

CHAPTER XII

CONFIRMED WANDERERS OR "TRAMPS"

ALMOST all "tramps" are "homeless men," but by no means are all homeless men tramps. The homeless man may be an able-bodied workingman, without a family; he may be a runaway boy, a consumptive temporarily stranded on his way to a health resort, an irresponsible feeble-minded or insane man, a professional beggar, or a criminal,—but unless he is also a wanderer, he is not a "tramp." It can, therefore, only lead to confusion in any discussion of the so-called "tramp problem" of today if homeless men of the types mentioned and of the many others that may be found on the railroads or in the cheap lodging houses are classed as tramps when they have as yet no confirmed habits of wandering.

The organization of modern industry leads to the massing of thousands of nominally homeless workmen in the large cities. In order to avail themselves of opportunities for employment which may occur in any part of the country, these men must be able to shift quickly from one place to another; and so long as they can, either by stealing their way or by paying small fees to brakemen,

HOMELESS MEN

reach their changing places of employment with little or no personal expense, it is unlikely that they will voluntarily pay the regular rates. Hundreds of these workmen may, therefore, be found beating their way about the country, and at certain seasons when large numbers of them are needed at once in a particular section of the country, they have been known to take entire possession of a train, swarming onto it in great numbers and overpowering and controlling the engineer and other employes. More often, however, they are content to steal or bribe their way to their destination, individually and without resort to force. Railway officials admit that in estimating the number of "tramps" that they carry in the course of the year they include thousands of men whom they know to be bona fide workmen. These seasonal and shifting workmen, however, are not tramps and should not fairly be classed as such. Neither should other men who, with a legitimate purpose, are on their way to known destinations, nor should those others who are only accidentally or quite temporarily upon the railroads be so classed. These men may and unquestionably do present many problems to the railroads and to society at large; but so long as they have as yet no firmly established habits of wandering; so long as it is, so to speak, the mere accessibility of the railroads themselves which accounts for their presence upon them, they are not as yet tramps, and the problems they present are mainly

CONFIRMED WANDERERS OR "TRAMPS"

of prevention rather than of cure. These problems differ greatly from those presented by the true tramps,—by the men in whom habits of wandering are fixed and confirmed and who probably will not permanently withdraw from the road until they are compelled by force of law to do so.

However, while it is true that in the beginning there are very real differences between homeless men of the types referred to and true tramps, these differences soon disappear unless the men who are temporarily upon the road are soon withdrawn from it; for although a certain proportion of tramps step directly from normal social life into this other and abnormal mode of existence, by far the larger proportion of them are recruited from among homeless men; namely, from among men or boys who have already for some reason left their own family circles and have not yet returned to them or joined others. Such homeless men drift into tramp life not because of an instinct to wander which in the first instance causes them to seek the life, but because, having set out to find work or health, or having only accidentally drifted onto the road, they become accustomed to this manner of living and are later unwilling or unable to abandon it. The following case is a very typical one:

A. B. was a printer, aged 35; married and with four children. He had a good work record in his home city; he drank occasionally but not to excess and he was paying in instalments for a home of

HOMELESS MEN

his own when his wife, quite suddenly, died. Being unable to find a capable housekeeper he soon broke up his home and placed his children in institutions. In his intolerable loneliness following this action, he thought that he would be happier if he could go to some new place and find employment. He set out with this intention, but failing to secure work, and even more restless and lonely in this city than in his own, he went on to another. Still not finding work he went to a third city, in the meantime drinking considerably and becoming daily more shabby in appearance. When his money was exhausted he began to beat his way from city to city, constantly associating with tramps both on the railroads and in the cheap lodging houses. Within a few months he no longer even made a pretense of seeking work but frankly dropped to the level of the men with whom he traveled.

When we knew him this man had been drifting and wandering aimlessly about the country for four years. He was sodden with whiskey and so degraded physically, mentally, and morally that it was difficult to believe he had ever been the clean and useful citizen, with a family and a home of his own, which correspondence with his home city proved him to have been less than five years before. We did our best to save this man who had once been so well worth saving, but we did not succeed. In the course of his wanderings he had broken his left arm and, because of the condition

CONFIRMED WANDERERS OR "TRAMPS"

of his system through the use of whiskey, the bone could not be made to knit, and he could never hope to recover the use of the arm. In spite of this handicap, however, we felt that if he could be persuaded to give up his habits of drink and of wandering, the man might again possibly become self-supporting. We appealed to him through his love for the children he had abandoned, and he agreed to stop tramping and to take a drink cure. We furnished him with new clothing and he went to an institution where he remained for about two weeks; then he left and wandered onto the road again without returning to the Bureau office.

This is one case. Scores of others similar to it might be cited, which would show how readily able-bodied and capable workingmen degenerate into tramps when once they begin to steal rides and wander from place to place. And, as before stated, the workingman who leaves his home to seek employment is by no means the only man that the fatal accessibility of the railroads finally converts into a tramp. The seasonal laborer who in traveling to and from his changing places of employment associates with tramps, in the end may travel more than he works. The runaway boy, who repeats the experiment of tramping too often, becomes enamored of the life and never returns to his home. The consumptive, still ostensibly seeking health, wanders until he dies. The feeble-minded man drifts until he no longer remembers

HOMELESS MEN

where he really belongs. In fact, the tramp army is so continually growing by these accretions that any estimate of the number of true tramps upon the road at any given time must be a mere guess. The body is not static and a census is impossible. At just what point the bona fide workman who left his home at the beginning of a year seeking work, and who at the end of it is a tramp, changed from one to the other, no one can say with certainty—least of all the man himself, who will probably claim to be the workman long after it is evident to others that he is, in fact, the tramp.

Basing their estimates upon figures furnished by the railroads, some recent writers upon vagrancy have stated that there are probably not fewer than 500,000 "tramps" in America. Edmond Kelly, in his book entitled *The Elimination of the Tramp*, states:*

"This figure (500,000) is calculated by taking as a basis the number of tramps killed on the railroads every year and multiplying this number by the figure representing the proportion of trainmen killed in the year to the total number of trainmen employed. The number of trespassers killed annually on American railroads exceeds the combined total of passengers and trainmen killed annually."

The same basis of estimate is used by Orlando

* Kelly, Edmond: *The Elimination of the Tramp*, New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1908. Footnote, p. 1.

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CONCERNING 220 TRAMPS

CONJUGAL CONDITION	
.....	169
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wed.....	24
ced.....	2
ated.....	17
Total.....	220

AMOUNT OF SELF-SUPPORT	
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Total.....	220

VERIFICATION OF STORIES*	
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.....	54
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Total.....	220

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* Lewis, Orlando F.: V
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CONFIRMED WANDERERS OR "TRAMPS"

knew them, but 220, or less than one-fourth of the whole number, merit the name.

Like the beggars, these 220 men were from all classes of society and represented almost every degree of education and training. A much larger percentage of this group were college men or men and boys from very good homes, than was the case with the beggars. In other respects, too, they differed from the men of that group, fewer being criminal and more being, in a sense, only accidentally upon the road. "Degenerate workmen" among tramps were very numerous, not only those men previously described who had set out to find work and had deteriorated during the search for it, but also seasonal laborers (there were 21 of these) and a considerable number of peddlers, traveling salesmen, soldiers and other men the nature of whose employment had tended to confirm them in habits of wandering.

The nationality of these tramps is predominantly American. If the five Negroes in this group are included with the white Americans fully 76 per cent of the whole number listed are native born. In the entire group of the thousand homeless men only 62 per cent are American. In ages the tramps ranged from mere lads to men in the nineties, but almost 43 per cent were under the age of thirty. In the group of one thousand but 35 per cent were under thirty.

A comparison of the tables giving the conjugal condition of the tramps and of the thousand home-

HOMELESS MEN

less men, shows that the percentage of men widowed, divorced, or separated from their wives is slightly greater in the former group than in the latter.

Physically, the tramps varied from perfectly able-bodied young men to pitifully diseased and decrepit old ones.* It will be noticed that the proportion of the crippled and maimed among the tramps is high. Accidents while tramping were responsible for much of this crippling.†

According to their habits of tramping the men in this group fall into three fairly distinct classes; for exactly as men who drink to excess may do so continuously, or only at certain more or less regular times, or periodically, with intervals of months or even of years between their defections from sobriety, so tramps in their wandering are of similar habits. Some wander continuously, others only at particular times or seasons, and still others periodically with long intervals of entirely normal life between the attacks.

As an example of the first named type of wanderer—the man who tramps unceasingly—the following case may be given:

A young deaf mute, with an arm missing, came to the office one morning and asked for transportation to St. Paul. He knew no one in that city and would have no means of support upon his arrival

* For data concerning the physical and mental condition of the men, see Appendix A, Table 26, p. 304.

† See Chapter IV, The Crippled and Maimed and Chapter V, Industrial Accidents in Relation to Vagrancy.

CONFIRMED WANDERERS OR "TRAMPS"

there. For this reason we refused to send him. Instantly he changed his request to one for a ticket to a city in central Illinois; then to one in Iowa, then to one "anywhere out West," writing in explanation, "I've just come from the East." He was impatient of questions, but in addition to a few other facts we finally learned that he had been in Chicago less than three hours; nevertheless he wrote on a piece of paper, "I must go on; I cannot stay; I have nothing to do so I travel always. I do not stay anywhere. I must go before night." We refused to assist him to "travel always," offering instead several different forms of aid if he would remain in Chicago, but he would not consider staying and I have little doubt soon succeeded in begging from someone an amount sufficient to purchase a ticket to "somewhere."

The "I have nothing to do" may have explained in large part the restlessness of this particular man, but we dealt at the office with a number of men, and of women too, who were able-bodied and who might have worked, but who possessed, as this deaf mute did, a veritable mania for wandering. And usually, as in his case, they were quite indifferent as to the direction they should take or the method of their going if only they could go somewhere and at once. Very rarely could we persuade a tramp of this extreme type to remain in the city even for a single day to receive needed medical treatment or for any other reason, even though he himself might recognize

HOMELESS MEN

and admit the wisdom of our request. "I must go on before night," would still be the dogged and unreasoning reply to all our argument or entreaty.

Nothing but forcible arrest, to be followed probably in most cases by medical as well as correctional treatment, can bring to a halt these half-insane victims of restlessness. Our experience at the office, however, fortunately indicated that by no means all the men who may be classed as continual wanderers are of quite so extreme a type as this; and the total number of men who tramp without resting I believe to be far smaller than that of the second type of tramps,—those who wander only at special times or seasons, notably in the dull periods of their trades or in the spring and summer months of the year.

Among these men who wander only at certain times must be included the great majority of boy tramps. In this group, too, are many of the scores and hundreds of homeless men (other than seasonal workmen) who crowd the city lodging houses in winter and who disappear from them as if by magic in summer. Many inmates of poor-houses, too, leave these institutions in the spring-time to enjoy the freedom of life on the road during the mild weather. Always in April, in Chicago, or when the season was late, in May, we would have for a few days or a fortnight a noticeable increase in the number of homeless men applicants at the district office. In time we learned to recognize this as the signal that the annual

CONFIRMED WANDERERS OR "TRAMPS"

exodus of tramps from the county poorhouse had begun. In the late fall the same men (who were generally crippled, old, or diseased) would again apply for aid and would admit that they had been "tramping" in the interval. The first snow of November sent them back to the shelter of the poorhouse and we did not see them again until the following spring.

The third and psychologically, perhaps, the most interesting type of tramp, is the periodical wanderer. In this class may be listed the tramp-workmen with whom many employers of labor, particularly in the mill cities of the East, are familiar. These men, who are often experts in their special lines, will remain at one place for several months or even for a year or more, but when the wanderlust attacks them, will go on "sprees" of tramping, not dissimilar, in many respects, from those of periodic drinkers; for while the lust to wander is upon them, families are neglected, savings are spent, and all responsibility is thrown to the winds. Among the families that we came in touch with in the district office, there were a number in which the man was a periodic deserter, and several of these men admitted, when questioned, that they "took to the road for awhile" whenever they abandoned their families. One man, a very fine worker and, when at home, a kind husband and father, deserted his family at regular intervals just six years apart. His wife was forced to apply to the

HOMELESS MEN

Bureau for aid during his third absence from home, because continuous illness had exhausted the savings her husband had left with her, which he had supposed would carry the family through until his return. This man came to the office later and paid back the money we had advanced to his wife. He spoke shame-facedly of his wandering, but said that when the attacks came it was useless for him to try to fight them. He simply "had to go."

The late Josiah Flynt was apparently a tramp of this periodic type and there are more such men upon the road than is generally realized,—men of ability and even, like Flynt, of cultivation, who at certain times seem utterly unable to control an abnormal restlessness which urges them to forsake the comforts and conventions of their own homes for the freedom from responsibility, the novelty, and the varied interests of life on the "open road."

The newspaper and stage caricatures of the tramp which invariably represent him as a dirty and idle beggar must be in large part responsible for the popular idea that he is a man who never works and who lives wholly by begging. A study of the history of the men in this group does not confirm this common supposition. Thirty-five per cent of them were found to be generally self-supporting, or at least not dependent upon the public for support. Several owned property and had independent incomes of their own; not a few

CONFIRMED WANDERERS OR "TRAMPS"

others were "remittance men," supported by regular allowances from relatives at a distance. These allowances, in some cases, were granted with the distinct understanding that they were at once to cease if the men returned to their homes. In one instance we found that a tramp of seventy had been thus supported for thirty-five years. Certain other men were pensioners upon the less stated bounty of relatives. One reprobate young Englishman of good family, whom we knew for some time, showed us letters from his mother and sister, the contents of which proved that he had received \$2500 from them within eighteen months. In reply to a letter which the office wrote to his mother, she sent \$100 more in order that we might pay for her son's care in an institution for the cure of drunkenness.

Tramps like these rarely if ever beg of strangers, although they often do not hesitate to apply for "loans" to men from their own colleges or fraternities, or to others who are acquainted with their families at home and may therefore be relied upon for help in emergency. But in addition to these men with specially provided incomes there are among tramps a good many others who enjoy tramping but who have an inborn repugnance to begging and who will not do so under any condition. There are others who claim to prefer to be independent and who generally are so, but who will beg when they cannot readily find employment.

HOMELESS MEN

From the nature of the life they lead, the form of work which tramps most often choose, if they work at all, is casual labor; although some of them peddle and others are in the habit of taking almost any sort of position which is available when they need it, and in which the work is not too heavy, holding it for but a week or two and then wandering on again until the amount they have earned is exhausted. This last was the habit of one tramp who had graduated from an eastern university and had then taken Hebrew and Sanscrit at the University of Chicago. He usually sought employment in bakeries or restaurants, and at the time that we knew him had lived in this way for several years, apparently making no use whatever of his superior education.

A large proportion of the 220 tramps, however, —96,* or 43 per cent of the group,—were not self-supporting, and unquestionably merited their widespread reputation for idleness and for utter disinclination to work. Thirty-eight of the 96 were men who had never worked in their lives; or, differently stated, over 17 per cent of the whole group of 220 men were of the socially neglected type described at length in Chapter X.† Of the remaining 124 tramps, 77 were generally self-supporting, and it is not definitely known whether the other 47 were or not.

* See Table X, p. 216.

† See pages 179-184. This does not include runaway boys of school age.

CONFIRMED WANDERERS OR "TRAMPS"

So many temperamental and environmental factors which must have played important parts in the careers of the tramps are necessarily unknown to the writer, that it is not practicable to attempt to state just what number of men had left their homes for one particular reason or another, but what some of these reasons were—both according to the men themselves and as found by investigation—it may be worth while to note.

(1) RESTLESSNESS. Commonest of all, especially among the younger men and boys, was what they themselves called "just restlessness"—that abnormal craving to see the world and the people who inhabit it that the Germans have so aptly termed *die Wanderlust*. Approximately a third of the 220 tramps were men who seemed in the beginning to have left their homes for this reason alone. Many of them stated unequivocally that no other or contributory reason existed; that they were not unhappy, nor overworked, nor in difficulties of any kind, and that nothing but this restlessness had started them to wandering. Letters to their homes, in many cases, brought replies which confirmed the men's statements, but on the other hand a good many men not included in this one-third gave restlessness as their excuse for wandering when we found upon investigation that other and very pertinent reasons for their leaving home had in fact been present.

(2) TO SEEK WORK. A second reason which was frequently given, but which, like the first,

HOMELESS MEN

was not always the truth, was to look for employment, the men claiming to be unable to secure it in their own towns or cities. Unquestionably, a great many homeless men are honest searchers for work, but industrial conditions alone cannot be held responsible for all the wandering about in search of work that is done by men who plead the lack of it in their own town as their excuse for starting out. Not only have some of these men voluntarily left good positions because of mere restlessness, but a number of others are seeking work in strange cities because of excellent reasons which prevent them from securing it where they are well known.

(3) FAILURE AT HOME. In fact, a third reason for their first setting out from home, which was admitted by a number of men, was that they had made failures of their lives up to that point and wished to start anew in other communities. A vague "somewhere out West" was usually the goal they sought, but of the men who applied to us, not one had succeeded in his hope of establishing a new and better career and almost all were rapidly sinking lower and lower in the social scale. Indulgence in drink was more often than anything else the reason for the failure of these men in their own towns or cities and continued to be the cause of it. Two or three drug-users had similarly wrecked their prospects at home and taken to tramping, and in a few other cases entanglements with women or other scandals which

CONFIRMED WANDERERS OR "TRAMPS"

had become known and had affected their opportunities for the future, had led men to set out upon the road. In many of these cases the psychological effect upon the men of disgrace, combined, as it was, with the sudden and enforced breaking of all the ties which had linked them to normal society in their own communities, was very marked. The idea that no one would now know or care whether they made a success of the remainder of their lives, tended to make them feel that effort was not worth while and caused them to deteriorate with startling rapidity.

(4) INEFFICIENCY. Still another form of "failure at home" which sent men onto the road was financial failure, by which I do not mean the large and spectacular failures of ill-advised business ventures but the pitiful and far more common failures of well-intentioned but inefficient men. Such men, even when long confirmed in the habit of wandering, would almost invariably ask us for work, and would explain,—some of them apathetically and some bitterly,—how they had never had a chance; how other men always got the advances while they themselves were the first to be laid off when business became slack. When asked what sort of work they wanted or were able to do, they would reply, "Oh, any kind of work whatever; I'm willing to do anything that is honest," but when we tried to fit them into particular places, employers found them to be stupid or untrained, or for some other reason

HOMELESS MEN

incapable of effective work. Men of this type are much to be pitied and if by some means places which they were really capable of filling could be found for them, many might become self-supporting; but the charity worker who has the practical task of trying to discover such positions for them feels at times that few homeless men who are mentally normal present a harder problem for solution than do these who are respectable, well-meaning, anxious to earn their own way, but hopelessly inefficient.

(5) BREAKING OF HOME-TIES. Family difficulties, quarrels and disagreements between husbands and wives, the desertion of the wife, or in many cases her death which led to the breaking up of the home, were reasons for taking to the road admitted by a number of tramps. Some wife deserters were among these but just how many it would be impossible to state, since, as previously noted, a number of the men admitted that they had "left" their families but very few that they had deserted them. Almost invariably they would claim an intention to return home "before long" or as soon as they got a job, even though they may have been tramping and idling for a number of years, during which they had never communicated with their homes. The fact of actual homelessness, however, is alone responsible for the presence of a certain proportion of the homeless men in the cheap lodging houses, and it was unquestionably the real reason why a small per-

CONFIRMED WANDERERS OR "TRAMPS"

centage of these tramps first took to wandering. Our investigation proved that the greater number of widowers who left their homes upon the breaking up of their families had at that time already reached an age when to do so was to invite ruin. For the severing of connections with life-long friends and acquaintances in their own towns and the attempt to establish themselves anew elsewhere, when over fifty, had been a fatal misstep, from the results of which very few of these men had been able themselves to recover. We succeeded in reinstating a few of them when they had not been too long on the road by returning them to their home cities, but for those in whom the habit of wandering had become firmly established, we could do nothing.

(6) TO ESCAPE THE LAW. A certain rather limited number of the tramps with whom we came in touch admitted that they had left their homes in order to escape the legal consequences of particular acts. Our own investigations discovered this to be the fact in a few other cases where men had given a different reason for their first wandering. It is well known that criminals take to tramping at times to avoid the surveillance of the police, but as not many criminals are confirmed wanderers, they are not true tramps under the definition used in this chapter, and therefore are not included with them. The few criminals here referred to are of a weaker type. Several were men who had jumped their bonds after arrest for

HOMELESS MEN

first offenses. Of these, one was a physician who had forged a note and fled to escape the penitentiary. It had been more than seven years since he had committed the offense but he still lived in constant, nervous dread of discovery and arrest. Not daring to register his true name and that of the college in which he had received his medical training, he was unable to practice his profession, and without references he claimed to be unable to secure even clerical work; he therefore became a beggar and was one of the cleverest ever reported to the office. He had been in to see us a number of times and had been known to us under half a dozen names for almost three years before he one day confessed his true name and told of the forgery that had made him an outcast.

(7) MENTAL OR PHYSICAL DEFECTS OR ILLNESS. These were the direct or indirect reasons why a number of men who later became tramps left their homes. The consumptive who wanders is a familiar figure in charity offices; insane men and feeble-minded men, as shown in a previous chapter, frequently drift onto the road. So also do epileptics when the fact that they suffer from frequent seizures becomes known and affects their relations with their friends, or their opportunities for securing employment in their home towns. All these men degenerate with peculiar rapidity into chronic wanderers.

The seven reasons cited above were, in substance, the ones given by practically all of the

CONFIRMED WANDERERS OR "TRAMPS"

confirmed wanderers in this group, as well as by hundreds of other men in the thousand—tramps in the making—who were asked why they had left their homes. It will be noted that only those having the true fever to wander,—some 70 men, or less than a third of the whole number,—had in the beginning intended to rove for the sake of roving. All of the others had merely drifted into the habit because the railroads, unguarded, were always at hand, and because at no point in their careers, after they took to roving, had society raised effective barriers to prevent them from drifting further, or extended helping hands to draw them back toward normal life.*

Only men with a true instinct for wandering can be said to be "born tramps" and many even of these would never become confirmed in their habits of roaming if it were a little more difficult for them to indulge their abnormal propensities in this direction; but if the facts brought out by this study of 220 cases are typical, not more than 31 per cent of the chronic wanderers can plead an active desire as their excuse for being on the road. Almost 70 per cent are mere drifters, men who might under different conditions have remained at home and have become useful citizens.

(8) UNGUARDED RAILWAY TRACKS. It is the mere accessibility of the railroads more than anything else, I believe, that is manufacturing tramps

* For data concerning the truth or falsity of their stories, see Table X, p. 216.

HOMELESS MEN

today. So long as it is possible for practically any man or boy to beat or beg his way about the country on the railroads, we shall continue to have tramps in America. When we succeed in absolutely closing these highways to any but persons having a legitimate right to be upon them, we shall check at its source the largest single contributory cause of vagrancy, and the problem of the tramp, as such, will practically be solved. As an unemployed, untrained, sick, or irresponsible homeless man he will still need attention, but this can be given him with incomparably less difficulty when once he is deprived of the facilities he now has for wandering from one place to another.

The railroads estimate that the tramps (under which name, as before stated, they include all homeless men who travel without paying regular fares) cost them not less than \$18,500,000 a year.* In this enormous sum many items of expense are included. If a tramp is injured when stealing a ride, the railroads must pay at least for his tem-

* Major Pangborn, representing President Murray of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, gave this figure as an estimate in the following statement made at the National Conference of Charities and Correction, Minneapolis, June, 1907:

"Never in the history of the American railroads has there been such a vicious, such a destructive horde of vagrants on the railroads of America as now. Now estimating that twenty per cent of the damage done is by the tramps, that is twenty millions a year. Say it is ten per cent, that is ten millions a year. Add the maximum and the minimum of police protection. In the one case it is \$15,000,000 and in the other instance it is \$25,000,000. Take the mean of the two and it is \$18,500,000 that vagrants cost us in money per annum." —Discussion on Vagrancy, Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction, 1907, p. 73.

CONFIRMED WANDERERS OR "TRAMPS"

porary care in a hospital. If he is killed, his body cannot be left by the roadside; the railroads must pay for its decent burial, and they do this in hundreds of cases each year. Then, too, the tramp is a great destroyer of property. While stealing a ride in a freight car he may break open boxes of crackers and of canned goods, and eat food the actual value of which may be but ten or fifteen cents, but because he has disturbed the contents of these boxes, the railroad is unable to deliver them in good order and is held responsible by shippers for their full value. The camp fires of tramps and their carelessly flung cigarette ends have destroyed much valuable property belonging to private citizens as well as to the railroad companies.

When railway police officers arrest men for trespassing certain expenses of their trials must in every case be met by the railroad, and not infrequently—because of the diversity of the laws in different states and the varying interpretations made of them by justices within a single state—the railroads are unable to secure convictions of the men and are required by the courts to carry them out of the towns at once, lest they become local nuisances when discharged. These are a few of the expense items which go to make up the sum mentioned above. And yet in large sections of the country the railroads are helpless to rid themselves of the tramps because they are unsupported by the laws, or rather by the local enforce-

HOMELESS MEN

ment of the laws, in these districts. It becomes a temptation, therefore, when the railroad policemen discover that a certain justice in a particular city or town, is willing to convict and punish the tramps before him, for these officers to carry trespassers to this place if possible before attempting to arrest them, and in such instances it usually will not be long before the taxpayers will rebel at the expense for the workhouse maintenance of non-resident men which the frequent convictions by this judge is forcing upon them.

The chief difficulty in the situation seems to lie in the fact that as the laws are now framed in most of our states, the community in which the tramp is brought into court and convicted is responsible for the cost of his maintenance in the jail or workhouse, and the feeling is everywhere common that this is benefiting the railroads at the expense of local taxpayers. "The tramp is not a resident of this county. The railroad has brought him here. Let the railroad take him where he really belongs and there convict him if it can." This, in substance, is the reasoning advanced in all sections of the country.

A letter asking "What do you do with the tramps?" was sent to the chiefs of police of 100 American cities, a few years ago, and more than half of them replied, "Give them so many hours to get out of town." Such a negative policy in dealing with these men can only result in a greater expense to every community in the long run, for

CONFIRMED WANDERERS OR "TRAMPS"

the cost of the tramp is met somehow and somewhere every day of the year and each community will receive from some other just as many tramps as it passes on. Moreover, until the "tramp problem" is fairly met and intelligently grappled with in every state of the Union, the total number of wanderers will continue to increase and the needless loss to the country as a whole, both of good citizens and of money, will be more appalling than it now is.

If the migrations of tramps could be controlled, as already suggested, under some sort of federal inter-state commerce law, the problem might perhaps be solved, but it is most unlikely that these vagrants can be dealt with by the national government until long after individual states have discovered how best to deal with them locally. Students of the problem now generally believe that little progress can be made by any state until the responsibility for the treatment of the tramp is assumed by the state as a whole; until the laws which affect him are state laws; until the cost of his arrest and punishment or treatment is met by the state, and not by counties or cities within the state. For the man who proves upon investigation, after detention, to be not a true tramp but merely an unfortunate, a sick, or an insane homeless man, whose place of legal residence can be discovered, let the state, if it has none already, enact laws to enable it to send him back to his home. If he belongs within the state, or if he has been a

HOMELESS MEN

tramp so long that he has no legal residence in any section of the country, let the state in which he has been found and arrested bring his wanderings to an end by placing him in a proper institution.

Each commonwealth will require a certain minimum equipment of good institutions, if it would deal effectively with all the various types of men that are on the road, but many states already have several of the needed institutions which should be available for the treatment of tramps whose legal residence cannot be determined as well as for men who are legal residents of the particular state. These institutions should include a hospital for the insane; a sanatorium for consumptives; a colony for epileptics; an industrial home for the feeble-minded; a general hospital to which any man who is ill may be sent; a home for the incurably ill; an industrial training school for young boys; a farm colony for the treatment of inebriates, to which they should be sent on indefinite sentences and from which they should be released only under probation; and lastly, a compulsory farm colony for the treatment of vagrants and tramps to which they should be committed on indefinite sentences and where they could be taught trades and trained in habits of work. Given all these institutions and a carefully drawn state vagrancy law,—similar to that of Massachusetts,—and given also a strong law prohibiting railroad trespass, and there will be

CONFIRMED WANDERERS OR "TRAMPS"

little doubt but that the particular state having such laws and such an institutional equipment will effectually and permanently rid itself of tramps.

The words "rid *itself* of tramps" are used advisedly, for so long as only one or two, or half a dozen states possess such laws and enforce them, the tramp problem will still exist in all the rest of the country. Vagrants will simply avoid the states where they know they will be arrested and will flock into the others where laws are less strict or less well enforced. But if a few of the larger states like New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Illinois should decide to deal with tramps in the way indicated, adjoining states would soon be forced to do the same and gradually still others, as these found that they could no longer pass on vagrants, would do so in self defense, until finally we might have railway trespass laws that were adequately enforced all over the country. Massachusetts has already passed very effective vagrancy and railway trespass laws, and Massachusetts alone of all the states of the Union has practically all the institutions just mentioned. In New York state for a number of years a bill for a compulsory labor colony has been presented to succeeding legislatures, but it has not yet become law; and Indiana, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, and Washington are agitating the question of founding such colonies. Undoubtedly as little by little a more intelligent public opinion regarding the tramp is evolved, and as the processes which are needlessly

HOMELESS MEN

bringing him into existence are better realized and understood throughout the country, the states will one after another equip themselves with laws and institutions that will enable them individually and jointly to cope successfully and finally with the problem of his elimination, a problem which at the present time, owing to the fact that his number is still on the increase, looks discouraging if not hopeless.