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Origin of the Hobo



Hobos, like the poor, we have with us always. At this season of the year, not a dusty country road is without them. Basking in the sunlight on the park benches of our cities or hidden away snug and out of the way on our wharfs, they spend long days in sleep and idleness. They really constitute an ever present ever threatening problem, social as well as economic. It is said that in this country, before the Civil War, they were practically unknown. Now there are over a million of them. Where in the world did they all come from? "Wanderlust" as the Germans call it, or the call of the road, is responsible for a large part in the making of them.

Every individual feels it. The business man's jaunt to the sea-shore or our short week end at the inn in the mountains satisfies this longing in us. The hobo has not the means to gratify his desire in a conventional way, so, being resourceful, he shoulders his bundle and takes to the road. This feeling is common to all peoples and classes in every age.

Were not the crusaders and the pilgrims of the early centuries affected by it? It was not altogether the religious fervor that first started them on their journeys, but the lure of long roads with their many turns which led through farm lands, over the hills and through densely shaded forests. The thought of distant lands with their strange customs, folkways and dwellings led them on—that restless, unsatiable desire to be off, seeing new things and feeling new experiences.