



Normalcy Has Arrived

Normalcy is arrived.

The illustrious T-Bone Slim has projected his scintillating presence onto a job. (Great applause.) Somehow he eluded his caretakers and accepted a flattering offer of a position in an extra gang—as a gandy dancer. This sudden rise of Slim into prominence was an agreeable surprise to his many friends. Nevertheless, his enterprise was not without its “deleterious” side, inasmuch as: Time (in its mad passage) finds Slim’s hatband stretched, which is more than can be said of the belly-band around his neighborhood. . . . Thus it is we find him swaying, one foot in the air, doing yeoman service on one of the “trade arteries” of our beloved globe.

• • •

Contrary to all beliefs, Slim says, he isn’t going to bust any criminal syndicalism law on the first day . . . by kicking on the grub. Yet he insinuates that no government inspector is going to be foolhardy, or hardy, enough to eat any of it. He challenges any governmental agency (from Hoover up) to eat a mouthful of that material which is dished up to the dancing proletariat of the maintenance of the way. He defies the Labor Board to eat of the plenteous “vittles” provided by the “commissary” and served under the “By-Product Act” in the models of twentieth century sanitation on “all roads” cursed with Morgan & Co. management. He issues an invitation to the “board” and requests they allow themselves the privilege of dining with him. The expense will not be great—and if necessary he will look after them. Board is one dollar a day—low, considering the high cost of fertilizer. Bring a dollar with you, O ye Noble Labor’s Board, and stay with us the whole day long—eat with us and be merry—that’s a good fellow, learn with us.

• • •

The back of the panic is broken! Let us record that on this day, June 16th, T-Bone Slim had “one day in!”—one day nearer emancipation! Tonight, after a day of toil, he has five cents coming to him, if the road doesn’t go bankrupt! His expenses have been viz.: Board, five meals, \$1.70; fee, \$1. How the company came to overlook the nickel is a mystery. (Maybe it is intended for tobacco.) If so, then the Co. is too extravagant. Slim’s ‘head expenses (for snus) are only 3½ cts. per day.

• • •

Tomorrow is Saturday. . . .

Monday morning (if he isn’t fired before then) Slim will have 30 cents coming. If it rains Monday he will be owing the company 20 cents, for two days’ work. Slim thinks the only reason the company doesn’t rob him of his clothes is because the company is afraid of the Labor Board. . . .

• • •

Slim, you see, is not personally acquainted with the Board members and thinks the Board is a bunch of two-fisted, horny-handed battlers, who wouldn’t wait for the “drop of the hat” before engaging in battle for labor’s rights, in valiant defense of labor’s prerogatives, which is all labor has left. And that isn’t all he thinks (of the board), but space and modesty will not permit the use of such flowery language extolling the virtues of our heroic board of the recent wage cuts.

• • •

Well, the second day of “hopping” is come to an end at last! Such contrary “ties” no one ever saw! No more than Slim would tamp up one, somebody would step on it and tramp it down again—causing Slim great agitation of mind. . . . Upon such occasions he would wax wroth, and in a voice vibrant with emotion he would warn his collaborators to tread lightly, nor mar the scenery his diligence had so laboriously created—a task well done!

• • •

Let us glance back over our work.

Previous to 1893 practically all roads were controlled by German and English capital. Ham and eggs (and other good foods) were served to the gangs of tracklayers. Wages (outside of section men) were \$2.25, \$2.50 and \$2.75 per day. Board was \$3.50. A man could clear \$12.70 per week.

• • •

Then the House of Morgan took over the roads. (The panic of ‘93 was utilized for this purpose.) Then came the 90 cents a day. Since then have come the predigested pigs—slimy, disintegrating things, too far gone to be served uncooked. Since then have come the chicory coffee, lowest grade oleomargarine (untouchable), rancid bacon and pork (maggots withdrawn by special process).

Menu for week: Dogs, cow-lips, beef butts, pig snouts and ears, and red-horse, all of these in an A. No. 1 state of decay. The “poor devils” try to work on bread and chicory—and eggs on Friday (a concession to Catholics, unnecessary, considering the meat is unfit to eat at all times).

• • •

Nowadays a man working on the tracks, if he actually isn’t in a poisoned condition, is at least suffering malnutrition.

Previous to ‘93, when English and German capital was in control of the roads, we received good board for \$3.50 per week. Now we get nothing but low grade swill—and we are charged \$7 per week for it.

• • •

After mature consideration Slim has decided to withdraw his invitation to the Labor Board. He thinks it too risky. They might get hold of food that isn’t properly disinfected, get cramps, and die of pellagra before you could haul them to near-beer saloon.

Then where would we be without a labor board (standing by us) handing out decisions which save the railroads \$48,000,000 alone and reduce our wages the same amount?

• • •

And then again, by the time the board got together, passed a decision to accept Slim’s hospitality, Slim might not be here (or any place else) to show that august body around.

T-Bone Slim.

(Note: When the “Milwaukee Road” was put through to the Coast 10,000 ham and egg-eating tracklayers went West with it. When they come back, ham and eggs will return also. Get next. . . .