

# "SUNDOWNITIS"

York, Nebraska, "Hoosiers-Up" On Slim

By T-BONE SLIM

In the famed state of feather beds, Nebraska, where this poor author ruined his kidneys sleeping in the boss' private chamber, in the front room, downstairs, if you please, while the boss chased his rising generation, considerate sons, admirable daughters and good but hefty wife up to the attic (where he followed them) to swelter in the midsummer night's balmy breezes . . . ah, a touch of real humanitarian consideration on his part; no doubt due to his Germanic origin and training. Although his wife formerly was an up-stater from New York, her cooking was marvelous; the only flaw in her art was a slight miscarriage she had in the making of ice cream—a thing that very easily can be overlooked in this age of phoney phreezers. Looking at those meals I made up my mind the Kaiser wasn't such a bad man after all, and that if he starts another war I'm afraid I might be persuaded to pull my punches and die the hero that I am—it wouldn't seem right to slaughter off a nation of good cooks. Well, that's all right, but this same State has within her borders what the boys call "sundown towns," a very apt term meaning nature's "throwback towns"; among them we might mention Norfolk, York and Fremont (Hastings isn't so bad, but slipping)—Nebraska, of course, is conscious of those weak points in her make-up but owing to her construction is unable to get rid of them and lives in the hope those unfortunate towns will outgrow their mental infirmities and aberrations or hallucinations. . . .

I had the misfortune recently to get off a perfectly good train (free lunch included, silver mounted toppings, but lunch just the same) to find myself in York, Nebr.—darn the luck—the town looked all right, too.

Me, directly from the City of New York on the shores of the turbulent Atlantic, a city of no mean proportions—where I used to stretch my great frame upon the sidewalk, piers or bank-portals and where the city ordinances had to conform with my comforts on sultry nights—where the populace defied upstart patrolmen to make any changes in their mode of spending the night—and where, too, patrolmen consider it the height of folly to disturb a sleeping person; a deed so foul that no lower animal will attempt; a peace so profound that neither snake nor tiger will violate.

But in York, Nebr., I had with considerable effort prepared myself a bed that was suitable to my "form of build;" in a box car of course and probably as sanitary as any place in that immaculate village — Hardly had my snores started vibrations in the rafters when in marches three big burles of the law and apologized for the intrusion but invited me to spend the balance of the night in the town's calaboose. Hm. My rest was ruined; my sleep seduced.

Being very broadminded, 'twas easy for me to see that the officers of the law, paid for being awake nights, saw no wrong in disturbing people tired out by the toils of the day before—a bear would have lumbered on, about his own business; a snake would have waited till morning to sting me. . . .

I guess that is what the boys mean by "sundown towns;" ace in the hole towns, where hospitality is so nil that workers carry their lunches in their coat sleeves for hundreds of miles coming into town—an "ace in the hole"—in preparation against the welcome to come.

I feel sincerely sorry for the good state of Nebraska because of those towns but, can offer no cure for that condition—in fact, I think it incurable and that it will fester and contaminate the whole state—let's hope

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