

T-Bone Slim Takes to the Air

OR

SAVED IN THE NICK OF TIME

A Thrilling Story of the Harvest Fields.

Instead of "with a car," our famed author is going to make next year's harvest in an airplane; he's going to buy one of those condemned "Jennies," name it "The Cream of the Tartars" and show some of those pole to pole vaulters how to get over the country—I'd have done this sooner but I didn't want to discourage Colonel Lindbergh (a friend of mine—Charlie, I call him—both of us practically driven out of Little Falls, Minn.)

God only knows where I'll get the money to buy that machine and it may not be good policy to question me too closely afterwards inasmuch as I have a terrible temper when fully aroused.

I'm telling the citizens of Rolla, N. D. all about it in advance.

A speck appears on the horizon; farmers are searching the box cars for the harvest hands that starved to death last fall; grain is all cut down and nobody present to shock it and thresh it; 37 farmers commit suicide and the town's leading banker sneaks off to Canada in the excitement, by way of the Indian Reservation, Turtle Mountains.

The gloom grows thicker—but just as the gloom is thickest, that speck grows bigger and bigger and even as the desperate farmers are getting ready to run, or pray, there is a blueish streak in the atmosphere and the great plane hurtles thru it seven miles a minute . . .

"Saved! Saved!" a great cry arose, "It's The Cream of Tartars come to save us!"

Sixteen women faint, ninety-two kids crawl in under the five elevators for safety and the managers of I. G. A., Red Owl and Red and White stores head a mighty procession to the airdrome south of town.

The Cream of Tartars circles the county three times, noses down and alights in the multitudes . . .

I was just going to tell about the hand-shaking and toast drinking when a citizen speaks up:

"Slim, you better get yourself a Ford next year; we ain't going to let you sail no Jinny over our heads—you might fall and hit one of us."

"Fall? Well, what difference does that make to you—if you don't starve to death this winter you'll be so weak by harvest time that you won't give a damn which way you get killed.—Just so it happens thoroughly."

"That's so too, Slim, but I wasn't worrying about myself—I was afraid you might be injured and all that grain would rot."

"I never thought of that," I had to confess, "mebbe I better get a Ford."

PART II.

In proportion as the proponents of this skin-game system befoul their underwear they are disinclined to step up and interfere with the proceedings of sensible people—and I don't blame them for, verily, underwear in any but the pure state is a sore affliction and acts as a hindrance in the travels of our would-be guides and advisors.

Right now is one of those periods in history, when the purity squads and professional white-washers are unable to keep up with their work of sanitation, renovation, and the great men we worshipped but yesterday shuffle around like a dog that has interviewed a skunk—even circumspect Christians hold their noses, look askance and debate whether or not the great men should be quarantined.

Indeed it is a problem.

Were we living in the happy-go-lucky age, ere the civilizing of Montana was accomplished, the good ranchers would round-up the great men and bury them neck-deep (in the shadows of her stately buttes) until such a time as the odoriferous gentlemen might emerge wholly cleansed and disestablished of their misdeeds—as it is, civilization prevents the purification of the parasites upon a large scale and we must, perforce, hold our nostrils and sail close to the wind.

True, this condition is highly obnoxious to us of the finer sensibilities (olfactorily laden with a stench that violates the aromatic sanctity of a sewer rat) and it is with difficulty that people resist the temptation to turn the disinfectant or fire department upon them. But altho its objectionable features or flavors or scents or stinks are many, it has an element that is greatly beneficial to public welfare—it keeps the parasites from stirring around too much and gives the downtrodden public a chance to organize.

As I said before, their self-acquired putrefaction is mortifying to the extent of causing the plutes to shy at presenting themselves in open society and encourages them to hide—out in the secret recesses of their manors and castles—trying their damndest to rectify the miscarriage of their ill-conceived program.

Only yesterday they were kings and money-gods; today they are bums, half-vits and . . . what? It is well—it is well the time at last arrived when the people have "the perfect freedom" to organize themselves in which way ever they wish, to remedy and correct the evils instigated and brought about by those unsanitary gentlemen hereinbefore referred to. And it is well and proper that those remedial agencies be applied now while the plute mourns the departed pulchritude of his haberdashery . . . Nossir, it is not taking advantage of him—he brought it on himself—nobody asked him to incapacitate himself—nobody asked the Hessians to polish their whiskers and get drunk the time George Washington was fixing to visit them. . .

It is well and proper to correct any and all evils now or any other time and if now appears to be the more favorable time now is the time to correct them—if the people want them corrected, and I have an idea they do.

I have been quite unable to make clear what constitutes the condition that smells to high heaven and it may be that I must recite an incident in connection to give my readers a chance to better penetrate my meaning:

A few years ago the state of Washington sent to Walla Walla a body of men accused of conspiring to defend their hall against any and all comers—that was eleven years ago. They were accused of doing what they had conspired to do—in other words they had done what all education, training, usage and principles of the country ask them to do and which is specifically permitted by law.

But they were sent to pail for conspiring to do it and the law, conspirator before the fact, has its freedom to masquerade before the people as innocent of all guilt.

How can a body of men conspire to do that which is permissible lest the word conspire be given scope that denatures its natural limitations?

Deeds (acts) assemble themselves readily into three categories or classifications.

Those that are forbidden.

Those that are permitted.

And those that are welcomed.

And it is my conception of the English tongue that "conspire" pertains merely to the doing of that which is forbidden; that men cannot conspire to do good; that men cannot conspire to protect themselves or conspire to defend their life, lives, property or inalienable rights. But in repelling the attack against them and their hall those men did execute, kill, one or more of the law-breakers who had conspired to break the law and who did get killed in the act of breaking the law and who did break the law and that the killing of those lawbreakers in selfdefense, in the protection of lives and property and rights, contributed in some mystic manner to the adjudgment of them guilty.

Those are the things that stink. Eleven long years that smell has risen to high heaven and the state of Washington stands before us today unclean.

A few men in defending themselves against a parade of monstrous proportions and bent on mischief—mischief that included the premeditated murder of one or more occupants of that hall—are taken in hand by a judge and sentenced "from 10 to 40 years" in Walla Walla.

I cannot understand the people of Washington—are they going to stand by idly while all their rights are removed by judicial dictum, farcical court procedure and political hokum

The precedent is now set, the stench is now strongest and now is the time to repudiate that precedent.

The "Centralia bunch" were all loggers and as loggers they deserve the support of every logger in this country and the best support the loggers can give is organize in the Lumber Workers Industrial Union.