

### Last Call for Lunch

During the course of a brief newspaper career I have had many varied experiences. One of these impressed me as being very singular. This incident, of which I am about to write, occurred during the time I was serving as reporter on a Canadian daily newspaper.

"First call for lunch."

These words assailed my ears one afternoon as I was strolling along a road near a railway yard. On investigating the source of this unexpected call, I found myself in a graveyard of broken, dilapidated box-cars in a section of the yard. There in a clearing was a motley group of "Box-car Knights," who gathered in a semi-circle around a fire. Suspended over the fire was an immense cauldron from which the tempting aroma of Irish Stew incensed the atmosphere. Accepting an invitation to join the feast which was about to begin, I learned that I had stumbled upon an encampment, which is more commonly known among the "Gentlemen of the Road," as "The Jungle." The encampment consisted of ten enclosures rudely constructed from railroad ties.

The spokesman of the party, which numbered approximately thirty men, introduced himself as "Steve." In his balmy days he had occupied an important post in the office of a Vancouver brokerage house, but, when the depression struck that section of the country, was forced to seek his fortune elsewhere. For the past year he had been "on the road." His oration was interrupted by the appearance of a tall, angular individual, who had been in search of tea, which was necessary to make the menu complete. The newcomer, hailed as "Professor," explained to the gathering, in language which would make a college graduate turn green with envy, that after considerable exploration he was able to secure sufficient tea from the kind householders in the city to meet their immediate demands. I afterwards learned that the gentleman with the extensive vocabulary was a University graduate, and, until two years previous, when he was forced by circumstances to take the road, had held an important position in a prominent business firm.

Various members of the party, I discovered, were natives of foreign countries, and were on their way to seaports in hopes of working their way back to their home

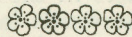


lands. Many others were Canadian born and their present predicament was due to circumstances, but all seemed to be optimistic that the future would bring better times and took the situation very philosophically.

When I inquired as to what means they employed to get food, the "Professor" replied that when stopping in a city where there is a "jungle" they generally succeed in securing enough material to prepare the "Hobo Stew," which they were at present enjoying. Lots are drawn and each man has a certain article to procure, and a house to house canvass for carrots, onions, cabbages, potatoes, etc. is started. All the essentials having been procured for the preparation of the stew, a cook is appointed to superintend the process of preparing the meal.

When the last morsel of food had been devoured, cigarettes were passed around. Then began a session of swapping experiences, which, if they could be published, would make the "Arabian Nights" seem like a bed time story. One member of the cosmopolitan assembly produced a deck of cards and a game of Auction Bridge was soon in progress. Certainly it was the oddest quartette of bridge players I ever hope to see this side of Mars. One member of the foursome, a native of "Ould Ireland," was clad in a pair of what were once white duck trousers and a derby hat. His partner, a youth of twenty years, when invited to join in the game, had been in the act of repairing his badly-worn trousers, and, the occasion not being a formal one he had not troubled to don them, but was dressed in his underclothes only. The other players were attired in equally informal garb. Just when everyone was bidding recklessly the whistle of an outbound freight train suddenly split the air. The quartette of bridge players and several other members of the party dashed madly to their huts to pick up their belongings before leaving the "Jungle" for regions unknown.

—G. G., '34



A man never shows his own character so plainly as by his manner of portraying another's.—*Richter.*

Treat your friend as if he might become an enemy.

—*Publius Syrus*