



T-BONE SLIM DISCUSSES FUSS AND FEATHERS

Motion attracts attention. Com-motion interest.—I have both.

Concordia, Kansas.—I hesitated a moment, in my mad rush thru the present world, to watch a bevy of gentle laborers picking chickens and roosters—defeathering poultry. And even, as I watched, the beautiful pickers removed the beautiful feathers from the beautiful birds, exposing the beautiful alabaster bosom of the chickens.—(Uh-huh, both.)

It was a scene of great and entrancing beauty. It was also a chicken picking establishment of great renown.

In addition to that it was early in the morning, or should have been, for had not I (ye noted and discreet chicken fancier) but recently arisen from my hard and virtuous couch.

The dexterity with which the ladies removed the feathers was something uncanny if not appalling and it occurred to me that it is no wonder there are so many bald headed men.

(Note: For furnishing them this alibi I expect a vote of confidence from the tortured sex.)

The fluffy feathers floated eddying in the consecrated atmosphere 'down the ventilated aisles twixt the crated piles of pulchritudinous roosters and garrulous hens. Our poet stood spell bound speculating as to what effect a broiler could, would, or might have on his prospective breakfast.

The girls appeared to be contented and happy, that is, if song is an indication of spiritual complaisancy and harrowing joy.—One of them began the "lilt," others joining in, and soon the feather strewn welkin fairly vibrated with the harmony of their melodious voices blended in some classic "composition" of a master artist. I hope I am not exaggerating and my ear may not be so keen, as it was, since John Young took to exploding cartridges, in an effort to give me the "Key" with a whining bullet. In fact, it was with gingerly-caution that I verified the presence of my sound receptacle and found it intact. But it may have lost some of its cunning as a sound detector and gatherer. No can tell.

What puzzled me was that such prosaic work as pulling feathers from a more or less dead bird could be so romantic and I strained my ears to catch the pulsating melody—and almost ruptured myself trying to remember the name of the song. Instinctively I knew it was a classic, (by Pietro Mascagni, Charlie Schwab or possibly one of our own Red Downs) and, so, I squirmed, quivered and grunted in my agony to recall the song. That these carefree ladies could sing while working seemed strange to me and further excited my jaded interest to identify the melodious masterpiece; mellifluous tocsin. With one mighty effort I concentrated all my fibres and faculties on the mystery, placed a finger in my mouth, rolled my eyes like a strangling calf, twisted one leg around the other and then—ah—and then, the words came to me as clear as the uncracked timbre of a bell:

John D. is saying,

Go feather your nest;

No fun in playing

Go feather your nest;

The zephyrs whisper,

Oh pull 'em off, sister;

You'll get a kind mister—

Go feather your nest.

Well! That kinda puts a different complexion onto the situation and I made up my mind that these ladies were "some of those gol dang Reds" I had heard about. Huh—making fun of their gol dang slavery—go feather your n'-n' box car! Huh.

My business, that of rubbernecking, being completed, I got myself under way and proceeded in a peaceable manner adown the track. . . . hadn't gone far when I came upon two children diligently picking the feathers from the person of a dove. The dove struggled valiantly trying to prevent a decent exposure but it was no match against the rising generation. It was in dire straits. Pretty nearly all its feathers had been removed and there was a certain strangeness about it that forcibly reminded us of a bob-haired flapper—so scantily was the bird clothed with splendor. "What the hell's the big IDEAH!" I politely inquired of the young rascals.

"That's the savage, in a child," butts in a fellow worker.

"Well, you see—mister—we're learning to pick chickens," replied the youngsters amost in one breath.

Now, if there is a connection between that song and picking chickens there must be a connection between the handiwork of these small boys and the labor of the maidens, and it will not surprise me if these young men progress along their chosen lines to such a frame of mind that some day they will scalp their sweetheart with great and good cheer—br a chair; or a lawnmower.

"That's the savage in a child."—

Not on your tintype. These young gentlemen assured me that they didn't want to hurt the dove; that they tried hard to get 'em off without hurting it; that they used every caution and gentleness in gettin' 'em off . . . Do you call that savage?

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A conscientious objector is a man that will not kill a rabbit but is willing to eat one . . . (I'm out of paper.)

'Twas I that passed judgment upon the dove's expectancy of life. Necessarily both were short—specially the judgment.

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No sirree! I swear by all that's wormey and holey, I did not eat that dove. You know me, editor, I'm innocent. I stand uncompromising, like Wellington before the battle of Waterloo; with me it is "Chicken or Nothing."—Once't I regale myself on dove, sparrows will be next and grasshoppers eventually . . . so, like Wellington before the battle of Marshalltown. . . "Chicken or Nothing."

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"It's rained two weeks, 'cept today. (Why not now?)"—Must be plugged up. If the skies were as tight as the farmers, the Kansas harvest would be over with.