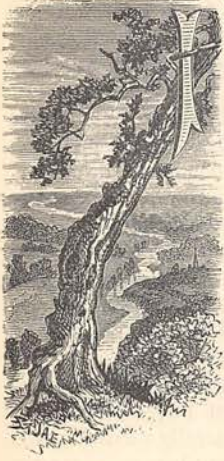


"ON THE TRAMP."



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 civilisation 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 elder brother is justly entitled a traveller; 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 gaily 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 a 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 hill-side 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 were making a new road seven miles off at P—; they might inquire there.

Work-seekers' stories are often most pathetic.

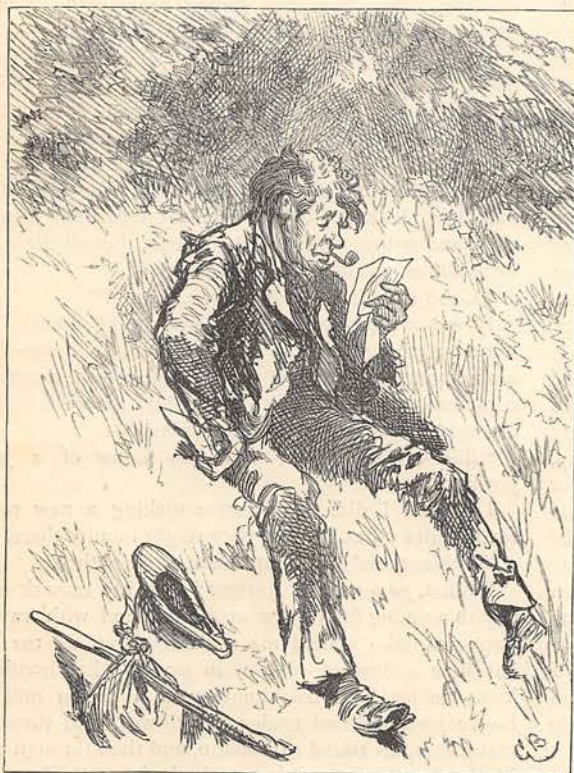
"What, *you* on the tramp?" was my remark one day to a young fellow, out at elbows, and with frayed garments, who visited me at home, handing me an envelope addressed to him in my own handwriting. Yes; he had lost his situation in a cotton mill in Lancashire, and had trudged south-westward through many counties round to London, and then through the Midlands, without getting a single job. Of late he had not tried; his clothing forbad 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. Acute feelings had dulled themselves. 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 favourite 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

uncivil, this seedy-black-coated "chum" would say to him—

"Give us a bit o' 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.



"DEAR SIR, THE BEARER—" (p. 289).

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 our 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 labour. When we had to sell the sewing machine, I could see 'twas all over—she clammed and died. After 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. Hard, 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 travelling 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 brawny navvies in Cornwall one day, I said to my companion—

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

Two days afterwards 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 learnt, noticed their military step and bearing, and gone up to them, saying, with a bold guess—

"You are deserters from Devonport?"

Taken aback, as such 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 repassed several times. He called at road-side houses, and as I slackened pace, generally overtook me, but I failed to get him into fair conversation.

"Going far? To M—? 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—bad, 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 sceptic. 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 centre, earning about ten shillings a week. Our conversation became lively; he forgot to call at road-side houses; and to my defence 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 honour 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.

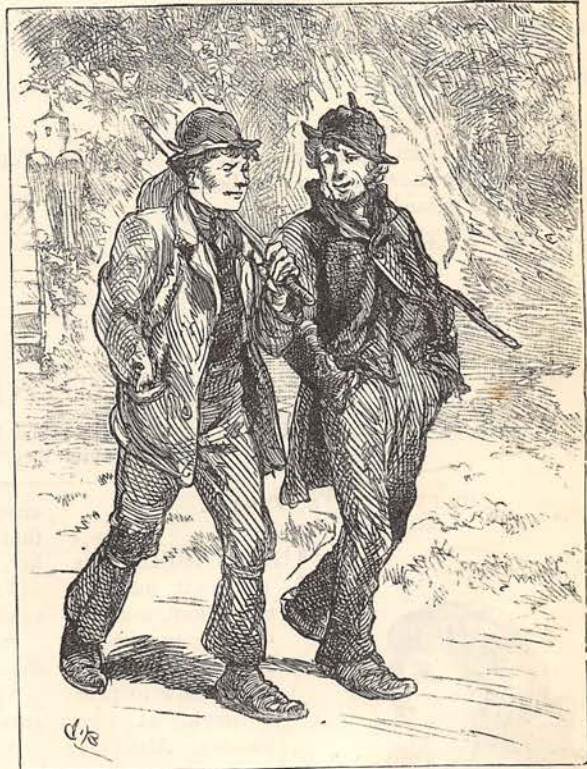
A dingy haversack and dusty garments may make even an honest junior seem like a beggar. Calling at a house in a lonely part of a well-known Yorkshire dale, to ask where I could get refreshment, the girl shut the door abruptly, and said nothing. To a second knock it opened again, and two timid women appeared, the elder in the rear shouting, "Seven miles further on!"—a pleasant answer for a hungry man!

A more civil shepherd's wife, to whom I told my story an hour later, said they were not "particular at Beggarsmond" (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 and 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 moralise anew on the old theme of the universe and the individual. "Chats with a road-side 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



"GIVE US A BIT O' POETRY, MATE!" (p. 288).

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 wells and sun-dials, the 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."

EDWIN GOADBY.

WHEN MARTENS FOLLOW SPRING.

[To this Song was awarded the Prize of Three Guineas offered by the Editor of CASSELL'S MAGAZINE for the best Song, suitable for music.]



N the roof-tree sparrows chattered,
And the gathering martens cried ;
Autumn's gold the glades bespattered,
As a lover's arts I plied—

As I pleaded, "Oh, belov'd one ! on my bosom fold thy wing."

"Yea," she answered—looking upward—"when the martens follow Spring."

So I watched the snowflakes falling,
With a gladness naught could chill .
In the warmth of hope forestalling
Joys which patience must fulfil.

For, within, I whispered lowly, "To this breast my love will cling

When the blossoming hawthorn reddens, and the martens follow Spring."

Soon the violet doffed her cover,
And the snowdrop rang her bell ;
Catkins tressed the hazels over,
And the gorse flamed on the fell.

Then I knelt, and whisp'ring, pleaded, "Lo, belov'd, the thrushes sing !"

Faint she answered, "For me *never* will the martens follow Spring."

Close I looked, and on her forehead

Marked the pencillings of pain ;

Saw her limpid eyes full storèd,

Like fringed pools o'erfed with rain.

And I cried aloud, sore stricken, "Oh, belov'd one ! stay thy wing !

For life cometh, cometh surely, when the martens follow Spring."

They are chattering, chattering gaily,

As their nests they mend with care ;

And I watch them, watch them daily,

With a dumbly blank despair ;

For they home returned from roaming, but my love, on tired wing,

Had just mounted up for ever, when the martens followed Spring.

MARIAN PENDLEBURY.

SWEET CHRISTABEL.

By ARABELLA M. HOPKINSON, Author of "The Probation of Dorothy Travers," "Pardoned," "In a Minor Key," &c. &c.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

ABSENT YET PRESENT.



CHRISTABEL rises the next morning early, and, mindful of the prophecies last night, walks to the window to take a look at the weather. Alas ! the window is one sheet of ice, and snow is on the ground. Not very much, only a thin powdering, but still sufficient to spoil the ice, which will be quite thick

enough to bear to-day ; and then she remembers that she has forgotten to bring her skates with her.

At breakfast she is greeted with the news that skating is to be the order of the day.

"And I, stupidly, never brought my skates with me," she exclaims.

"I dare say we shall be able to find you a pair," answers Lady Lithsdale.

But when, breakfast over, Algy Molyneux brings her all the skates he can find, they are either too large or too small. Piers, standing by, notes the look of disappointment on her face, and before any one can make a suggestion, has offered himself to walk into Crockley, the nearest town—the roads are too slippery for driving—and buy her a pair.

"I want to catch the midday post," he continues, "so I will be off at once."