

**A DAY WITH A
TRAMP: AND
OTHER DAYS**

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A Day with a Tramp: And Other Days by Walter A. Wyckoff

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WALTER A. WYCKOFF

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BY
Augustus
WALTER A. WYCKOFF

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL ECONOMY IN PRINCETON
UNIVERSITY; AUTHOR OF "THE WORKERS"

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PREFACE

THE following narratives, like those published in the series of "The Workers," East and West, are drawn from notes taken during an expedition made ten years ago. In the summer of 1891 I began an experiment of earning my living as a day laborer and continued it until, in the course of eighteen months, I had worked my way from Connecticut to California.

In justice to the narratives it should be explained that they are submitted simply for what they are, the casual observations of a student almost fresh from college whose interest in life led him to undertake a work for which he had no scientific training.

W. A. W.

PRINCETON, October, 1901.

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
A DAY WITH A TRAMP	1
WITH IOWA FARMERS	41
A SECTION-HAND ON THE UNION PACIFIC RAILWAY	91
"A BURRO-PUNCHER"	127
INCIDENTS OF THE SLUMS	168

A DAY WITH A TRAMP

HE was an American of Irish stock; his name was Farrell; he was two-and-twenty, a little more than six feet high, and as straight as an arrow. We met on the line of the Rock Island Railway just west of Morris, Ill.

But first, I should like to explain that in the course of eighteen months' experience as a wandering wage-earner, drifting from the Atlantic to the Pacific, this was the only day that I spent in company with a tramp.

It was in the character of a workingman and not as a tramp, that I began, in the summer of 1891, a casual experiment, by which I hoped to gain some personal acquaintance with the conditions of life of unskilled laborers in America. Having no skill, I could count on employment only in the rudest forms of labor,

and I maintained consistently the character of a laborer—a very indifferent one, I am bound to own—yet finding it possible everywhere to live by the work of my hands.

I did tramp, it is true, walking in all some twenty-five hundred miles of the distance from Connecticut to California; but I did it from set purpose, discovering that in this way I could get a better knowledge of the people and the country and of opportunities for work, than if I should spend my savings in car-fare from place to place. It cost me nothing to walk, and I not infrequently covered two hundred miles in the course of a week, but it generally proved that, in actual cash from the savings of my last job, I was out quite as much as I should have been had I ridden the distance. This was because it was often necessary to pay for food and lodging by the way, an odd job not always being procurable, and the people being far readier to give a meal than to take the trouble of providing work in payment for it. I could little blame them, and I soon began to make use of the wayside inns, trusting for contact with people more to chance