

# PITIFUL MENDICANT GIVES WAY TO THE CUNNING BEGGAR

A Special "Slanguage" Used in the New Fraternity and the Old Threadbare Wiles Are Displaced These Days by Ingenious Trickery to Get Alms.



A Typical Crippled Beggar.

If you'll give me your attention, some facts to you I'll mention, about the "bums" convention, that was held at Montreal.

CHORUS.



This Fellow Has Made a Fortune Posing as a Foreign Nobleman.

From the days of "Philly Pop" and "Erie Grip," said to be the two original American "burley" beggars, who flourished back in the early seventies, down to the present time, when, it is estimated, there are no less than 500,000 beggars, "burleys" and "locals" in this country, boys, or "gunnels," have played a large part in contributing to their support. No well-regulated and properly conducted beggar camp is lacking in boys who have run away from homes in city and country to "fight Indians" or win fame and fortune in the West.

These boys get to the end of their slender finances and resort to the camps for food. They are welcomed, but outwardly frowned upon, and, after being taught begging stories, if they don't already know a lot of them, are sent out to collect money for beer. The huskies know "plinging" will be far easier for the boys than for them, and so the boys have come to be regarded as almost indispensable to the profession.

Each decade since begging in the United States became a popular calling has been productive of its own form of deception. There have been ingenious variations, but not very many different schemes, as many think. Old "Philly Pop" himself invented the "lye bug." He was a Philadelphia veteran of the civil war anyway, and when he found that he could produce an ugly scar on his body by a lye burn which he could pass sometimes for an honorable wound received in the service of his country and at others as the result of a railway accident which incapacitated him for work, he thought himself living for life. He made an excellent living for many years, and passed the secret on to "Erie Grip" and others until the game spread all over the country and was worked to death. Mr. Forbes says there is hardly an old

The "dummy racket" came in about five years ago, and is still at the height of its popularity. It has been by far the most difficult form of deception to catch up with, according to Mr. Forbes. It consists simply in the "burley's" determination not to speak and not to seem to hear. All the king's pinchers could not get a word out of some of the "huskies," and the police have had the greatest difficulty in proving that a man working the "dummy racket" is not the afflicted being he poses to be. Sometimes when a man caught working the game is known to be a faker,



One of the Most Successful Begging Letter Writers.

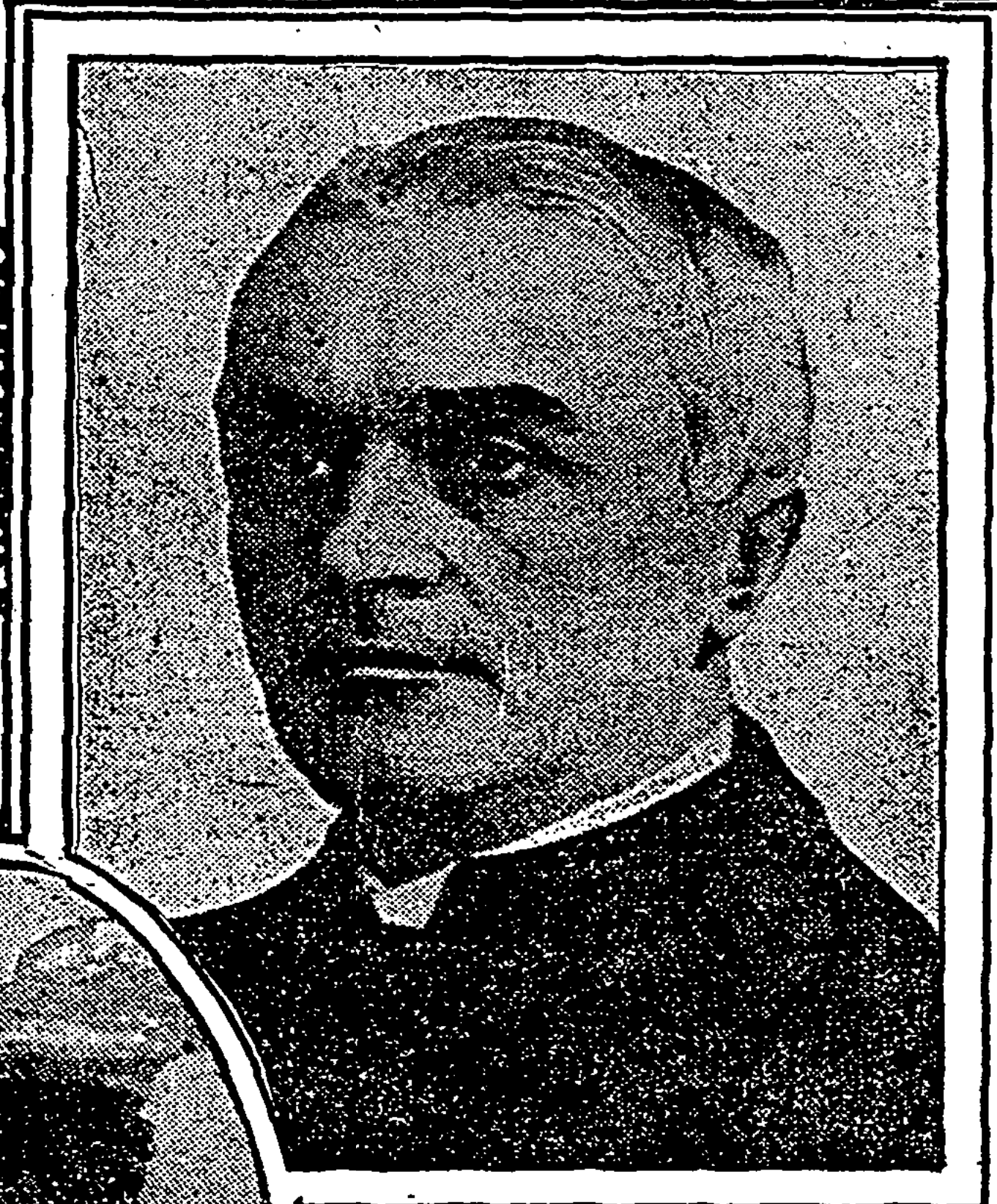
beggar in this country who has ever had the distinction of being a "burley" whose uprolled left sleeve does not reveal a series of lye-burn scars. In a short while, when "plinging" on that plan became unfruitful, a variation came in the production of scars and blisters by the application of cantharis, or blister beetle.

When this game got old and failed to work some ingenious "husky" invented the "throw-out," which was popular for many years, and is yet to be met sometimes. In this the "burley" drops his left arm and hand out of joint and drags his left foot as if suffering from a severe form of paralysis. The simulation was well-nigh perfect, and it was a long time before the people discovered the deception. Some of the old-timers got so expert that though they have been taken to Bellevue Hospital and subjected to stiff electric currents to "shake them out," have been able to lie crippled through it all.



A Bogus Collector for Charity.

the police put him through a series of jumps which test his nerve to the utmost and usually enables him to find his voice. Not long ago Mr. Forbes was called



This Is the Consumptive Type with a Sad Tale. In Reality He Is a Healthy Specimen.

"Aw, get out," the police wrote back crisply, and the man was carted to the hospital.

Dr. Arlitz, who is one of Mayor Gaynor's physicians, was called in to give the ether. Seaman, after a hard fight, was overpowered and stretched out on the operating table. He had not uttered a word, and the police and Dr. Arlitz also heavy damages from the city.

"Suppose this man is really deaf and dumb," argued they, "he might collect heavy damages from the city?"

"He can talk as well as any of us," insisted Mr. Forbes. "I know it, because I have heard him."

This convinced doctor and police, and the ether was administered. While under its influence Seaman said two or three words distinctly, but when he came out, not knowing that he had done so, he signaled for pad and pencil and again threatened dire calamities for the police, the doctor, and the town. He was immediately sent back to sleep. When he came to a second time, he spoke up cheerfully enough:

"Boys, you've got me. I give it up." Seaman had been "working" on a Lackawanna train, handing out cards telling his tale, and later collecting whatever he could get.

Mr. Forbes was called on a short time ago to see two beggars captured at Poughkeepsie. They turned out to be "Pekin Eddie" and "Jersey Blackie," two notorious characters.

There are still plenty of red-blooded "burleys" who would "chuck" their jobs before resorting to the aid of "petticoats" for their living, but the "profession" as a general thing is somewhat degenerating. The "high-heel racket" is yearly becoming more and more popular. This consists of having girls, picked up in the back rooms of



Pitty the-Blind Man.

this and other large cities, put on a shoe with a heel several inches high. The effect is to throw one hip almost out of place, produce a decided limp, with a small affectation. For effect a crutch is dragged along, and in this get-up collections are usually good.

Outgoing suburban trains are the favorite scenes of action. The man for whom the girl is working is on the same train, keeping a close watch on the result of the dragnet for coin. The girl "limps" through the train giving out cards. Here is one used by Virginia Wilson, who was recently trapped by the police and relieved of her high heel:

Being crippled in such a manner that I am unable to earn my living by hard work, I am trying to get enough money to learn shorthand and typewriting so I can become self-supporting.

Please give what you can. Yours truly, VIRGINIA WILSON.

This was the reverse side of the card: A CRIPPLED ORPHAN GIRL'S APPEAL.

To school I went one morning, On a bright summer day; Not a dangerous thought in range, Ah! little did I think, my friends, An hour would make a change.

In an hour I was a cripple, And when I laid down that night, 'Twas on an operating table, Beneath a surgeon's knife.

I suffered long in the hospital, Got well-it is mystery how, And turned out in this busy world The way you see me now. Price-Anything you wish to give.

Mr. Forbes says the highest ambition of a "burley" is to have a saloon in New York or San Francisco when he gets old, to which all of the young "burleys" come when in town. There are several saloons on the Bowery and other downtown streets at present conducted by former "huskies" who do not care for the general trade, but only such as speak the "language of the tribe." Next to keeping a saloon a "burley" prefers being a yeggman. It is considered a manly calling, worthy of one who scorns "poutice route" work.

The "burleys" have a music as well as a language of their own. The first stanza and the chorus of one of their most famous songs at the Montreal convention has already been quoted. Another, the "Tank Song," runs like this:

Oh, we left Frisco a month ago, Eastbound for Chicago, The headshack (brakeman) ditched us at a burg.

The other side of Fargo, Sez he, "And if you are a bum, And not a mush or a chronker (one who goes to jail or almshouse for the winter,) Just walk down to the water tank And there put up your 'moniker' (name). Oh, I went down to the water tank— It was all marked up with chalk. There wuz bums from every State From Frisco to New York.

The kid-glove variety of beggar infests the cities, Mr. Forbes finds. The most intelligent and resourceful become letter writers and make good money at it. William Edgar Finlay is one of the most notorious of the letter writers, posing at various times as a distant connection of all the well-known families of New England and the South.

The "hochstabler" is the German and east side beggar. The "black-hoods" are the old women, closely hooded in mourning veils, who go about the streets telling pitiful tales and hoarding thousands of pennies. One of these "black-hoods" who for years had been going to St. Vincent's Hospital for breakfast dropped her bag on the floor there some time ago, and about \$70 in pennies and small change rolled out on the floor.

Mary Duff, another celebrated "black-hood," who spent most of her nights at the Municipal Lodging House, was found to have about \$7,000 in bills in her dress.

"Hunkies" and "Woops" are respectively Hungarian and Italian beggars. Mr. Forbes says Italians don't become "huskies." They don't beg, as a rule, unless actually disabled. He recalls one, however, Lorenzo Marchionne, who was recently found to have \$1,800 in cash in his pockets. While one of the purposes of Mr. Forbes's organization is to prosecute fraudulent beggars, its chief aim, he declares, is to prevent mendicancy, to aid those likely to become beggars in getting honest employment, and thus make them self-respecting, productive citizens, for, generally speaking, he says, once a beggar always a beggar.