

It's Like This

By T-BONE SLIM

It is said snuff drives a person crazy. How well I know it! My snuff-box has been empty these many days and if any man is batty, it's I'm.

. . .

Now, I've used it fifty years and if it drives a man nuts, how about some of these farmers around here? They must have used it 150 years . . . ?

(But that isn't why I haven't been writing much, lately.)

It's like this:

My old fractured ribs are bothering me again to such an extent that I can scarce hold a pencil between my toes. You see, a few years ago I had some heavy lifting to do and you know when I get "hold of a thing" something must give—It did. It was my ribs. My short ribs, front and back. My partner here has a theory my ribs are all right but are starting to cave because I have failed to keep a proper amount of stuffing behind 'em, vitamins, etc., and are starting to buckle-up for that reason—

Reason?—why, that's unreasonable.

. . .

A certain uneasiness is pervading the chests of our crack writers in this land of greatest wealth—Hearst papers are no longer hollering for additional immigration but are on the contrary offering their properties to stockholders, via, also, the curb market—(Chi. "Herald-Examiner," N. Y. "American" got mentioned; in rural districts of the Omaha "Bee") This uneasiness is a natural condition although lacking the proper "horsepower" that would be present had the crack writers gone without their daily rations and had they left undissipated their three daily to hungers.

Therefore his somewhat tardy uneasiness stands out as a mere shadow temporarily crossing the horizon of their consciousness. The real, genuine uneasiness rests temporarily secure within the hearts of Mr. Hearst's countrymen—how long it will remain secure is a question that may well inspire our crack writers to greater realization of the calamities that are almost upon us—are upon us. There being no call at present for more "assimilable foreigners," Finns, Swedes, Danes, Norwegians, Germans, French, etc., the assumption is we have all the foreigners we can skin profitably at this time, and that our skimmers must remove their outfits to lands that are capable of supporting the "to be skinned" until the peaceful penetration is a fact—and the hide is safely removed and strung on the fence.

There is a certain peculiarity about this skinning process that makes it an ever present nightmare to all skin-bearing animals. Whether the critter has much or little epidermis there's always a long row of skimmers whetting their knives (in plain sight) and casting appraising eyes at the sun-kissed coat of pores . . . Not infrequently a skinner himself is horrified to recognize his own hide decorating the bulwarks of privacy and breastworks of spite . . . Not a hide seems secure (in its original location) in these days of super-civilization and civilized brainlessness . . .

Existence under a program of fears! Progress tempered with worry and tears!

—T.b. S.