

A Tramp s Own Ritual

Q. Who comes here?

A. A poor, worthless candidate for charity, who begs to have and receive a part of the free lunch of this town set apart for regular customers, as many thousand tramps have done before me.

Q. How do you expect to gain the rights and privileges?

A. By being a man too lazy to work, not ashamed to beg, and under the tongue of generally bad report.

Q. Where can this report be had of you?

A. In the police reports and inebriate asylums.

Q. From whence came you?

A. From a town in Texas called Booze.

Q. Then you are a regular tramp I perceive?

A. I am so taken and arrested wherever I go.

Q. How do you know you are a regular tramp?

A. By being often arrested and tried and never acquitted, and expect to be arrested and tried and convicted again.

Q. Where were you first prepared to be a tramp?

A. In a small bar room adjoining my place of abode.

Q. How were you prepared?

A. By being kicked and cuffed around until divested of nearly all my clothes, having been previously deprived of all my money and diamonds.

Q. What first induced you to become a tramp?

A. That I might travel all over the land and indulge my ravenous appetite for beer and sponge my living from an easily humbugged public.

Q. How am I to know you to be a tramp?

A. By the size and laziness of my feet, by the size and color of my nose, and by signs, grips and words?

Q. What are words?

A. Certain plausible tales that will best serve to induce the lady of the house to give up her cakes and pies.

Q. What are signs?

A. Dirty face and hands, torn and dirty clothes, with a bad limp in either leg.

Q. What is a grip?

A. A tight hold on anything portable that can be turned into ready cash.

Q. Will you give me the grip?

A. No; get one on some other fellow.

Q. How did you first gain admission to this town?

A. By a good long tramp at low twelve the time when all policemen are called from labor to refreshments.

Q. How were you received?

A. By a cop, just on the point of taking a Manhattan eye-opener.

Q. What did he do with you?

A. He put me in the cooler in due form.

Q. What was next done with you?

A. He conducted me around from East to West, to the court house, and told me to stand erect and face the judge.

Q. What did the judge say to you?

A. He told me to say my name and promise to obey the law, after which he ordered me to take a step to the left and follow the cop to the place from whence I came.

Q. What was then said to you?

A. I was asked whether I would be off or from.

Q. From what unto what?

A. From this town to the next quite quickly.

Pass.

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