

MULTUM PARVO

By T-BONE SLIM

(Continued from last issue)

Another Ghost

I was horror struck—there on my saucer lay a one-sixth part of a pie—the rest all had quarter cuts—I turned sick to my stomach.

What's the big idea of issuing me the abbreviated portion? Me, who does more work than any pie-face present? Me, the captain of the big rack—it's a good thing I had my dinner safely in my stomach before I noticed the discrepancy . . .

As it is, I debated the eating of that pie long and finally came to the conclusion that insofar as the pie made its appearance late in the meal and insofar as my piece is the only small piece (several pieces must have been oversize quarters.) It is a "marked" piece. And, if it is a marked piece, why was it marked? What's the matter with it? Is there croton-oil or arsenic in it? Who can say?

Slim Sees Light

By this time other additional eaters had arrived, eaters of prestige, and, simultaneously, a plateful of choicer steaks appeared on the table. I'm deep in the pie problem and although my meal was complete except for the dessert I settled the problem by grabbing the steak plate, sweeping half the steaks onto my own plate and starting dinner anew. (I'm not a meat-eater and I deplore this.) I exchanged two cents worth of corn-starch pie for twenty-five cents worth of beef-steak. I deplore this. I do not want to make a practice of it. It is against my will and interest . . . Can it be the four berries were "markers too" and that if I had eaten them, sinful as I am, old Lucifer would have had the pleasure of tanning my hide? Who can say?

I cannot believe that, of the girl—insofar as I notice her culinary efforts so far has resulted only in the sending of her relatives to Arizona—to a more equable climate. But I don't want to go to either place. My nemesis pursues me: We have ice cream for supper—dished up with a tablespoon. I'm not nosey or something, but I could not help noticing my dish was the only one that had but two spoonfuls in it—the rest had three to five spoonfuls and, strange to say, the big dish was given to an able-bodied neighbor farmer that had earned it loitering around the grain tanks all day . . . Why did the girl, young old maid, favor that able bodied married man? Should I speak to his wife about it? (Stop me if you've heard this story before)—I ate that two spoonfuls of ice cream in very prayerful frame of mind (a man can't be too careful these days) and after an illness of ten days I'm on high road to recovery . . .

Half of my readers will think this treatment of the harvest hand was the outcome of certain contempt those pauperized aristocrats have for workingmen—bums they call 'em; that they consider a workingman of low estate and unfit to associate except with the four legged asses, cattle; live in the barn; sleep in the manger, or mow. My dear readers are wrong. These things happen not because they love harvest hands less but because they love others more—even two spoonfuls of ice cream is on the love side of the ledger (St. Pete, please note.) Four berries is a clear indication of affection and although a dishful may amount to burning passion we must not allow ourself to conclude a lesser dish would indicate a frost-ed fondness.

Love it is in its various powers, its full radiance shining forth only when they are dishing things up for themselves, simple souls—self-service, love of self, selfishness, individualism, individualism the illegitimate child of conceit and discontent. (I use the word discontent ad-

visedly though it doesn't cover the ground.)

Now I have here held up the girl as an every day example of farm aspiration and have refrained mentioning the more delicate phases—I'll just mention one, utter disrespect for aged father and dictator of conversation, snotty "I AM TALKING TO HIM" . . .

You? YOU!—I question whether your talk benefits anyone including yourself, in the sense the same amount of cackling would not do.

Individualism.

Early the farmer set out into the world, into the great open spaces, into the wilderness to build himself a home apart from others.

Individualism.

A kingdom of his own, and heroically he toiled to make it approach the specifications of his dreams.

Individualism.

By his own efforts he shall make the desert bloom—just so he can have the freedom of being alone, self-sufficient.

Individualism.

How can you expect such men to organize?

Years ago we politely referred to them as pioneer spirited citizens but now, and I pray do not think me hateful, we bluntly say dog-in-the-manger attitudes cannot prevail and individualism is a delusion. But it runs in his blood. I'm afraid it will take much practice for him to shed it from his system. I do not hate the farmer—every word in this article is on the love side of the ledger (St. Pete, look it over.)

Ingrained individualism, whether it afflicts the farmer or working man or statesman is a non-workable proposition—it eliminates team play, generates errors that cannot be corrected, fosters jealousies, greed, constructs oppositions and finally goes down to defeat overcome by superior organizations. In this age of organization everybody must organize or perish—the ones that organize fastest will survive. The rest will whistle for theirs!

This year in the harvest fields we have seen the workers organizing fastly. Hundreds of delegates and active members scoured the country for unorganized men and made them acquainted with industrial unionism. Gave freely of their time, suffered much and did the thing "that could not be done"—it's done. Nothing short of a miracle and the working class, though unappreciative now, will one day be duly grateful to those determined men.

The AWIU organization drive has been carried on with such effect and eclat that men who never before carried a union card, or recognized the need of one, are determined to take out one at the first opportunity and are convinced, after all, the solution to salvation is solidarity—the same can be done by other industrial unions and probably is being done, so far as I know.

The fight for higher wages has been conducted with such spirit this year (an off year) that "the powers that be" have practically decided to pay the farmers the difference—a proper course, since they can't get the men to work for nothing . . .

It is only occasionally that a non-union man takes exceptions to the principles of the IWW and, mindful of the heroic battles put up by individualists of the past, attempts to lick the whole organization with his fists—I do not mention this in the spirit of bravaço, or bragging, but merely to point out this one thing: An individualist has a very poor conception of his capabilities and capacity for punishment . . . the presumption being, organized men are of a superior quality. Thus it is that many an heroic attack against the IWW can but give birth to sore muscles, overstrained ligaments and strained relationship—all a futile impedimenta in the struggle for a living.

(Note: Elmer Buddinger once told me, "Slim, you should try to lick only the smaller towns"—I had tackled a great big thriving city—was in the hospital fifty days.)

Yes the harvesthand and farmer can come together but it will be under that horse blanket I spoke about.

T-b. S.