twelve good men and true.' The foreman, looking very shamefaced, expressed a wish

that the law had permitted them to know the prisoner's antecedents before giving their verdict. 'It will be a bad look-out for the prisoners in the cases to follow,' remarked a police sergeant to the writer. 'That last case has thoroughly piqued the jury. 'He had, indeed, correctly gauged the situation. For the rest of the day that jury returned verdicts of 'Guilty' with a steadiness and unanimity that were worthy of a better cause.'

Christmas Odds and Ends.

There is always a 'fitting opportunity' at the tailor's, especially at Christmas time. Patient (the day after Christmas)—'Doctor, what's good for dyspepsia?' Doctor—'Christmas pudding and mince-pies.' 'Blykins said, at the Christmas party that his wife is one in ten.' 'So she is. She is the one and Blykins is the cypher.' 'What made you think the collection was taken up to get the minister a new suit for Christmas?' 'Because so many of the congregation put buttons in.'

He (as they sit under the mistletoe)—'Mabel, tell me, do you love me?' 'Sh—' 'Yes, darling, I would die for you.' He—'No, dear; I prefer your hair as it is at present.' Barber—'But you have paid me two-pence too much.' Victim—'That's all right; it's a Christmas tip for not trying to sell me a bottle of your never-failing hair-restorer.'

Wee Miss—'Mamma, mayn't I take the part of a milkmaid at the Christmas fancy ball?' Mamma—'You are too little.' Wee Miss—'Well, I can be a condensed milkmaid.'

Freddie—'Ma, didn't the missionary say that the savages didn't wear any clothes?' Mother—'Yes, my boy.' 'Then, why did pa put a button in the missionary box on Christmas Day?'

'Do you think, dear, with my cold, it would make my head bad if I were to take a solo in the church choir on Christmas Day?' 'No, dearest, but it might make somebody else's head bad.'

Mamma (to Johnny, who, the day after the Christmas-party, has been given a pear with pills artfully concealed in it.)—'Well, dear, have you finished your pear?' Johnny—'Yes, mamma; all but the seeds.'

Mrs. Newly Wed (returning from church on Christmas morning)—'What prompted you to ask me to be your wife, dear?' My Newly wed—I think, my sweet you prompted me more than anybody else.'

'Have you received an invitation to the Bachelors' Christmas ball?' 'Yes indeed; I'm to be the only girl there.' 'What?' 'Yes, really. You know, the bachelors only had an invitation apiece to send one, and I received one from each.'

Eager maiden (on Christmas Eve)—'Well, Reginald, what did papa say?' 'Rejected Suitor (about to depart)—'I cannot be expressed in words. All that I can tell is that his answer gave me great pain.' (The old gentleman had kicked him.)

'I must say,' ejaculated the majestic matron, during the conversation after the Christmas dinner, 'I should like to have a decent and pretty expensive funeral, plenty of flowers, and all that kind of thing—in fact, the sort of funeral one has been used to all one's life.'

Hubby—'How do you suppose the saying, 'There is nothing new under the sun' ever originated?' Wife—'Really, I don't know, unless some woman who wore a bonnet like mine said it to her husband.' And he straightway bought her a new one for Christmas.

It is not everyone who can display the coolness of the gentleman who once carved the Christmas turkey with such misplaced energy as to send it under the table. Seeing that the guests evinced some discomfiture, and an anxiety to know where it had gone, he said, 'All right ladies and gentlemen, it won't hurt you; I have my foot on it.'

Mrs. De Flat (on the look-out for a Christmas present)—'Have you anything new in folding beds?' Dealer—'Only this, madame; and it really is quite a success. On arising in the morning you touch a spring, and it turns into a washstand and bath-tub. After your bath you touch another spring, and it becomes a dressing-case with a French plate mirror. If you breakfast in your room, a slight pressure will transform it into an extension table. After breakfast you press these buttons at once, and you have an upright piano. That's all it will do, except that, when you die, it can be changed into a rosewood coffin.'

Reputated.

At the men's service in Yorkshire parish the vicar tried to convey the lesson that the truest heroes and heroines are those who do noble deeds in the secret corner of the home, where none can see or applaud. 'Few of you seem to think,' he concluded, 'that your wives staying at home uncomplainingly to mind the children, and prepare the meals, are heroines. And yet their touching devotion to duty proves them to be so.' It certainly hadn't struck a certain old farmer in this way before, and as soon as he got home he promptly told his wife that the vicar had called her

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a heroine. 'Whatever does that mean?' asked the good lady. 'Oh, it means a woman who stays in t' house instead o' goin' art to show hersen,' explained the farmer vaguely. 'Then I'm not a heroine, an' I'll thank t' vicar to mind what he's sayin',' snapped the wife. 'I go to his church as much as t' other women do, an' he must be blind if he can't see me. Why I'd five different colors in the bonnet I wore last Sunday.'

SMALL PAPERS OF PARIS.

Their Number not Regulated by the Demand but by the Occasion.

The press of Paris, describing under that generic term all the newspapers published in the French capital, is a somewhat spasmodic group, the number of newspapers being regulated not by any ordinary rule of demand, but by the necessity of some public occasion. In times of excitement there are more papers published in Paris—not more copies of established papers, but more newspapers—than in times of quiet. A great sensation adds not so much to the number of copies sold of any particular journal as to the number of newspapers published, and whenever, as sometimes happens, there is a lull in public interest, it manifests itself not in the suspension of newspapers, for French newspapers never 'suspend,' but in the disappearance of a number, for some Parisian journals appear and disappear without any apparent good reason for so doing.

The population of the city of Paris by the last census was approximately, 2,500,000, and the number of newspaper readers in Paris was a little larger, perhaps, than in other large cities, speaking relatively, for the reason that practically every one in Paris speaks or understands French, for there are very few foreigners in the capital city unfamiliar with the French language. According to the recently published Press Annuaire for 1899, the Paris newspapers for this year number 2,587—more than ever before.

There are in Paris at present 140 daily political newspapers, but how many there will be next week or how many the week after is practically impossible to state. Some effort has been made to classify according to divisional lines the daily papers of Paris which devote their chief attention to politics, and it has been found that 97 come under the category of Republican, 30 are Conservative and 13 are Socialist. The 97 Republican papers are subdivided into moderate and radical Republican papers which support whatever particular Government is in office, and Republican papers which oppose whatever Government is in office. The 30 Conservative papers are divided into those that support the various groups of pretenders. Orleanist and Bonapartist, the clerical papers, the financial papers and the papers which cater to various interests connected with the army and navy. The Socialist papers of Paris, being 13 in number only, are less easily susceptible of subdivision, but some are more radical than others and some are more moderate than the average; but the maintenance of 13 Socialist newspapers in one city is strongly indicative of the extent to which French papers take up and consider politics.

This state of affairs is rendered possible by a variety of conditions which do not prevail in the United States. The price of French newspapers is high; the reading matter is small in amount and the space taken by it is very limited. French newspaper readers do not require much news

and are perfectly satisfied to depend upon the Post Office as an ordinary channel of communication whenever the telegraph fails. More importance is attached to literary style than to exact details in local newsgathering, and it is therefore possible to publish with entire pecuniary success a Paris newspaper from the columns of which all items of expensive news are omitted. Moreover, many of the French political papers, so called, are subsidized sheets, deriving their support, not from their readers or advertisers, but from sundry 'funds.' So long as these funds continue the papers appear; when the funds languish the funds disappear, and to this condition is due the fact that the number of daily newspapers published in the city of Paris varies radically from time to time, and in an apparently inexplicable manner, under stress of some local event which visiting strangers would not regard as of considerable importance. In France, outside of Paris, the number of papers published is practically stationary.

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