

Comment by the Editor

TRAMPS

Many boys have planned to be soldiers, explorers, salesmen, or some other kind of hero who goes places and sees things; but whoever heard of a boy who wanted to be a vagabond. A fellow might as well aspire to be a pauper. Somehow tramps never appear in the youthful vision of future greatness. Vagrancy does not commend itself as a career. Maybe that is because most folks are ambitious, while hobos typify indolence. It is natural to build castles, not hovels. Who wants to walk when he might soar?

And yet there are and always have been tramps. Not that they set out to be tramps. Their plight is more circumstantial than achieved. Perhaps vagabondage is a kind of escape from the tedium of steady employment, a natural reaction against the coercion of necessity. Jack London rebelled against hard work and went off with Kelly's army of the idle poor upon a hilarious jaunt across the continent. There is freedom, relaxation, and irresponsibility in the life of the road, a pleasant relief from the restraint, the tension, and the duty of earning a living. The realm of bondage is just across the way from vagabondage and the barrier between is neither broad nor strong in many

places. Now and again the most sedate of men will respond to what is boyish, venturesome, or casual in their nature and take surcease from irksome toil to go where they may watch the human pageant calmly and apart.

It was in the spirit of farce that the hobo convention at Britt was conceived. For a day or two, busy journalists, printers, "tourists", and bums reverted to the irresponsibility of youth and sought amusement in pretense. Like boys at play they banished care in imaginary pseudonymity. Emulation of the traits of tramps not only suited the mood of the make-believe hobos, but provided opportunity to parody the times.

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