

# A CITY AND A MAN

*Bojorski Learned that the Manning of Great Cities is a Fool Game in the Gospel of Work*

By AUGUSTUS BRIDLE

**B**OJORSKI, long-gear'd, supple-jointed giant, with lurking laughs in his blue eyes and the great, gaunt spaces in his pockets, had been the winter in the city. It was a big, clattering town, motor-cared by many Canadian millionaires, the kind that Ignace of the long, brown surcoat, and the greasy cap, had never seen in his own country except to connect them with terrorism. It was a city of much wealth, where thousands of men, many of them as able before the Lord as Ignace, huddled by night and very often by day, not daring to beg, and but once in a long while getting work enough to keep paying for meals and a bed. Thousands upon thousands of others every night spent many thousands of dollars in seeing all sorts of shows that gave them glimpses of half the world and hearing music that made them feel the pulses of heaven, wherever that might be.

And by the machinery of a great railway system Ignace had got plunged into this top-rearing, many-walled city, where most men wore neckties and had no patches on their clothes. He marveled how so many hundreds upon hundreds of such very clever, clean men were needed in that city; except that he saw many grand offices and motor-cars and huge factories that had to be kept going by somebody. Once he had shoveled snow and chucked furnace coal for such a man who always came up the hill in his grand, gleaming limousine. But in the worst weather he found nobody else within a mile of this man's great house who wanted such a man. So because sometimes he missed getting the snow cleaned off in the nick of time, Ignace was let slip back to the ranks of the totally unemployed.

The giant had no liking for this. He could live on a pound of rye bread and half a gallon of water a day. His clothes were the kind that a little stout needlework done by himself on the edge of his bed could easily mend up so as to keep wind out and skin within. But with all Ignace's desire and great need for cleanliness, there was no way of much washing his clothes. It got so that he left off shirt entirely, covering himself only with the worn lining of his huge vest and skewering together with wooden pins whittled with his own clasp-knife the over-lap of his tremendous surcoat. By some means he had been given, or lent, he scarcely knew which, a half-worn undercoat of somebody's, which he slit down the back to get buttoned and in the armpits to get into with some comfort; and this was as good as a shirt. So that what with plenty of clean wind blowing in upon his pelt and through the crannies of his duds, Ignace managed to keep himself from being pouffed at in a crowd on the street.

**O**H, he managed to keep healthy. God had given him great lungs and oxygenizing blood; there was no taint in his tissues, and if he had been bathed and liveried up and stood at the door of any great inn or haunt of fashion he would have been looked at with admiring awe by beautiful ladies. If he had been dowered with a gift of song and a great voice he would have become the idol of thousands at grand opera. God had made him very much a man; such a man that he desired a country where his manhood might work itself out into something he had no more than dreamed in his own country.

And surely Ignace was a much happy man. On shipboard in the steerage he had been the liveliest of the lot, always seeing in the storm and the calm and the sounding sea the majesty of a great freedom. Europe, with its hampering tyranny and its wars, were all behind. He had seen the battlefields of Bulgaria. They made him sick. He had wondered what could have made powerful peoples fertilize the fields with the blood of men whose women and children were left to go gaunt and cold and miserable. Had he been called to such a war, Ignace would have boarded the troop train as blindly and cheerfully as any and lent his blood to the soaking earth for the rains to wash down and down in the spring whenever the birds might twitter along and the vultures were gone. But there was no war for him; as yet no wife and children in a hut; and he had somehow gloriously escaped all the terrible misery of a continent where millions have perished in battle. He had got to the sea. He had boarded a tramp steamer, working his way out the Mediterranean to one of the outward-bound ports of Europe, from whence thousands upon thousands, with their women and children, swung away to a land called Canada.

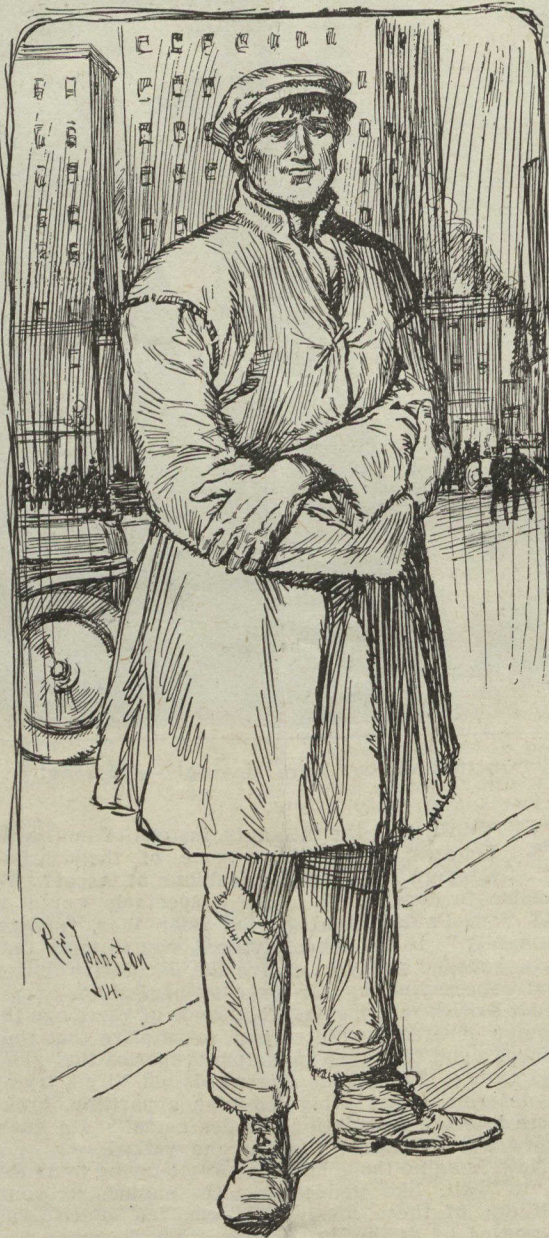
Such a journey! It had taken his last kopeck almost. At Quebec he got a casual job of dock-heaving, because for the same number of kopecks per hour he could earn twice as much as a common man. Which at first made him sorry for the others. But he was to learn that somehow the others don't always matter.

But the population were not staying in Quebec. It was the swing of the sun that drew them, on and on, in the colonist trains to scurrying cities and vast yawning spaces of no people; then more towns and cities and rocks and prairies and a strange moving

For years past Canadian governments and steamship companies have been dragnetting Europe to get immigrants. European labour, underpaid and underworked, was promised that in Canada there was no lack of work and plenty of good pay. In 1914, when at least 200,000,000 bushels of wheat is heading out on the prairies, unemployed immigrants in Canadian cities, who have been less than three years in Canada and have taken civic relief, are to be deported back to the countries they came from—by order of the Immigration Department. This was announced last week by the Superintendent of Immigration to a delegation of foreigners who asked him how the country to which they had emigrated could give them work to do. This seems like ingratitude, as well as unsound economic policy. So it seems that the country is unable or unwilling to give work to thousands of ignorant people who have been brought here by glittering schemes of immigration based on plenty of work and good pay. The story of Ignace Bojorski is intended to throw light on the situation, as experienced by one of the victims.

of people and tongues and all manner of costumes along the endless lines of steel and smoke towards the mountains.

All this Ignace knew about as in a sort of dream,



"He yearned for work, because it was the only law he knew."

when in the late fall as the last ships were groping through the fog to lie up for a long winter, he found himself chucked into the swirl of a swift, magical city, with half-done walls topped by daring pigmies of workmen and streets crammed with an endless tide of traffic. He beheld interminable lines of yellow coaches jammed with people and propelled by God knew what. He saw hundreds of cars shuddering along run somehow by men at steering-wheels. He threaded his way through head-bent lines of people all going somewhere and some coming back again. He heard the bells of many churches. He saw priests and policemen; soldiers and strange women; and he heard the clatter of many tongues, even more than he had heard on board ship.

And in his blundering way Ignace knew that at

last he was somewhere within a thousand miles of the middle of a great, new country, whose one grand overpowering desire was for more and more workers such as he was. So he had been told by the posters of the railway company in Europe. So he had been retold by the glib agents at the offices. Again he had heard it reaffirmed, and with yet greater emphasis by the steamship agencies, whose brave, smoking placards in gaudy colours spelled to him the lure of a land where all men were free and equal in the glorious game of spending their manhood in labour for what the labour might be worth.

**S**UCH were the crude, uncultured ideas of Ignace, whose brain, with what schooling he had got from a poor Jew schoolmaster, was easily obsessed by great simplicities. He was a perfect, untrammelled child in all but his consuming greed for work enough to keep his great muscles and steady nerves busy on what would put him ahead in the world. He yearned for work because it was the only law he knew, and the one way he could find of getting roubles enough hoarded up to pay for the transport of a certain young woman he knew to this same country, Canada. And in a city with such profound every-day and every-hour problems to work out by means of muscular and skilful men, Ignace dreamed that he surely might get work enough to satisfy him.

Heavens! The city seemed never to rest. All day the walls were creeping up and the cars clattering past. When the mists swung up from the water and the lights blisted out yellow and white and the windows glowed with all manner of wealth and fashion and beauty, Ignace saw more people than ever cramming the cars and the carriages and the sidewalks. The long lighted streets sucked them from miles upon miles of houses and side streets and suburbs, down to the glittering and noisy places where they sat, some of them at a dollar an hour and some at ten cents an hour, and some of them ate and drank and smoked at tables and long, glittering bars, whose doors let out floods of light and smell.

And always Ignace marveled where so many men, none of them so large as himself, got the kopecks for this sort of beguilement. Maybe there were mines of loose money somewhere. He had heard of mines in his own land. Miners he believed were always rich. Here were fur-coated men, many of them, and some of them very flippant young rakes. Ladies by thousands wore the furs that must have cost each hundreds of roubles. Surely their husbands were men of wealth. It made Ignace's head ache to try computing how many millions of kopecks these people might have in their clothes when leaving home of an evening or a morning; and how many of these would be left in the tills of such men as sold eatables and drinkables and smokables and tickets for amusements. And it began to seem to this much benighted giant of work-wanting, that Canada must be a marvelous land to have got so many thousands of people with such wanton display of wealth. He imagined that a city like this he had got from the train into must be a sort of magic place where men might make money by some form of admirable black art. Maybe it was the great number of banks that he saw on some streets, with people dodging in and popping out? Ignace entered one of these to see if there was some great pile of silver and gold or stacks of paper money from which, by some form of ceremony or lingo, people got what they wanted. He leaned on a desk and watched scores of folk writing out little slips which he could not read. He saw them flip these things in at little wickets to busy, shrewd people, inside the cages, who, after some scribbling with pens, obediently passed out wads of bills and sometimes silver also.

It was no use to write one of these out himself. Had he done so it would have been in Russian, which, of course, no clerk in a cage would be able to read.

Ignace wandered out; just in time to escape being ordered away by a man in a peak cap with brass buttons, whom he noticed to bear some resemblance to the many police he saw on the streets. And he marveled that this person of authority had so long permitted him to stand with his ugly clothes and his huge scow boots in such a temple of riches.

**B**UT there was another powerful religion that he observed took up people's time. Half the people he met seemed to be reading newspapers. Ignace bought one. It was cheap. It cost him less than a kopeck. Wonderful! What a smell it had! He liked it. Here was a fat wad of reading—if he could only read it. He saw lots of pictures. Page after page he turned it. Not a word could he read. Now he was struck with a powerful impulse. He must master the reading. If he was to learn how to make money in a country where people read so much he must get acquainted with the language. How? He scarcely knew.

But there was a small colony of his own nation—  
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