

This ruse he had probably encountered elsewhere.

"Don't know me, I see. Well, gentlemen of 'the art preservative,' I am a travelling missionary of The Society for the Dissemination of Knowledge, in whose interests I have the honour, for the time being, of carrying the banner. I am not, as you observe, arrayed in purple and fine linen, nor have I fared sumptuously to-day. I contain, at the present moment, one red herring, a penny loaf and two beers. Taking no thought for the morrow, I require for to-day's sustenance two more beers or one square meal. It is for the philanthropic among you to decide which it shall be; I have no choice in the matter."

Six having subscribed one penny each, he continued:

"I am looking for work with one eye, and the means of existing without it with the other. My right eye, gentlemen, is blind—atrophied; literally worn out with looking for employment. Nature, however, has made up for this infirmity by concentrating my whole power of vision in the other eye. For this reason, I rarely fail to minister to my appetite with some degree of regularity. I can work; I have worked—in an emergency, and have recovered from the effects thereof; but I have it on the best medical authority that a relapse might be fatal. I feel that I have not outlived my usefulness; therefore I do not wish to die yet. What useful function do I fulfil? Well, charity is a virtue, is it not? Do I not cultivate virtue, then, in the human breast? I do; the argument is unanswerable. Gentlemen, this meeting is adjourned *sine die*. I leave you better men than I found you; for, be it remembered, 'charity covereth a multitude of sins.' Adieu."

Just at this moment the foreman came up from the store with a rush job. After a whispered conversation with one of the hands, he went up to the tramp and said:

"Here's a job that's got to be out to-night. You don't go till this is in type. Off with your coat and get to work!"

"But——"

"But you've got to. You can go to the better land when this is set up if you like; not before. Here, Smith, make up this man's stick to thirty ems and get him started."

"Gentlemen, this seems to be an emergency; I succumb," said the tramp.

We all expected to see "miking" exemplified to perfection; but, to our astonishment, he was transformed in an instant. His coat was off in a jiffy, and in five minutes he was picking up type in a manner that curled our hair to see. No two men equalled his output; his spacing was even and his proofs clean. The foreman stood aghast, and when proofs of the job were pulled two hours before it was promised, he acknowledged the tramp had "one on us," and, pointing to a vacant frame, offered him a steady job at five shillings above the union scale.

"My dear sir," said he, "I am not looking for a steady job; I go in quest of the Home for Incurables. I fear I shall not survive this shock; the reaction will be tremendous. The honorarium for my services you may bestow on such as I; I would not take the bread out of any man's mouth. I am an ethical culturist; that is really my forte. I will now depart to slow music."

"There goes an enigma," said the foreman as the typographical tourist went out to absorb the sixpence.

The door was pushed ajar, and a voice exclaimed:

"Gentlemen, take my word for it, every man's an enigma. Each gets his experience in his own way. This is my way; what d'ye think of it?"

"Not much," replied the foreman.

And so said all of us.

That night, about eleven o'clock, I met the enigma on the street so overwhelmed with experience that he was unloading incoherent chunks of it upon an indifferent public. I asked him if this exhibition was a part of his system of