Omaha's Hackmen and the Service They Render to the Public

out through the back door to have his personal and trusty chariotees give him a night ride through the throbbing streets of ancient Rome, backmen have been established institutions among advanced peoples. "Sez I," the philosopher of the local tribe, puts it thus:

"Where there ain't no backs there ain't no civilization, is what I sez. Stanley didn't find no backs in Africa, did he? Nor Peary didn't find none up around the north pole, either, sez I. And there ain't any running around Uncle Leopold's preserve up on the Congo, If there was we wouldn't hear so much about practicing dissection on live people. Folks won't stand for that, sez I, where the conveniences of people what know are to be found."

Necessary to Urban Life.

In Omaha, as in every city of metropolitan pretensions, the street back is an established institution; and the hackmen, as a rule, are fixtures who in a few years conto be known by many people. They are not only a necessary convenience of modera life, but are the bearers of secrets and bits of peculiar knowledge which if dropped promiscuous would cause many an upheaval. They know the streets, every nook and turning, and can find any given place in the darkest night. They know the general run of hack users much better than they know the streets even. Their acquaintance with men from up and down the state who visit Omaha is wide in extent and intimate in character. Good and bad people all look alike to the hackman, with the exception that nine out of ten of the drivers would rather deal exclusively with decent people If that were possible. The shady ones spend money more freely, but they demand more attention and make trouble five times where the ordinary citizen will once.

Old timers in the business will tell you that the golden days of "hacking" are gone. They recall with fond recollection the days when a dollar was hardly counted as fair pay for any sort of a ride. Those were the days when the city had not quite arrived and the town had not vanished. There were no city ordinances that out much figure, and if there had been the people whe used hacks would not have paid any attention to them. In the days before the one-horse street cars arrived a few pennies were to be gathered by the man with a carriage for hire. Circus day, when all the population was out to enjoy itself, and determined to spend money for the accumulation of all the joy there was to be ment that about all of them stick to the had, used to be looked forward to with finish, rich anticipation by the backmen. Every fellow with the price wanted to take his girl to the big show in style, and two or three couples were taken out in every load. Horses had to earn their oats that day, dashing back and forth between "downtown" and "the grounds" in clouds of dust. At the close of circus day he was a poor hackman who could not count up from \$25 to \$50 as the result of his day's hus-

Thrifty Drivers Do Well.

Many of the drivers of the early pleasure vehicles saved their money until they became owners of their own horses and rigs. A very justifiable pride was taken in the possession of a swell four-wheeler when that style of rig began to come out in all its shining leather and stuffed cushion glory. To wash it until it shone and to care for if with much pains and unlimited polishing was a labor of leve. And the horses, team was indeed envied of his fellows. Hackmen with the proper qualities to make away to the bad in their estimation. the business a success have always been wise in horse lore; many of them veterin- business dealings with hackmen as a part under any and all circumstances.

Wisdom Is Theirs.



JOHN B. CARVER. ing degree. Physically, the drivers wear like iron, largely owing to their outdoor life and association with horses. Very rarely do they die, and the life is so attractive to men of just the right tempera-

Views of an Old Timer.

"Jack" Carney is the oldest man on "the boot" in Omaha, as to service and years on earth. His memoirs, if carefully and truthfully written, would furnish food for the keenest sociologists to digest. The deductions to be drawn should undoubtedly be enlightening to that half of the world that doesn't have even a hazy idea as te how the other half lives. At 50 years of age Carney has come to be a philosopher in thought and an advocate of the better side of the hackmen's lives in action. He puts his beliefs thusly;

"Hackmen draw all too much blame for other folks' failings. It is natural that this should be so to a certain extent, and up to any reasonable measure we do not object to shouldering a share of trouble, to ease the other chap. But the general public that does not come into close touch too, were the source of much satisfaction with us-especially the women who are to the drivers. The man with the prize altogether home bodies-get many a tale handed to them which puts the hackman "Few people outside of those who have

arians of no little cleverness, not taught in of their daily life know that we do not the schools, but check full of practical haul men who are drunk, to use the blunt knowledge of what to do for an animal word, unless a personal friend is with the party, or unless we know him ourselves, and all about him. That is a rule established in self-defense. The reasons for it Wise in the ways of the world hackmen are many. A man who is incapably drunk have been and are. Changes in human na- will mess up a hack almost invariably; he ture they never look for, but it is a pretty may not have a cent when he strikes a swift game of intended bunce that they hackman to haul him home; he is likely to cannot catch up with. Having figured the be quarrelsome and hard to handle. Now, vagaries of human nature down to a nicety, about the money part: The man when he a simple change of label on any of the comes to, at home or wherever he ordered species does not go far toward fooling the himself taken, will say that he had money professional handler of a street carriage, before he got the hack, and his friends He can see a fare even if the same be know that he started out with money. He walking in a fog, and as a rule he can may have been in all sorts of places and tell just about what the fare is going to in every kind of company before he took be worth. The "rounder" with the coin refuge with the hackman. He forgets and a disposition to let go is the special where he spent his last change, or cannot delight of the man who is tired of riding remember who he was with. What more himself, yet is always willing to give any- natural than that he should take a chance game is all played, the men in this bust- respect Armour represents a large class of lines. Tucker has been on the Henshaw body else a ride. Wedding or funeral so- shot at the last friend he could find, and cial call or exploring trip-it is all one to lay the blame offhand on the driver, who formed would suppose." the man on the box. Blow hot or blow cold, perhaps took a verbal promise to pay for blizzard or duststorm, burning sun or his work and his trouble? See the posdrenching rain, he will take you where you sibilities for ill to the hackman in such a want to go; and the rougher the weather situation as that, especially as there is the more likely you are to need him. The nearly always an excuse to be made to of valuable experience while perambulat- not stand for the same. real hackman has never yet been driven some one, at home or elsewhere. Thus, to cover by the weather. He faces it as while playing the really friendly part, the a matter of course, and ofttimes the worst hackman accumulates a smudge of bad men go not at all a bad sort. He takes "Al" Brown and "Jim" Tucker, who men indiscriminately. weather is his best harvest time. In this, reputation that will rarely be forgotten. as in many other things, his life differs But I often think that if the record is from that of the ordinary oitisen in strik- squared, as we are promised, when the



JOHN W. EVERETTA



AL WEIDNER.



AL SMITH

sibilities himself. But in their closemouthed characteristics the old knights of "the boot" are but typical of all the tribe of real hackmen. They constitute one of the half dozen or so guilds in a community that cannot violate confidences. They are

One of the Real Characters.

Alfred Wallace, better known to the hack users of Omaha, and of this section of the west, as "Sez I," is one of the noted drivers of the city. His remarks at the beginning of this article are but an indication of his somewhat unpolished but direct way of reasoning. It is only a few months since a well known councilman missed the last car to his section of the city and hired "Sez I" to draw him home. Afterward the hackman, with the perennial smile, found a \$20 gold piece in his pocket. Telling about it afterward, he said:

"Sez I to myself, sez I, there was no whole collection to a Boston party. councilman out home. Hence, sez I, the hackmen that the development of the street didn't feel no different to an ordinary will get one," said Jim Tucker, and those may need the money; so he gets it, of conclusion. course. He acts right about it, but, sez I There are about two score hacks availto him, any other driver would have done able for street duty in Omaha, and about the same thing, sez I, being the circum- twenty members of the union own their stances were as they were; and that's all carriages. H. G. Rockfellow owns ten of there is to it. So the ongtong cordyale, the street backs, which are handled by as we call it, was maintained, and that's hired drivers. The carriages of all ownour object, sez I to the boys; and they ers do a good deal of double duty, with a

agreed likewise." "Jim" Tucker indersed what Wallace shifts. opined touching the gold piece, and "Tom" Cronin, another night fog pllot, who cares for the back travelers who start from in or about the Millard, also voted aye.

Well Known on Their Stand.

About the Thirteenth and Douglas corner Fred Myers and Alex Russell have been found at that "stand."

"Bob" Drake is known to the men on the pet name of "Sleepy Fred" among his local union are: intimates when they get their joshing clothes on. He is anything but sleepy when a fare is in sight. Clint De Moss, secretary of the union, may be casually alluded to as "Soldier," because of early

military training. If he had cared to practice up on that end of life De Moss might now have been at least a drill sergeant. He has a good eye for effect and a love for a good horse that would have made him an ideal cavalryman.

Swells of the Guild.

The Beau Brummels of the local aggregation of backmen-and there are quite a few who are more than passingly handsome-are "Johnny" Dugan (Everett) and John B. ("Doc") Carver. As exponents of the sartorial art these two men sport a pulchritude which might win the envy of even an eastern congressman. "Dugan," as Everett is best known, has a pretty turn of wit, not at all dutted by the possession of a bank account. Carver has been considered something of a mogul by chance passers who have noticed him in front of the Paxton, alert but quiet, well dressed and ready. He is really the part, too, for he owns a couple of fine rigs and enjoys a good reputation as a steady going chap who will discharge his duty expeditiously and well.

Story Told by the Kids.

Herman Borsky and Ray Bishop, who have their stand at the Paxton, are the "kids" of the local hackmen. Borsky was one of the jurors who tried Pat Crowe recently and Bishop is an officer of the union. Both are quite well broken and tractable and in time hope to be admitted to the inner circle of yarn spinners among the veterans. It is said to have been one of these boys that started a story told on Amos Bray, another reinsman. Bray, so the story goes, was called to a private residence to take a sick woman to the train. He was keeping his eyes on his pair of highsteppers, and when he heard the back door apparently close he drove off. When he arrived at his destination he got down and opened the door to let his fare out. He found only two pillows. A feather would have knocked Amos to the bad, and when he got back to the house and found a wondering woman waiting for an explanation he wilted like a man hit with a piledriver. The other lads say Bray put up an excuso that would have fulled even vinegary Xantippe into good humor. He never lays his head on a pillow now without searching it. He says it makes him light-headed to even see a pillow casing on a clothesline,

Drivers at the Depot.

"Joe" Suttley is the veteran of the depot paid for their work all right, as a rule, bunch. With his mates he has seen many a but their customers must necessarily often chap come off the train "like a h-l-roaring trust the drivers with secrets that in some tiger," only to start home later "tame 'nuff instances would brew much trouble if t' eat out'n yer hand." The depot drivers divulged. A hackman rarely volunteers have seen, too, many alling travelers unevidence, except it be to clear up a crime loaded for the hospitals and have helped to or where a person's liberty is at stake and tenderly put them at ease in a carriage and fair play demands that the facts be un- then have carefully driven them to the buildings where treatment of the ills of life is the only specialty. Hospital calls are no uncommon thing among the street hackmen. Strong physically, with a large vein of sentiment and a kindly feeling for others in distress, they never fall in satisfying those who call them in such service.

Omaha's Hack Equipment.

There are no hansoms in Omaha today: nearly all are four-wheelers, with a few coupes. The two-wheelers with the man up top behind had quite a vogue here a few years back. Jim Stevenson, the veteran liveryman, put a large number on the streets, but after a time he sold the

It is the consensus of opinion am councilman must have got a cross-eyed car service has had no very bad effect on blink at the shiner he staked me to. It their business. "A man who wants a hack simoleon in me mitt, but, sez I, the man who heard the expression agree with its

change of horses for the day and night

Pioneer Union Men.

The Omaha,nackmen set the pace for the whole country in the matter of organization. It was in 1894 that the local street men got together in an organization for the Few patrons of the Her Grand but know betterment of the business and for mutual Henry Corbett and Ernest Underwood, protection. So successful did the effort prove that it was soon extended to other cities and it is now coextensive with the fixtures for so long that passers-by would country. The Hack and Cab Drivers' miss them if they failed to show up. Union of America is affiliated with the tensiveness of this burg is part of their had done service every day in the year, "Jack" Priest and "Johany" are also to be American Federation of Labor and is an important organization. At present the local union has a membership of about the boot as "Missouri," because he rather forty, including every man engaged in the likes to be shown. Fred Trutteman has business in Omaha. The officers of the

President-Al Smith. Vice President-Joseph Suttley. Secretary-Ray Bishop. Treasurer-John W. Everett. Recording Secretary-Clint De Moss.



ALFRED WALLACE

Bili Armour a Booster.

ing about the precincts of old and modern



ness will not fare as badly as the unin- old-timers who cannot separate themselves beat longer than either of the others. Only from the idea that the richness and ex- last May he disposed of a carriage that own lives. No one can put up an uncon- with rare exceptions, for sixteen times "Bill" Armour never made any money tradicted "knock" on Omaha while such an twelve months. These first class four-

Omaha. A canny lad is "Bill," but as Regulars of Long Standing.

in pork, but he has gained a fair amount advocate is in hearing. They simply will wheelers cost \$1,100 today, so it is not every year a new one can be purchased; and it is very evident, too, that such a carriage cannot be placed at the mercy of drunken

CLINT DEMOSS

almost as much pride in the city and its stand with Carney at the Henshaw, and Brown is second to Carney in point of development as his namesake of Chicago have so stood for many years, backed up years of service. He could, if he would, ever did in his own achievements. In this his reasoning with instances along similar spin a few yarns of quite interesting pos-



HERMAN BORSKY.

Quaint Happenings in Every Day historical hall tells the history of the plow, low of 10 years, had greatly admired his Love Touches in Old Age. ROOKLYN papers tell of a million- which is the object of much curiosity from mother's singing and it was a loss to him

aire resident there who lives with visitors. his wife in a handsome home. They are both past the middle were young and struggling.

is told at Innsbruck. Two persons were was 288 pounds. The man clung to the flyascending Mount Etivo, which has an altitude of about 6,100 feet. Near the top a dog attracted their attention by his plaintive cries and his obvious efforts to induce took the road indicated by the dog. The animal kept in front, and led them to a narrow ravine, at the bottom of which they found Herr Bugoot, a professor in the Lycee of Lubeck, lying dangerously injured by a

Life Saving by a Dog.

mens. Both legs were fractured. He is now lying in the hospital of Arco. Plow of U. S. Swords.

fall while searching for mineralogical speci-

A plow made of swords used in the American civil war has been placed in the treaty was signed regulating the indem-The plow was made in America twenty-five years ago, but it is only recently that it was presented to this city for the purpose of having it placed in the Washington A. Cunningham, wife of the finest object lessons in the power of high

The emblem of peace and war is composed of ten different blades, so arranged part of the plow, but also the handles. An Not a word did she utter under any circum- the whole blossoming and changing into a inscription attached to the wall of the stances. Her only child, a bright little ful- thousand cascades.

Kite Lifts Man Thirty Feet. one custom which they established in been experimenting for some time at his his mother, he demanded that she sing. days when they were poor. The old laboratory at Beinn Bhreagh, Baddock, carried a load comprising flying lines, returned. dangling ropes and a rope ladder weighing A remarkable story of life saving by a dog sixty-two pounds. Thus the total weight

Youngster Kills Giant.

ing line as he was lifted into the air.

Mitchell Shadrick of Columbia, Mo., a them to follow him. The two travelers giant, said to be seven feet in height, was almost instabily killed Christmas night the archbishop advanced with due solemnity four miles west of Columbia by an 18-year- and placed the crown upon the head of the old boy. Henry Jonas, who brought him statue, while a military band stationad outdown with a stone no larger than a wal- side played the royal march and a salute nut, thrown from a distance of forty feet. was fired from the fort. Shadrick had struck at a younger brother or Jonas and, it is claimed, picked up a tion and the performance of national dances club with the intention of assaulting the in the market place. latter. The lad's missile struck him bedead. No scar was found on his body. No coffin in Columbia was long enough kings. hall in Geneva, Switzerland, in which the to contain the body of the victim and it

was found necessary to make one to order.

Joyful Christmas Gift.

especially to miss her cheerful voice. Boylike, forgetting the misery he was inflicting, he appealed to her again and again to age, but the happy couple retain Prof. Alexander Graham Bell, who has sing to him. Christmas day, at home with lady cuts the old gentleman's hair. Econ- Canada, with flying kites of the tetrahedral through the motions of singing, at which omy of this kind at one time was a neces- form of construction, succeeded last the boy had often laughed. To her great sity with them and though that was a long Wednesday in getting his latest designed surprise and astonishment of the boy the time ago the wife every two weeks says to kite, which he has named the "Frost King," strains of "Jesus, Lover of My Soul" rang her life partner: "Come, dear, it's time I to lift a man named McDearmid, weighing out in the stillness of the country home. cut your hair." And while the scissors snip 165 pounds, to a height of thirty feet and The boy, overjoyed, ran to tell his father they chat contentedly of times when they supporting him there steadily. The "Frost and the day was the happiest Christmas of King" itself weighs sixty-one pounds and that household, for the mother's voice had

> Costly Religious Crown Seventeen hours of religious services preceded the crowning of the statue of "The

> Virgin of the Pillar" in the Cathedral of Twenty-two altars were in use, services being continuous at all of them, and at last

> The ceremony was followed by a follifica-

The crown was presented by the queen hind the left ear. After running about in mother and ladies of the aristocracy of circle for several minutes he fell down Madrid and is valued at \$150,000, being more costly than some of the crowns worn by

A Great Explosion.

The recent firing of sixteen and one-half tens of nitroglycerin in Aboukir bay was a Three years ago last September Mrs. great spectacle and considered one of the historical hall which saw the last treaty grocer at Majenica, Ind., suddenly lost her explosives on record. The force was so speech. All efforts of physicians and friends great that the ocean was actually lifted proved unavailing and the family had set- from its bed, the water flung aloft in tretled down to the assumption that the mendous volume with such velocity that together as to make not only the working mother had lost her vocal powers for good. the mass burst into a gigantic waterspout,



TRED COWLER