ON THE HIGH ROAD WITH THE FLIVVER BUM

The Junk Piles Gives Him His Car and He Has Developed the Fine Art of Panhandling Gas From Kind and Trusting Motorists

By RICHARD BARRY

Where are the hoboes of yesteryear,
The bums with their tin cans yodeling?
Gone as the birds' nests of yore, m' dear,
The bum in a tin can is traveling!

Archibald Clarkson of Phoenix, Ariz., collector of cowboy ballads, handed me that one as I stopped in to see him. "Who composed it?" I asked.

"Oh, we got that up for the show at the Elks' Carnival this Summer," he said. "It made quite a hit, too. The end men sang it. It was a topical number that called the turn on a new condition out here that nobody seems to realize. The hobo as we knew him in American life for several generations is no more. He is as extinct as the dodo. Haven't you noticed it?"

Come to think of it, I had. But I thought perhaps it was because I have motored along main-traveled highways, for the most part, where it is hard for pedestrians. "I've been thinking they must have been driven into the dirt roads of the hinterland."

"Not at all," said Mr. Clarkson. "They are right on those main highways, and more than ever. You've passed hundreds of them. Thousands, I'll bet. Only you didn't recognize them in their new setate. For the lowly hobo has climbed out of the dust of the road into the squeak of the motor car. He has become the flivver bum!

"There's romance in the flivver bum. And philosophy. And a great signpost in the domestic economy of the proletariat!"

"What do you mean by 'signpost in the domestic economy of the proletariat?'"

"Just that. The sociologic historian of the future will devote a chapter to the hobo of this age and he will comment on his rise from legs to wheels as one of the most significant episodes in the national life of America. His account will run something like this: 'Prosperity among Americans of that age had become so widely spread and so thoroughly distributed that even the mendicants of the lowest stratum of society found means to travel in the discarded motor cars of their more affluent fellows; they abandoned the peripatetic habits of their myraid ancestors and suddenly, within the scope of a very few years, were to be found traveling from place to place almost entirely by means of the gasoline engine; a condition entirely unprecedented heretofore in human society. That is what you will read—if you live long enough!"

"I thought you said it was here now."

"So it is. Only nobody seems to realize it yet."

"Do you mean to say there are no walking hobos left?"

"Haven't seen one in Phoenix in five years. Plenty of 'em in tin lizzies, only somehow they don't seem hobos when they can choke an exhaust."

"But if they can afford to buy a car and run it, they are no longer hobos."

"Yes, they are. In the first place, they don't have to buy a car. In the second place, it doesn't cost anything to run 'em. I'll take you out to the city dump. You'll probably find a couple of hobos there right now assembling a flivver out of the cast-off parts of discarded machines. You'll find the same thing in any town in the Southwest."

"Hobos like that must be mechanical geniuses."

"Possibly some of them are, but if they know no more than how to crank and pedal, they can go to a used car dealer and buy a flivver for a few dollars."

"Even so," I hesitantly admitter, "there is still the problem of gasoline. Can they pick that up free too on the city dump?"

"No. But they have their ways. Do you mean to say that you have traveled across the country and haven't been touched yet for a gallon or two of gas? Well, just wait. You say you are going on to Flagstaff. What route?"

"The Apache Trail."

"Good," said Mr. Clarkson. "There's none better for what I have in mind. After you leave Roosevelt you climb the long Sedona hill. If you don't pick up more than one flivver bum along the Apache Trail and up that Sedona Hill, then I'm no ballad monger."

I said good-bye to Mr. Clarkson and traveled on. I began to patch together out of my memory of the previous few months certain disconnected incidents. There was the keeper of the municipal camping space out of Sacramento, Cal., whom the newspapers had quoted as asking for a special reservation for tin lizzies whose drivers could not afford the twenty-five-cent-a-night tariff imposed at the protected plaza. He said these were always men who seemed to have no objective. "Roamers," he called them. In another day, doubtless hobos.

Then there was that incident in Montana the Fall before. I was coming along a dirt road at a fair pace when suddenly across the prairie an open flivver bounded out of the tall grass, as if from ambush, and stopped athwart the road, rendering it almost necessary for me to stop to avoid a collision. I remembered what another motorist had told me—that this was a method employed by hold-up en. He had urged me never to halt.

This man, however, was of so haphazard a nature that one could not doubt his apparent harmlessness. There was a week's stubble on his chin, tattered clothes on his gaunt body, and a general shiftlessness in his eye and demeanor. The car fitted the man, or the man the car, as you choose. Only one tire was partly inflated. Two tires were quite flat. The fourth wheel had no tire, but an old shirt bound about its rim. The front fenders were gone, and the rear ones flopped about like an elephant's ears. The dashboard was broken down; the rear seat was out; the top was gone; half of the hood was torn away. Still, my eyes actually had seen the thing move. On the earnest solicitation of the driver I "loaned" him some gasoline. He wanted to go only a few miles, he said.

Was that a hobo, too? Might I not have met him a few years before tramping the same road, his bundle on a stick?

I was thinking of that Montana mendicant as I began climbing the Sedona Hill. Then an unexpected grandeur claimed my full attention for the moment. A hill? With a rise of 8,000 feet in seven miles? Through serrated buttes, prismatic with coloring worthy of the Grand Canyon, among pines and sycamores cleft by the floods of centuries one travels. It is inspiring.

As I climbed I realized I was on a one-way road, the "hill" rising half a mile above on one side of the road and falling half a mile or more on the other. What if one were to meet some one part way up the incline. A mile from the top, I met him—the flivver bum in his bum flivver. All his tires were flats, and there had been no attempt to inflate them. They were all bound up with old rope and pieces of gunny sacking and rags.

I stopped. He ran his nose into the hillside, leaving his car full athwart the road. It was impossible for me to pass without the certainty of toppling into the ravine a hundred yards below.

He got out and came forward apologetically. His person was symphonic with his tires—clothed, after a certain fashion, in mismatched and patched apparel. But he had a pleasing smile and a most appealing proposition. He was sorry, he said, that we had met thus on this one-way road, and as we were nearer the top than the bottom he considered it only fair that he should back a mile or two and let me out, rather than to insist that I back five or six miles and let him down. Only . . . Here was the rub.

"You see, Mister," he said, "I kain't rightly back 'cause I haint got no gas. I was just coasting down to Sedona to the station there."

"Where do you live?" I asked.

He gestured vaguely in the direction of Utah. "Yonder!" he said. "Or—"He waved an arm toward Nevada. "Oh thar—sometimes!"

"What are you doing here?"

"Passin' through."

"Well, I have an extra tin of gasoline under my seat. Suppose you had that, would you back up for me?"

"Say, mister! Now that's an idee! Never thought o' that!"

He poured the gas into his tank and chugged back to the summit, where there was room to let me pass. As we halted for a word of farewell he called: "I'd pay ye for th' gas, mister, only I hain't got th' change by me jist now."

"Then how did you expect to get gas at the station below?"

He grinned amiably.

"I know 'em down thar!" he said, "and if y' want th' rest o' yer gas outa my tank, gimme a syphon.

"Keep it," I said, "and good luck!"

"Same to you! And many of 'em!"

He began slipping down the hill again, to panhandle the next wayfarer, I imagine. For a few gallons of gas? It was hardly an indictable offense.

That night in the Hotel Flagstaff there was Archibald Clarkson. He had come on the train. I told him about my adventure on the Sedona Hill.

"Didn't I tell you?" he exclaimed. "It's the new way of getting a handout. Only the hand-out now is gasoline."

Friend—"You awnt harmony in your family life, don't you?" Benedict—"Not if I have to play second fiddle to get it."

WANTED A STIFF KICK

Friend: Why are you eating starch, my dear?

Wife: I want to make a good stiff kick when hubby comes home.

"ADAMSON'S ADVENTURES"—By O. Jacobson.

You Can't Always Believe What You Hear.

WARRIOR WOMEN STILL RULE IN A REMOTE ASIAN KINGDOM

A strange land, where the women rule and the male members of the family are kept to the house, has just come to light in the ancient kingdom of Azerbeidzhan, among a tribe known as the Yassi. This tribe is believed to be a fragment of the old race of Avars, who once carried the sword from their domain in Asia as far west as Italy and Germany before their encounter with Charlemagne sent them reeling back in defeat. But the Amazon, it would seem, persists even to the present day, still clinging to her stronghold in the mountains of Asia, whence she emerged, according to the famous Greek myth, to make war on all mankind.

The "Battalion of Death," formed of Russian women, in the World War is a modern example of the Amazonian tradition, but in that instance the female warriors were fighting for their country and not for a kingdom of their own. There have been times, however, when women have sought to attain dominance by a recourse to arms. In Bohemia in the eighth century bands of warrior women sprang up and endeavored to seiz the country and proclaim a matriarchate, and as late as the eighteenth century travelers returning from Russia brought reports of communities that consisted exclusively of women. From the period of Marco Polo until comparatively recent years, tales have been told of fighting women in the Far East, of female palace guards at Bangkok and of troops of Amazons in Bantam and China.

According to old chronicles, Libussa, who attained the throne of Bohemia in ancient days, armed and trained women for war, and at her death these Amazons revolted and placed Valasca, one of their number, on the throne. Only women were permitted to become soldiers under Valasca, the right thumb of all males being cut off so that they could not wield weapons. For seven years this Amazonian State lasted until the death of the Queen restored the men to power.

The most serious attempts to discover a kingdom of the Amazons—a legend firmly believed in for centuries—were made by the Spanish adventurers in South America. Columbus himself had heard of an island inhabited only by women, who lived by hunting and made war on their neighbors.

When, in 1540, Francisco de Orellana was exploring the jungles of Brazil he heard repeated stories of a domain of warrior women, and on the banks of the Maranon he was met in combat by armed men and women natives In his record he says that the women warriors were tall, fair and clad in the skins of wild animals. They fought fiercely and killed many of his party before they were driven off Orellana, in honor of his women adversaries, renamed the river the Amazon.

"A stepper who goes the pace is usually given the gait."

"I cannot understand," said the vicar, "why so many of the congregation go straight from church to the public-house." "That," commented his sprightly young curate, "is what is known as 'the thirst after righteousness'."

Gift Suggestions for the Farm

Perhaps you are planning Christmas gifts. You know it ought to be done, but you do hate to fritter the money away in things that will count for nothing. In planning for your own family why not have some that will make for year-around health?

Good Digestion—Much of the indigestion of farm folks is due to the constipation induced by the cold, dreary earth closet that is a thousand miles away on winter nights, and obtrusively close on hot, summer days. Make the family a Christmas gift of sanitary plumbing. Alternative: a chemical toilet.

Good Eyesight—How are your lighting facilities? Do you still use tallow dips or kerosene lamps? Get a complete lighting system, if possible. If this is not within reach of your pocketbook, you will find some excellent lamps that will at least give superior light for the living room, equal to electric lights.

Fresh Air—Keep your house at the proper temperatures, and to regulate this, install a reliable thermometer in each living room.

Plumbing Comfort—One of the best gifts for the housekeeper is the introduction of a force pump, tank and home water supply. Not only will this give comfort for every day of the year, but it will add to the value of your property, and your health will be better because of a plentiful supply of pure drinking water.

For Good Sleep—Buy a sound, well-constructed mattress. Many a person is provoking "that tired feeling" by trying to sleep on a sagging, old mattress that compels one to lie all night in a strained position.

Sound Teeth—If your gifts must be inexpensive, take a look at the toothbrushes that are being used by the different members of the family. In addition to brushes, you may consider gifts of dental floss, or some dainty dentfrice. Possibly mother or father would be willing to install new teeth if a Christmas gift from the children.

Family Sanity—It is thrown in with these other gifts. When you have good sleep, good digestion, good light, fresh air, good food and good water, there comes a courage, a harmony, and a balanced humor that eases friction, dispels family gloom, and makes for a genuine Merry Christmas the year around

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Big Business

Floorwalker (to impatient customer, leaving)—"Can't you get waited on, Madame?"

Madame—"No. I'm afraid I came at an unfortunate time; your salesladies are in conference."—Boston Transcript.

Cheap Publicity

Conductor—"How old is the little girl?"

The Child—"Mother, I'd rather pay the fare and keep my age to myself."—Humorist (London).

Rubbing Him the Right Way

Premier Mussolini's son born yesterday was baptized Romano to-day. The King and Queen sent massages of congratulation. — San Francisco Chronicle.

Famous British Aviator Begins Flight to Central African Lakes

Sir Alan Cobham to Make a 20,000-Mile Trip by Flying-Boat, Which Will Take Him Completely Round the Coast of the Dark Continent

flight which is to take him up the Nile, to the Central African Lakes, across to the coast at Beira and thence right round the coast of Africa before they get back to Plymouth, Sir Alan Cobham gave an interview to the press. Sir Alan is as great an enthusiast about flying as ever, or more so, for this cruise is being made in the latest Singapore all-metal flying boat which has been lent by the Air Ministry. His earlier great journeys were made by airplane, his flight to Australia and back by airplane fitted with floats, and now comes a journey by flying boat.

Sir Alan stressed the point that this is no "stunt." It is not made to get publicity for man or machine. It is a utility flight pure and simple. He looks upon it as a sound business proposition from an Imperial point of view and as the crystallization of his former African flight. It is a pioneering flight, for it will be the first long distance flight undertaken by flying boat for civil purposes. The craft to be used is the identical machine which was one of three to make an extended trip to the Baltic and back during last summer. It is driven by two Rolls-Royce-Condor engines.

"It is a practical craft, a flying ship, an aerial yacht," said Sir Alan. "It can alight on any sea, any river, any harbor. It is safe and seaworthy."

A survey of the air possibilities of the west coast of Africa will be carried out, which has never previously been done. Governors will be interviewed and the air needs of the various countries discussed and their possibilities investigated. A film operator will be one of the crew, and it is hoped that the results of his workk will bring home to the public the possibilities of British possessions in Africa. In fact, from first to last it is to be a nonspectatular, utility pioneer flight.

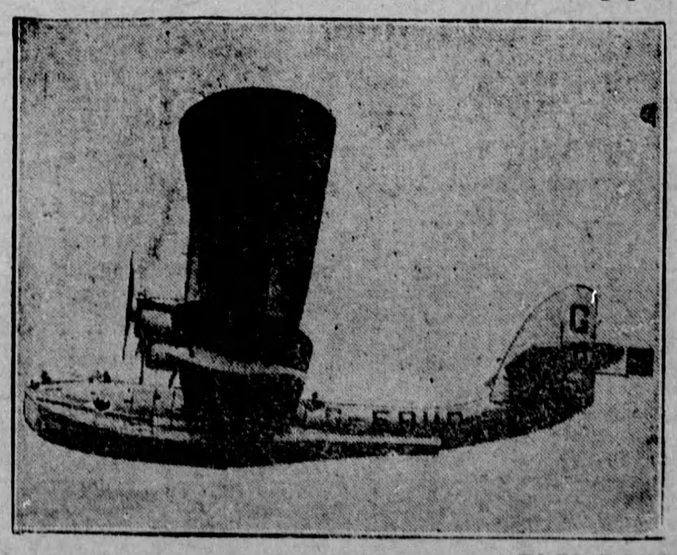
Apart from unforeseen landings, the Singapore will alight no fewer than 43 times on sea, lake or river, and will have flown close on 20,000 miles before she arrives back at Plymouth at the end of February or thereabouts. The flight is to be known as "The Sir Charles Wakefield Flight of Survey Round Africa" for, as in the case of Sir Alan's flight to Australia and back, Sir Charles is taking a big share in financing this one. He is a firm believer in the future of Imperial aviation.

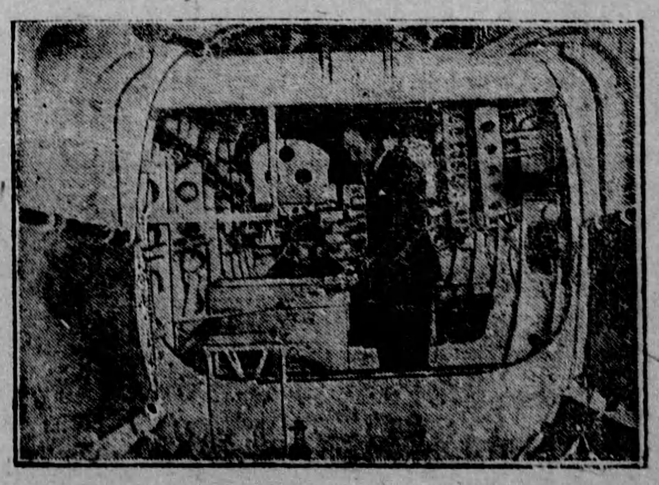
The North Sea Aerial Transport Company has now amalgamated with Alan Cobham Aviation, Ltd., for their combined interests in Egypt, the Sudan, Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika. They will operate as "Cobham-Blackburn Air Lines, Ltd."

Sir Alan Cobham intends to carry out a return flight from Kisumu, on Lake Victoria, to Khartum during the course of his African survey, so as to gain experience of the conditions of the Nile with the Singapore flying boat, which is similar to those which will be eventually used by the regular air service. As much mail matter as possible will be brought from England to distribute over this section and possibly mails will be carried on the return flight.

Sir Alan intends to meet representatives of the Official and commercial interests at each stopping place and if necessary, to go up country to discuss civil aviation as applied to any particular district. He should thus be able to collect information necessary to the successful establishment of air routes.

The "Singapore" Outside and In





TO TOUR THE COASTS OF AFRICA

Sir Cobham is at present surveying the Coasts of Africa in the above gigantic flying boat. Sir Allan is seen in the control room in the interior views. The ship bunks three while carrying a full crew of five.