

Passing the Plate

By T-BONE SLIM

Just as the police officers gave up the pastime of nickel-snatching—a habit they had of grabbing "the change" from crap games—our leading railroads are taking up the habit of forcing men caught in their yards to buy transportation to the full extent of their capital—thus, to all intents and purposes, taking the very bread from the mouths of poor people. Missouri Pathetic is the latest offender—at Omaha.

This procedure cannot be classed grand larceny, on account of the petty amounts of money involved—pretty small business for a railroad that boasts thousands of miles of lines—hence, I'm persuaded, it's more like nickel snatching than, even, petty larceny.

The men are "forced" to buy tickets or go to jail. In other words, the railroads, through their "dicks" constitute themselves judge and jury; find the men guilty of trespass and sentence them to buy tickets with all their money.

Judge and jury! Ambitious aren't they? Nothing petty about that—After awhile we won't need no courts at all; the railroads will condescend to take care of the calendar, in their spare moments—and we can put our judges to pasture.

Transcontinental Larceny

I was indeed, practically seduced, into trying my hand and foot in the game of hitch-hiking, if you know what that is: begging rides from automobile and Ford drivers.

Well, I humped along the highways full of hope—nothing else much—and pretty soon along comes a car.

Hwa! Shall I stop him?

No!

I gave one look at the driver, through the dirty windshield and jumped into a ditch—he looked like a man that would rob the bank of his child; a farmer, probably.

When he was gone I crawled from the ditch and brushed myself.

A narrow escape!

Pretty soon along comes another one—Christ, are they all escaped convicts? Into the ditch, I goes—I'm not gonna be robbed by any car driver if I can help it.

After being in the various ditches all day, after dark I sneaked back into town and caught a train and I'm proud to say, here in Chew City, Iowa, my money (3 cents) is still in my pocket. Damn that hitch-hiking, anyway—you can't tell what's liable to happen to you!

Let us sing:

When the last p'pop bottle is empty
And the last joyous symphony sung,
It is then that it tickles our mem'ry
Just to note that as yet were un-
hung.

O, our lot is as hard as they make
'em;
What with chills, poison ivy and
corns—
And our change—as together we
scrape 'em—
But revives us a new set of mourns.

Not a doubt but our troubles are ex-
tant,
That they're powerful, ruthless and
real,
That we need no "diviner" or sex-
tant,
To locate the grim sorrow we feel.

After breakfast we're too apt to
hurry
For the next meal—we paw dirt and
squeal—
Yet we know that a five minute
worry,
Is enough for an average meal.

We complain much of losing our
hearing,
And conclude that ol' fate is un-
kind:
Thus engrossed in our hoping and
fearing,
Fail to see a poor cuss that is blind.
Disregard, then, our tears that doth
splatter,
And our tunes of stark bitterness
full—
What's the odds if we don't hear
the clatter
Of a tongue that is coated with
"bull"?

Let's forget all our errors and fail-
ings;
Looking backward but adds to the
pain—
Nothing much in melodious wailings,
Otherwise every effort's in vain.
Even if those shy, awkward back
glances,
In their wake, left our joy unre-
strained;
They would interfere with our—our
dances (or chances)
And, if nothing is lost, naught is
gained.

Looking backward we see but the
ruins!
Looking forward we see progress
built!
Therefore, let us have enough of
such doin's,
As of longing for milk that is spilt.
In this Age of mentality's rattle,
In this Era of Whisper and Buzz;
It is better to run like scared cattle,
Than to harp on the glory that was.
—T-B-S.