

T-BONE SLIM

DISCUSSES

SLEEPING SICKNESS

Many people have amassed a notion that we, the scribe, are of good-natured, happy, sunny disposition—not that it matters—but such notion is a collection of errors, and is wayward or way-off. . . . Every night I bawl myself to s-l-e-e-p (when I don't shiver). In reality, I have won great fame for irascibility . . . etc. When we arrive at a lumber camp the boss begins to tremble and the "straw" hides his face from our searching gaze. Just the other day the foreman approaches us and says, "Slim, now I don't want you to jump," sez he, "and I hate to ask you to do it," sez he, "but I'm in an awful jam," sez he, "now, I want you to take that team of bounding bays and haul in a little firewood—never mind the wages," sez he, "I'll see to that" . . . and he took me in the office and told the clerk to give me three stacks of Copenhagen tooth powder, as an appreciation. . . . But just as the clerk jumped to his feet—I'm sorry to say—I woke up. The boss was shaking my foot, saying: "This is no hospital—if you're sick or sleepy you better roll up and roll out"

I tried to tell him I was waiting for a favorable wind—an east wind—so I could cut across over to the Hines camps—but all to no avail.

He was adamant.

Generally when we arrive at a camp the cook digs down into his sea-bag and pulls out his 4th of July apron, orders the flunkies (more or less soiled) into the roothouse and sends, by the B. C. (bull cook), a barrel of water, six bars of lily-white, with instructions for them to use "all or none" and to present themselves to his presence after they are presentable. Then he rushes over to the men's bunkhouse to shake our illustrious hand; steps on the cat's tail. . . 'Damn that cat—God, but I'm glad to see you, Slim'—while I blush appropriately and modestly. Hardly ever—any more—do they drive me out of camp at the point of a gun, 9 p. m., into a snow-storm, amongst coyotes and wolves—I s'pose that's because I've grown so crabby and cranky that they fear I would bite a chunk from their cannon—besides, the companies are in no position to declare war against so powerful an ally as your humble servant—we have declared for a truce, to give each time to prepare. Furthermore: the companies are too deeply immersed in logging to give their undivided attention to campaigns against our integrity; whereas I'm not—I'm not handicapped in any way.

But occasionally, today, a misunderstanding arises—when the foreman's schooling has been neglected or misplaced.

I'm driving a skidding team—I blush to mention their names, Bessie and Babe—a lady-like team—since 9 a. m., I've been conspiring how to get the big ash, butt, to the skidway; decided to leave it till after dinner (skidding elsewhere in meantime) so's to let the trail pack and freeze during noon hour and in order to have freshened team after dinner. All right. After luncheon I arrives at the "butt," hooks on, (she's stuck), hooks on other end, swings wrong end in trail figuring to haul "away from skidway," for a turn—(she's stuck again) — business of letting team blow ere we shake the other end—along comes the boss full of pea soup—"Pull 'er straight ahead," says he (if I do I'm blocked by stump, if the team could—log being dead weight, nosed).

"The team won't pull 'er," opines I.

"Pull 'er straight ahead," he yells.

"The team won't pull 'er," I yells.

"Pull 'er"

"Pull 'er hell, pull 'er yourself, here's the lines," says I.

"Go to the shanty, go to the shanty," he roars.

I roar.

He roars. (We both roar).

"Dat's right, dat's right," chips in the old Finn swamper, tickled 'cause I'm fired, (he's been with the company all his life—loyal). Note:—I mention this because of its "news" value; he is the first one of that kind I've ever met—a curiosity.

My position is quite clear; one teamster is enough for one team—especially if that team be high-life and small.

I ran into an 11-mile hike because of upholding that principle—and it commenced to snow—some day I'll get heart failure from failure to guard my surging irascibility—there should be a law against bosses intruding themselves among the feelings of lumberjacks. . . .

When you run with wolves you've got to howl!

And the boss came unto me and said: "Slim, forget it," says he; "I'm

a fool," says he, "but the company don't know it," says he. And he invites me into the office to have a dipper of prune syrup, and tells the clerk to mark down five days extra for me, and five dollars per month more—"not that the company is exactly stuck on you," as he said, "but as a slight token of appreciation of your sterling worth and character."

I reached out to accept the dipper and, in so doing, rolled off the bench—to the enjoyment of an intelligent but untactful bunch of camp inspectors.—Like the Frenchman, when he saw a cyclone, I says: "I can't see wat push dat thing."—T-b. Sl.