

genuine probity that make the Gipsy middleman welcome both where occasional credit is necessary, and among his countryside customers. In the main they are van-dwellers. In the summer time, as with us, traveling certain well-defined routes and purveying in villages and even in the outskirts of towns and cities, articles whose annual aggregate value amount to a stupendous sum.

Their cavalcades at the outset may comprise one or more vans. These are, briefly described, tiny houses upon wheels. They are drawn by donkeys, or often by broken down city tram horses which the Gipsies get in the cities for a song, and which with care are finally transformed into excellent cattle. Following these may be three or four, or a half dozen, little donkey carts, after the fashion of the costermongers' city carts. These will hold the real resources of the band. An examination of the latter would reveal almost enough material in quantity, certainly enough in variety, to stock a little country store.

This stock in trade has not been picked up at random. In the London Whitechapel district there are great storehouses of "Travelers' Goods." Their owners, who I find include wealthy Gipsies, could not continue in business without the Gipsies' trade. The goods handled are somewhat similar to our American "bargain counter" odds and ends, especially in tinware, and metal goods, hardware, crockery, cheap oilcloths and household nicknacks, with the coarsest beads and gilded jewelry. It would be a revelation to ordinary English tradesmen to realize the enormous quantities of stuff annually disposed of in this manner throughout England, Scotland and Wales and the integrity of these Gipsy wanderers where they ask and receive credit for their supplies, as they often do. Smaller "Travelers' Goods" stores may be found near the Bull Ring in Birmingham, where carts may be refilled in the lazy journeyings; but small shipments from time to time are forwarded by rail from London.

I have friends in the fruit and nut trade in the Drury Lane quarter of London who have supplied Gipsies in all parts of the provinces for the past twenty years. Half of this trade is done on credit, and the fruiterers all inform me they have never lost a penny at the hands of their thousands of Gipsy small customers. All these goods, fruits and nuts are hawked in little villages and sold at fairs and on market-days. Indeed the English country fair of today would lose all its picturesqueness and most of its attractions for younger people were the pretty Gipsy booths and Gipsy showmen withdrawn.

About the middle of the century when the British Rural Police Act, which was directed against Gipsies and all wandering folk of the road, came in force, we find Borrow lamenting that the "Gipsy had nowhere to lay his head." The oppressive measure undoubtedly sent America 50,000 English Gipsies within a period of ten years. Indeed it almost extirpated Gipsydom in Great Britain. But the coming Gipsy soon saw a way to mend his fortunes. He took out a license to become a traveling merchant. "Two and sixpence" gives him this right for the period of one year. He could still remain a Gipsy in every other particular. Insensibly and by degrees he

actually became the fellow whose vocation he originally assumed in order to merely exist.

There gradually followed a system among the wanderers of providing "Gipsy ground" on which to camp in safety from the raids of the mounted constabulary. Gipsies here and there who had got a footing and could be trusted bought or leased bits of waste land, unused lanes, idle tracts at the outskirts of cities and towns, or camping rights in roomy old stable yards. These are in turn sublet to arriving pilgrims at from one shilling down to a penny a day. And thus, with Gipsy travelers who really have something besides "black arts" to sell, one can travel from Land's End to John O'Groat's house, or London to Oban, and return, and never upon the road by day, or underneath the tent or the van-roof and the stars at night, be outside the comforting protection of watchful British law.

But the British Gipsy is something more than a "vagrom" trader. His kind are encroaching upon, or making for themselves, many other profitable pursuits and vocations. I have always held that in this would be found the real evolution of the Gipsy; and that in just the degree he became like other men—not in religion, because you can no more reach a Gipsy with Christian missionary schemes than you can secure any expression of belief from any other form of Agnostic—in vocation and the betterment to himself and family in material living, in like degree would the so-called "black arts" of Gipsydom disappear. I have from time to time shown this to be true among American Gipsies. It is gratifying to find it true among British Gipsies. I do not regard them as having chosen the most elegant of vocations; nor as a class can they be said to sustain enviable relations to society. But they are doing something; making money; finding themselves possessed of inherent industrial power; and their acquisition and possession of means are making them a better race of men.

In one of the large London "Traveling Goods" concerns previously referred to, the largest shareholder is a Gipsy who is reputed to be worth fully £8,000. I know of many shooting galleries in London conducted by Gipsies. They are not only successful with these, but, in associative form, just as they are beginning to own most of the money-making Punch-and-Judy shows of the Metropolis, control many like privileges at noted places of holiday resort, near London, from which unusual profit is derived. One of the most thriving vegetable boothmen of Covent Garden market is a Gipsy, who is in great favor with and is brought much trade by the countless costers of the neighborhood.

Near the Royal Albert Docks is a public house owned and conducted by a Gipsy, and this property is worth more than £2,000. Precisely as in some of the leading American cities, where important horse sales-stables are owned by Gipsies who are thought to be of another race, I found in London and its environs thirty-one similar establishments wholly controlled by Gipsies. They are credited with an extraordinary amount of trade, not only in horses but in donkeys, Shetland and Cushendal ponies and goats. Commission dealings are unknown. Every transaction is made for cash, and in two of these places the leasehold, fittings and stock

of animals always on hand must require the possession of a capital of from £5,000 to £10,000.

An old and profitable business in London is that of purveyor of carts and donkeys to the costermongers. There are thousands upon thousands of these costers in the metropolis. Many are notoriously improvident. To start in business requires a hand-barrow or cart, and a coster of recognized standing must possess both cart and donkey. There are many places where from fifty to 500 carts are hired out by the day, week or month and where costers may purchase barrows, carts and donkeys on the partial-payment plan. Those controlling this manner of business are said to secure a profit of 500 to 1,000 per cent. They are usually graduated costers; but three of those engaged in the traffic I know to be Gipsies, who are becoming very rich. They are supposed to be retired costers, with whom London Gipsies have many points of common resemblance, character and interest.

The most surprising discovery of this sort I ever made in London was in the acquaintance of a dramatic agent, near the corner of York and Waterloo roads, on the Surrey side, while making inquiries regarding the haunts and ways of London music-hall performers among the many agents of this vicinity. The man is one of the richest and most powerful of this numerous tribe. Those who daily deal with him believe him to be a Hebrew; but I had indubitable evidence, aside from his admission, that this man, whom hundreds of the "professors" fawned upon and feared for his favor and influence in "booking" their London and provincial music-hall engagements, was none other than one of the outcast Romany race. He had in former times been "on the road" with "vagrom" traveling shows, some of which he still controls, and had, gradually and without attracting attention to his early Gipsy associations, become a dramatic agent in this famous "Poverty Junction" region.

I know in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, Bristol, Plymouth and London, of many Gipsies who are chimney-sweeps and who, by hiring others and doing "contract" work have secured independence and comfort. At Brighton, Southport, Scarborough and other important English seaside resorts are hundreds of donkeys upon which "outers" and all children are given bonebreaking rides along the beaches. Nearly all the owners of these are Gipsies, some of whom not only have respectable bank accounts but also own town properties. In and about Nuneaton and Coventry are many Gipsy property owners. A few are farmers, but most own properties at the outskirts of these cities, such as places for stabling, sale stables and old inns which still have attraction for the farmers, and make dickering in horses and other live stock possible and profitable. Probably the richest of all British Gipsies, one Smith, lives at Nuneaton. He owns nearly all the houses and land in one entire street; has money in considerable sums loaned to speculative traveling Gipsies; and is also the owner of bank stock and blocks of shares in the London and North Western Railway. Altogether his holdings are computed to exceed a quarter of a million dollars.

On one occasion while visiting the old cathedral city of Gloucester, England, and wandering in St. Catherine's street,