

"Try not the pass," the old man said:
"Dark lowers the tempest overhead;
The roaring torrent is deep and wide,"
And loud that clarion voice replied,
"Excelsior."

Now, the old man probably advised the youth not to try the pass, because he knew, if he did, and got one, he would never be asked to pay fare again without feeling that outrage was perpetrated on him. The opium habit is a positive virtue compared with the pass habit. The fact that one is in no way entitled to free transportation only stimulates one in the desire to ride at some other fellow's expense.

One of the most dangerous laws we have is the one forbidding office-holders to accept passes. It keeps our leading citizens out of politics. Some one said in a moment of temporary aberration of mind) that he'd "rather be right than President"; but I'd rather have an annual on the New York Central than be an Assemblyman in the tents of wickedness. (That's another biblical quotation.)

The only drawback about using a pass (in addition to the loss of your self-respect) is the harrowing thought, which constantly hovers over you, that in case of accident your mangled remains will be of no cash value to your afflicted family. It is a safe plan, when traveling on a pass, to spend a portion of your ill-gotten gains on an insurance policy. Then, in case of accident, your last moments will be soothed by the thought that you have beaten the game both ways.

But inasmuch as I have never succeeded in worming a pass out of the sleeping-car people, I feel at liberty to make a few remarks on that branch of the railroad service, not in a carping spirit, but more in sorrow than in anger.

It is frequently remarked (especially in advertisements) that travel in our palace cars is the acme of comfort and luxury; and I guess they are about as perfect as they can be made and still pay dividends on diluted stock; and yet, after a night in one, I always feel as if I had been through a severe attack of cholera infantum.

In winter, especially, the question of temperature is trying. The mercury, soon after you start, bounds up to one hundred and ten degrees in the shade. You endure this until