

The Wiles ... of the Beggar

Conditions are such that no unfortunate man, woman or child need ask the public for aid in the city of Lincoln. So if you listen to a tale of woe on the street corner and fish out a quarter in response, do not continue your homeward journey with a sort of glow of secret philanthropy permeating your inner conscienceness. Instead just remember the chances are you have been worked.

If you are a personal friend of the suppliant and know the circumstances it is a different matter, but even then it is far better to inform the chief of police or Secretary Prevey of the charity association.

The latter will make immediate efforts to relieve the suffering one and in addition may be able to provide work. Whenever those philanthropic feelings come on it might be well to call up the secretary by telephone and allow him to judiciously place the alms which you have to bestow.

For the city of Lincoln has not one professional beggar. But frauds and sharks are kicked off of every freight train and their wiles are legion.

Perhaps the shrewdiest fakir that ever struck the capital city was captured by Officer Joseph Mitchell about a year ago. To the casual observer this mendicant, squatting on the pavement, was doubled up like a jack knife as if with palsy. His legs were curled up under him, his hands resembling the talons of a bird of prey, were pressed against the lapels of his ragged coat. He was a heart rending, pocket-book-loosening spectacle.

Officer Mitchell looked upon the deformed one and was straightway moved with pity. Intending to take him in out of the cold the policeman reached down and picked him up.

"The fellow gave me a sort of malicious leer," said Officer Mitchell in telling of the matter afterwards, "but I didn't notice it much at the time. Finally I got his legs straightened out and was walking him to the station when I noticed that one of his arms was uncurling. I stooped over, he was a medium sized man, and all at once he aimed a right hander straight at me. I tapped him once and after that he came along all right.

"That fellow was the smoothest beggar I ever saw. He was a professional. No actor on the stage could perform like he could. He would drop down into that doubled up position and if a man had a nickle he couldn't pass him without getting it out and dropping it into the fellow's distorted palm. He fooled me."

This mendicant was given a liberal jail sentence and threatened with further prosecution if he did not leave the city. There is no doubt that many a philanthropist contributed to his support and felt the better for the deed.

Tramps with hard luck stories are nearly always imposters. The deserving seek the police or the charity organization and never fail to get aid. As a general thing the fellows with the blood curdling tales of woe seek their fortunes in the smaller towns and in the rural districts.

The dodge that succeeds best in Lincoln is the child-deserted-by-its-parents-scheme. The beggars move up close to the city limits and encamp. In the party are children, usually both boys and girls, taught to beg from house to house. They invade the city limits with tales that cause tears of pity to fall from the eyes of affectionate mothers and set matter-of-fact business men to thinking. After their day's work they go back to their masters and are petted or scolded according to practical results.

The little fakirs tell all sorts of stories and are well drilled so that they fall easily into their various roles. They are taught to elude the officers and return safely to their abettors without bringing in their wake the minions of the law.

Of course it is just a little while until the children begin to note information

about their benefactors much prized by thieves and burglars. The next step in degradation is generally picking up articles of small value. Then they gradually perfect their education and emerge full fledged into the world of graft.

Smearing an arm with acid, causing a painful sore and wearing formidable bandages is a very common scheme. When arrested these bandages are removed and the injured member soon recovers. Some of the beggars are positively heroic in enduring the torture simply for the sake of gain.

Plaster of paris moulds are frequently worn by people who are uninjured. In this way sympathy is aroused. Genuine cripples are numerous and always express surprise when arrested. They think that misfortune has given them a perfect right to beg and make no secret of their disgust when their vocation is stopped.

Deserving cases are provided with light employment by the authorities. But when once the begging habit has been formed the injured one nearly always skip out to seek aid elsewhere. It is so much easier to work the dear public after the art is thoroughly mastered.

Mendicants of the professional sort have nearly all been eradicated from the city. During fair time, public gatherings and rallies some of them take advantage of the preoccupation of the police and start out again but their cases are generally attended to when the excitement ceases.

Erratic giving can do no good in Lincoln except when the generous one has specific knowledge of the conditions. On the other hand it is capable of much mischief. The professional beggar is always near allied to the crook or criminal and by encouraging one class, the other profits also.

Systematic giving through the regular channels is the only intelligent way and will produce the best results. Of course it is not spectacular or dramatic but exactly fills the requirements of that time honored admonition of the Great Alms-giver, "Let not your right hand know what your left hand doeth."

TONS AND TONS.

I thought of the good old question that visitors used to ask the school when I was a boy.

"Which weighs more, a pound of feathers or a pound of lead?" said I.

"They weigh the same. A pound is a pound," said the children.

"Correct," said I. "Now, which weighs more, a ton of feathers or a ton of coal?"

"A ton of feathers," chorused they, showing that the innocent are not necessarily undiscerning.—Town Topics.



Miss Lillie McCauley, whose latest portrait appears above, is the chum of Miss Alice Roosevelt, daughter of the president. The girls were at school together. Miss McCauley is the daughter of Col. Edward McCauley of the census office. She is related by blood to many of the most prominent Virginia and Maryland families.

Color Styles ... in Horses

It was a countryman who made the rather startling discovery that there are no sorrel horses in this city. He had come on from his native town—where the sorrel horse of his grandfathers is still in vogue—to buy a pair of carriage horses. In the course of his equine shopping hundreds of horses were shown him, and it was not until he had requested a dealer to bring out a certain pair that he had looked at earlier in the day that he made the discovery.

"Which pair is it?" asked the dealer.

"That sorrel and gray," explained the countryman. "Sorrel and gray," repeated the dealer, and for a time he remained silent as if in great perplexity of mind. "I guess you must mean that cross-matched pair—the golden chestnut and the flea-beaten gray;" and when the pair were brought into the ring his surmise proved to be correct.

"If that 'golden chestnut,' as you call him, is not a sorrel, then I've never seen one," declared the countryman.

"Oh, that's all right," explained the dealer, "he's a sorrel—a beautiful sorrel at that—up where you come from; but in New York city—never! Why, he would eat his head off four times before we could sell him to a New Yorker as a sorrel. They won't stand for 'em. They don't like the name. It sounds too provincial for their taste. And you know as well as I do that even when we were boys the old sorrel had a bad reputation—'no bottom, no courage,' they used to say.

"It's a curious thing about a horse's color anyway—that is, so far as it influences his market value here in New York. This pair you are looking at now is a good illustration. Their color scheme is about as near the correct one as you could find—some buyers might want a blue instead of a flea-bitten gray to go with that golden chestnut, but there are just as many more who would prefer them as they stand. For ourselves, I'm most willing to wager that we would never look twice at that gray horse if we were not influenced by the fashion that this city sets. In my native town—and I suppose the same is true of yours—we always considered an old freckled gray (they don't become 'flea-bitten' until they reach New York) about the meanest and cheapest beast a man could ride behind. Here they are looked upon as the smartest thing

in horseflesh that can be had. I've handled horses long enough to know that no good horse is a bad color; but for bottom and for wear and tear in all sorts of climates, I'm ready to concede that that same old-fashioned freckled rascal can outlive them all.

"I know that you want a pair of horses that are considered the proper type and color here in New York, and are not going to be affected by what your neighbors say or what I say. But what would nine in every ten of your horse-fancying townspeople say if they saw a man driving a cross-matched pair? They would say he was color-blind. Take those men that travel through six counties with a pair of compasses in the pockets—looking for a bay horse with a white star on his forehead or a four-inch white stocking on his off hind leg; what would they say to the crazy quilt pairs that are sold here every day?

"I do not mean to imply that we city folks know more about horses than the countrymen. On the questions of an animal's soundness I should just as readily accept the opinion of a farmer who has been 'tinker-in' around horses' all his life as that of a city veterinary who makes \$10,000 a year. When it comes to sacrificing uniformity in action and conformation, however, to a white star or a white stocking, I think we are wise where the countryman is foolish. I can't think now of any combination of horse colors that we could not put together and sell if the animals were evenly gaited and had the same conformation. As for that sorrel horse, why, he's a 'golden chestnut' here for the same reason that the red-haired girl up in Cattaraugus county is a Titian blonde in New York. And you can't go wrong on them, sir," said the dealer, suddenly lapsing into his professional vernacular, "as sweet a going pair as you ever drove behind, bold going and cheerful, and both as sound as a brass bell."—New York Evening Post.

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