

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1915

Our Brother
the BumOne More Case of the Innocent Bystander in
Imminent Peril.

**If You Want to Avoid the Panhandler's Touch
Never Be a Hustling Young Man With a
Smile or a Kindly Old Man---and Never, Never
Give Up Your Money When He Says It's the
Price of a Drink He Wants, You Are Most
Likely Being Fooled---the Science and
Psychology of the
Trade.**

By JAMES P. HAVERSON

THIS is the story of a bum—told in the language of a bum, and expressing the philosophy of his trade or calling. In it is set out the psychology by which he sorts, from the mass of humanity in the street, those who are probable prospects for the price of a bed, a meal or a drink. It is an exposition of the brains behind begging.

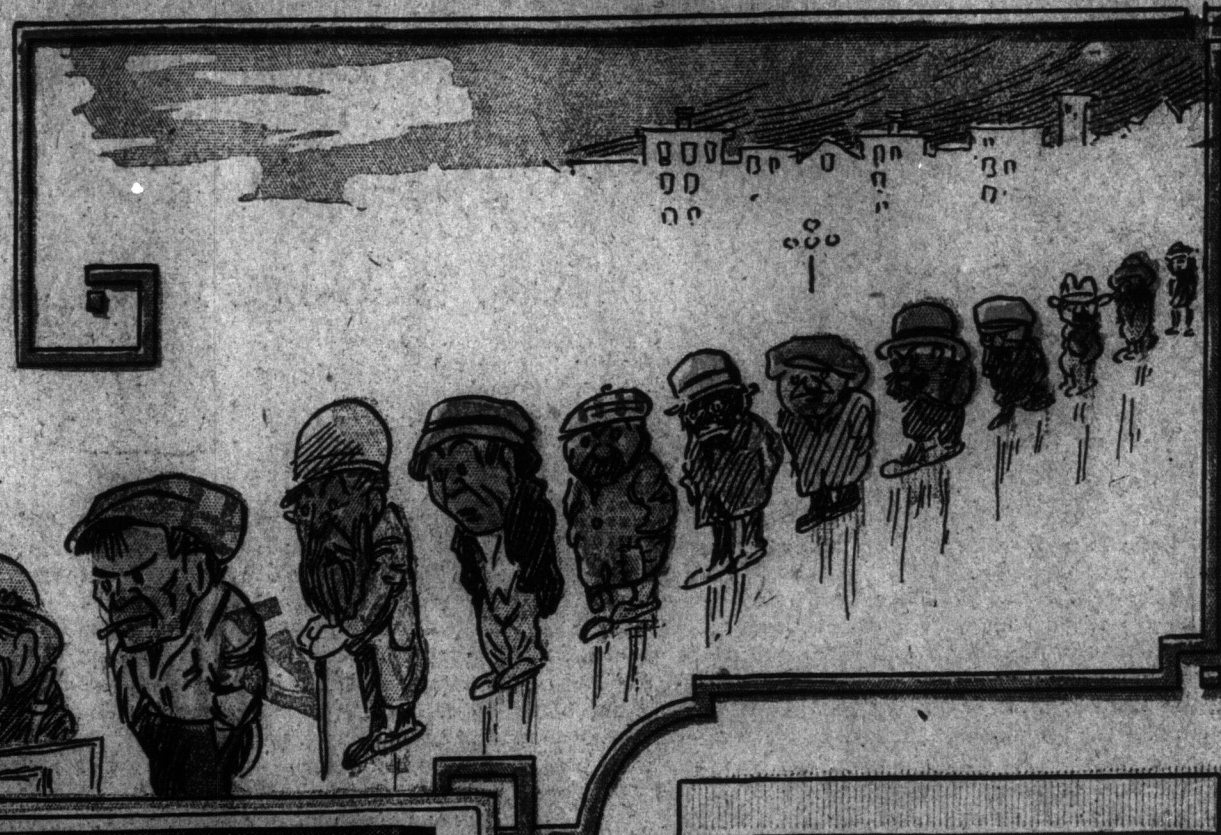
Being the story of a bum, it begins as the beggar begins, with, "Say, Mister, can I speak to you for a minute?" Then follows the plea for the price of a bed, a meal or a drink, garnished by various urgencies of need.

This particular beggar was frowsy, out-at-elbows, unshaven. He was a typical bum, and

"I've Had a Bit
of Hard Luck."

I asked him how he begged, when he begged and where and from whom he begged. I learned that there is a distinct philosophy and psychology of begging.

"There's lots of times," said he, "when ye'll do better to ask for a drink, even when it's a meal you want. There is a kind of man, an' you can tell him at sight, who thinks that every beggar wants a drink. It's no use askin' him for the price of a meal. He'd only think you was foolin' him. Tell him you want a drink, and he thinks you see he's too wise to be fooled.



"Can I Speak to You a Minute?"



This Smile Was Not for Charity, But for the Glad Rags of the Bum.

Nine times out of ten he'll give up that way. "Take a young fellow with a smile; he's good, if you can get him stopped. Chances are he'll brush right by and never hear you; but if you get him stopped, he's good for a quarter, maybe a half. A smiling old man is pretty near always good for something, usually not as much as the young one, but he's a surer prospect.

"Some places is better than others. Only a mut'd beg near the Armories just now. You'd think outside a church would be good, but it

ain't. When a man's given up to the collection plate, he's dry for the day. There ain't no use begging from women, anywhere, unless at their doors, and then it's only good for grub or clothes, with likely as not a job of work to do before you get that. A woman even hates to stop to drop a penny in a blind man's tin cup. She thinks it makes her noticed and there ain't no show to stop her in the street. Residential districts is good at night, but you always want to ask for the price of a bed. If a man's goin' home to a comfortable bed of his own he sort of has to think of a guy with no bed to go to."

This is the story as it was meant to have been written. This is the way the editor mapped it out. It looked easy. All there was to do was to go out, find a bum, or let a bum find me. I have always been good bait for bums. Then I would ask the bum about bumming and print the story, as he told it. But there was one thing we had overlooked, one calculation we had not made; we had not reckoned with the pride of the bum.

I suppose that in the week I was stopped by a dozen different bums, frowzy, down-at-elbows and out-at-elbows, but when I asked them of their business, they became taciturn and uneasy. Some of them took me, I think, for a plainclothes policeman, others plainly thought I was crazy. They became restive, and when it was suggested that pictures should be made of them in the exercise of their calling, they weighed anchor and made off, full steam ahead, and discharging black clouds of reproach and abuse.

A bum, the dictionary has it, is "an idle, dissolute fellow—a loafer." "To bum," says the same authority, "is to live by sponging on others," but this is by no means the whole matter. This takes no account of the pride of bums, of their infinite reluctance to talk of their profession and of the well-nigh impossible task it is to entice them before a camera, nor of their vanity when persuaded to do so. A bum is of no necessary age—there are old bums and young ones. Loafers may be fat or lean, but they are all alike, dyed-in-the-wool and contradictory colors of pride and timidity.

There is, I am now prepared to declare, no trade or calling, the secrets of which are so jealously guarded, as are those of the professional bum. A man may beg at any time, in any place, but talk of his begging, he will not. One beggar I approached, or rather he approached me, declared that it would never do for him to have his picture taken. He had washed dishes, he vowed, in every restaurant kitchen in down-town Toronto, and should his picture appear as a bum, he would be done for. In vain I pointed out that what was wanted of him was merely a deodorized form of panhandling, a sort of moving-picture begging. "Twas no use. Of all wild animals of street or forest, bums are the wildest and most wary. So that this, which was to have been the story of a bum, was in a fair way to turn out merely a bum story. Then I secured the services of the bum whose pictures appear herewith.

I had almost given up. Bum after bum was approached, begged to

Continued on Page 2

