

The Carmelite News

WHITEFRIARS
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TRAMPS

I KNEW many tramps when I was a boy; the travelling men of the road. They were all individualists, as different from one another as cherries and plums. Men and women, and sometimes both together, but one got to know that it takes personality to be a successful tramp. Forty years ago, tramps were the daily newspapers of the countryside, moving from house to house bringing news and gossip from afar. I lived in the County Wicklow. I was born on a Wicklow hill. The tramps brought us news of how the crops were going down in County Wexford, then right up through the mountains until they met the hard and stony ground where no man may live if he is idle.

In general there was a certain respect for the tramp, and a certain aloofness that sometimes amounted to distrust. That is why the tramp always tried to ingratiate himself with particular families, and he picked these families for his stopping places. He would set off in the morning and he had to find a stopping place for his midday meal; then on again until he would hit some friendly housewife who would give him something to eat in the evening; or a lay by. He would boil his billycan right in view of the front window and then maybe come along to ask for a grain of tea or a fresh egg, as the sun went down. No woman ever gave a tramp bread without butter on it, and a woman was known as generous and a friend of the poor if she didn't put it on and then scrape it off.

I doubt if any man became a tramp or travelling man because of dire poverty. I think that they became wanderers of the road because they were foot loose; or because something had disturbed the even tenor of their lives; or simply because they loved the open spaces, the irresponsibility, the fact that they could go where they liked, and salute whom they willed.

You could know the genuine tramps from the novices. A tramp that was unknown would sometimes be turned away from the door and would retire with abuse. I have not known a tramp to be turned away from a door at which he was known. In fact a certain bond of affection grew up between the known tramp and his stopping places; and even the neighbours would salute the tramp in passing—"It's a nice day! God speed you!"

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THE BALD WEASEL

I REMEMBER one, and we called him the Bald Weasel. A strapping man of 6' 2" with a battered hat and a beard trimmed neatly. He carried an ash plant, and a mongrel dog went with him. He had been in the British army and there was a smartness in his stride that told of the old soldier. His dog never failed to find him rabbits when the evening sun cast shadows on the grass. Sometimes he would lie in the bracken quietly, without a move, waiting for the rabbits to come out. Most of them went home, but one

was left. It went into the pocket of the Bald Weasel; and many an egg went in there too. If he heard a hen cackling in the outland, he knew that there was an egg. If he found a nest in the hedge that the housewife did not know about, of course he brought in the eggs that he didn't want, and the woman regarded him as a friend. The few that were left in his pocket were just a taxation. Where he ended his travels I do not know. I bet that he went on until he could go no longer. By the air of him he was a Protestant. At least we all thought that he had a smack of the "Black North" about him, but no matter, "a man's a man for all that" and he had a turn of humour, sly and salacious, and no Irish woman ever blamed a man for that. We saw him once in three months, which was not often, and his rounds took him some two eighty or three hundred miles over the mountains of Wicklow and down to the Baronies of Wexford and back around again by ways where the hills do not break a man's back. He had finished with all that when he escaped the Afghan rifles on the Khyber Pass.



MAT THE BRITON

THEN, there was Mat the Briton, an old soldier of the North West Frontier of India. A proper lad! He had seen more life than even he would care to talk about. The gun and the knife, the women of the bazaars. He could do tricks that amazed us. We were just kids. He could poise himself on top of the slope, cross his legs, grasp his ankles in his hands, put his head between his knees and then go tumbling down the slope just as if he was a football. He was called Tumbleweed. That was not a name we gave him; it was a name he gave himself. I think he must have lived some time in the Great American desert. You can give no odds on where an Irishman moves. Anyway, he was a decent fellow. He could get what he wanted, because he stood sharply to attention and tore off a sharp salute to the housewife. It turned her into a lady and him into a gent and both could then go forward for what ever it was—a cup of tea, a boiled egg, maybe a slice of bacon left over from the breakfast. A man is entitled to the best.

MOG'S MOLLY

THERE were not many women on the road, but I remember Mog's Molly; a lean wild eyed woman, full of spit. She got along well with the men in the fields but sometimes she came up against a hard type of housewife, who looked at her with eyes that said "You're a slut." Then she gave as good as she received, even worse than she got. The things she told housewives who sent her away, bothered even their husbands.

She made her way unloved, and yet in charity, but the hard eye never left her. She never understood that a soft word in the ear works a miracle in the mind. Women do not last long on the road. Ten years and the thing is over; neither man nor woman can wander for ever. The day comes when they must find shelter between four walls, be it at the public expense or not. She didn't. She walked into the river one night when the floods were on, and the bridges were down, and there was no one there to pull her out of the raging waters. That was down on the borders of Wexford. Unlike an old Irish hero "who swam the river Slaney and left them far behind." Mog's Molly couldn't swim. May God, the giver of all good, the Saviour of his people whom he has created, bring her to safe harbour, because no creature on earth ever wished her ill, and why should He.

You can always rout a good woman if you know the right words. I knew a man once who came to say that he could not stand any longer the nagging of his wife. Every time he came home he had to face a barrage of nonsense. I said to him, "It is all because you do not know the right words." So I gave him a copy of the Old Testament and pointed out to him the Book of Proverbs. I said to him, "Read it carefully, memorise it faithfully. Choose your ammunition with deadly accuracy, and then when the barrage is drawing to a close, just deliver a few texts at her head, and go and lie down." He did this so successfully, and chose his textual ammunition so aptly, that he reduced the woman to speechlessness. She went round saying to her neighbours, "What manner of man is this?"

What woman can stand this sort of thing for long?

"A wise woman buildeth her house but the fool will pull down with her hands that also which is built."

"A diligent woman is a crown to her husband and she that doth things worthy of confusions is a rottenness in his bones."

No woman can stand sniping of that sort backed by the authority of the Scriptures! It confuses a woman! It maketh her sad! But I am afraid that my friend did not confine himself entirely to the Book of Proverbs. I think that he ranged over the Psalms. In fact, he became a Scriptural gramophone. In the end she commenced saying the Rosary. Too true, because Scripture was a line of country in which she had never been trained.

There are many vices a woman can stand in a husband. There are many faults that she can understand and forgive. But if ever he starts quoting Scripture at her, she is defeated. She is frustrated. She does not know what to say. In fact I think myself, that if reason for divorce existed, that should be one of them. It is bad enough for a priest to have a good woman quote his sermon back to him, but deliver me from the woman who quotes Scripture to her husband, or vice versa.

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GYPSIES

I WON'T say much about the gypsies because they are an organised movement, moving from place to place under their own power and they generally know where to go and how to cope with the problems of life. They knew their friends and they knew those who were not their friends. They knew they must not offend their friends. When a strapping gypsy came to the door and said, "Mr. Lynch, can we have some potatoes?" My father would say, "Yes, you can have one bag full if you will go and dig them yourself; but one bag full." And then the gypsy would say, "Can we have a few turnips as well?" My father would say, "What is a turnip here and there between friends!" Maybe before the gypsy turned his back he would say to my father, "Do you want to buy a good ass?"

Their code of honesty was absolute, they took from those who did not give,

but they respected the man who gave something away because he had more than enough. Not that any man had more than enough in the mountains, but he could always spare some potatoes, and swede turnips were food for cattle. In the morning early, the gypsy girls would come round to the house to find out if there were any pots and pans that needed mending and maybe to see if there was some milk to be had, or buttermilk that was left over. Buttermilk goes well with potatoes, and if you have the fat of a rabbit to go with it, it becomes food for a man. But put the red bog berries in it to give it a tang. (TO BE CONTINUED)

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PARADE

SLIGHT MISUNDERSTANDING

The irritating presence of Uncle Charlie in their home was the rock that almost wrecked the Brown's marriage. For ten long years, Uncle Charlie was with them, constantly nagging, finding fault, and getting first to the table. Finally he died. Driving home from the cemetery, Brown said to his wife, "Darling, I have a confession: if I had not loved you so much I could never have stood your Uncle Charlie."

Mrs. Brown's eyes widened. "What?" she shrieked. "I thought he was *your* Uncle Charlie!"

*Mcarshtolenhicpardon
Sokayfounditbacksheat*

MONTREAL — Police sergeant Rosario Dusseault says the following actually happened:

A man with a high-pitched voice telephoned Thursday night to report the theft of a steering wheel, a brake pedal, a clutch pedal and a dashboard.

"Off what," asked sergeant Dusseault.

"Off my car," was the reply. I get behind the wheel and there's no wheel, no pedals; nothing."

The sergeant, after saying he would investigate had just hung up when the telephone rang again.

"Don't bother," said the same high-pitched voice — this time with a hiccup. "I got into the back seat by mistake."

SO NOW WE KNOW

Here is a story told me by a good hearted parish priest up in Wales. He used to visit a family once a month regularly and each time he had to listen to stories about their wonderful parrot. But the parrot never performed in his presence—looking at him with a beady eye he shifted himself nervously upon his perch and gave forth certain condemnatory noises just to mark his disapproval of a stranger.

The mother of the family died and our friend in due course, came out to offer his sympathy to the family. The father was there and the son and two daughters.

"I made a very nice little speech," said Father, "I reminded them that in death we should also be conscious of resurrection, that 'he that believeth in Me shall never die.' I reminded them that it was just a temporary separation and ended up by praising the virtues of the dead woman and hoping that her good would not be buried with her bones. There I drew slowly to an end. Then the father put his hand in his pocket, took out a pound note and handed it over to me saying, 'Father, will you say a Mass for the good of her soul?' Just then the parrot piped up with a full verse of 'Pop goes the weasel—That's the way the money goes.'"

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THE REASON WHY

Six-year old Jackie Smith's parents were dumbfounded. Jackie's First Com-

munion was still months away, but Jackie claimed that he had already gone to Confession. His 1st-grade teacher at St. Mary's, Sister Elizetta, said that he had not been taught how to confess, yet there was no reason to disbelieve him. The little fellow insisted that he was telling the truth. "Father gave me three Hail Mary's for penance," Jackie said.

Then, on Sunday morning, before anyone could stop him, Jackie slipped up to the altar rail and received Holy Communion. Why did he do it? "I don't know," he said after Mass. "I just did."

The answer came in a few days. Jackie Smith was killed in an automobile accident.

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Take a look at our design on the Dead List. It would make a very good Memorial Card. It gets away from that silvery sickly design that is so common.

Samples on request, printed on good card.

Our Coming Novenas

THE LITTLE FLOWER
Sept. 25th—Oct. 3rd

OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY
Sept. 29th—Oct. 7th

SAINT JUDE
Oct. 20th—Oct. 28th

OUR BURSES

	<i>Already acknowledged.</i>		<i>Increase.</i>
The St. Jude Burse No. 2	... £938 6 8	now	£967 16 8
Holy Child of Prague Burse	... 482 12 3		492 2 3
The Holy Face Burse	... 158 19 4		159 19 4
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Burse	... 211 13 6		218 3 6
Little Flower Burse	... 184 15 0		188 2 6
St. Anne Burse	... 46 3 6		47 13 6
St. Anthony Burse	... 118 0 6		121 10 6
St. Martha Burse	... 896 19 6		900 6 6
Sacred Heart Burse	... 368 16 0		388 16 0
St. Philomena Burse	... 20 18 6		22 8 6
Immaculate Conception B.V.M. Burse	... 10 0 0		20 0 0
Our Lady of Dolours Burse	... 10 0 0		—

Our Lady keep you! Yours in Carmel

M. E. Lynch O.C.