

How Poems Are Made

By T-BONE SLIM

Many people have an idea that I stay up nights and Sunday afternoons writing these heartrending truths for the purpose of uplifting the readers of our otherwise faultless press.

Nothing of the kind.

In the first place I don't write in the night time, in the second place I slumber all day Sunday and, in the third place, our readers don't need any uplifting.

My sole purpose is to enlighten the linotype operator.

Some would think that Slim, mebbe, is trying to slip the editors a chunk of wisdom now and again camouflaged as an innocuous contribution.

I ain't that crazy.

In the first place, even if I convinced them, they still would think of me as a liar, in the second place editors are consecrated to the belief that anything that comes "in is no better than" not so bad and, in the third place, they don't have to read it—they can smell it blindfolded and send it down to the linotyper. That's the man I'm after! He can't dodge it! He's got to read it!! If he doesn't—he'll lose a day's pay (besides the cost of liquids to drown his sorrow.)

wlw

I'm reminded Crocker was editor of the Sol. in that fateful day when August Walquist and myself were attacked by muses, in old 951 W. Madison St. Nothing would do but write a song. August, hemmed in the corner, wrote two choruses that were the direct cause of Samuel Gompers' death—and I hawed in the wings and did the dirty work—three stanzas.

The masterpiece was finished!

"Take it up to Crocker," orders Walquist. "Way, Walquist, has the strain been too great on your brainpan?" inquires I, in sincere solicitude, "can't we lower it into a waste basket, ourselves?"

"Well, we'll both go up," blurts August.

wlw

Crocker was very nervous that morning after an all night study of economic problems and the participation of too much black coffee to drive the ever creeping slumber away—for those were perilous days and a great responsibility hinged upon our editors. Crocker was keen and alert—as usual. Walquist stood on one side of him; I, on the other—he was seated in the middle (a deucedly awkward position).

"I got a poem for you, Crocker," says I, in my best grave digger voice and funeral-director manner, "care to look at it?"

"Hand her over," groans Crocker, taking his cue from me.

He look at it, cleared his throat, twisted his neck and lookt at Walquist (185 lbs), turned his head and lookt at me (5 ft. 11½ inches) "why demmit," says he, "that's better stuff than has been coming up here; take it right down to the printer and tell him that if he don't get that in this issue I'll come down there and kick him all over the place..."

So we let him live!

wlw

"There," exclaims Walquist, as we hit the street, "when you've got a really good piece, everybody will admit it."

"A good piece? How do you know it's good?"

"Crocker said so."

"How does Crocker know, he hasn't seen it yet—he merely stared at it for three minutes."

"Dammit, I believe you're right, Slim," whispers Walquist a great flood of understanding lighting his noble face.

But the linotyper did see it and stated that "a rottener piece never went through his machine"—but then, you know how linotypers are—good mechanics and all that—but what do they know about real ART?

Pooh! Nothing—what with lead-poison? Besides, they're bound to be habitually sore because they have to read it—they ain't like me or you that can lift a lid and shove it in the stove—if it doesn't jibe in with our views of true literature.

The General Health —

Slippery as it was in the "city", most of the street accidents were fractures of the hip flask.

O when will the Gothamites learn to carry them next to the heart!

wlw

See where Alma Rubens, screen actress, tried to cut herself loose (with a paper knife) from a couple determined doctors that were going put her in a sanitarium. Don't blame her a gosh shang bit—I've been in lumber jack hospitals enough to understand Alma's feelings in the matter.

Ah! If she only had a straight edge razor, or a two bladed snickernee, what a difference a few timely slashes would have made? No, I haven't anything in particular against doctors—a death penalty would be too severe for them—neither do I believe in cutting 'em up into bits—nor do I think Alma intended to make them up into boullion cubes—but, you know how it is, and the doctors themselves say that letting out bad blood occasionally is beneficial for the health—I can not help but believe it!

But at the same time, I'm conscious of the fact that Alma made a mistake in not having them stretched out on an operating table, where she could work on 'em without being interfered with by taxi cabs and motor trucks—she'd have found thousands of willing hands to hold 'em down.

A street is no place for "a delicate operation", as the doctor's say—too many always standing around anxious to pick-up a trade, a profession—beg your pardon.

It's now up to Alma's press agent to inform the populace: "the operation was a complete success, tho the doc. will live."