



A TOUCHING STORY

Sad as the situation is, I could make my pen run with tears—but why cry over spilt millions? Let's laff it off and save our tears for a situation that really needs a good wetting-down.

Tears will of course stir up sympathy (the more sonorous the sobs the greater the sympathy) but let me point out sympathy is one of the hardest things to digest known to contemporary and contemptuous science—it just lays and lays on the stomach like a hen over an ivory doorknob—so what good is it?

As a garment it is out of date and went out of style with Adam and Eve; it is worse than porous-knit underwear, and stops the north winds but very damn little. —A little cheese-cloth wrapped around the ribs is a far better windbreak (not that I'm boosting limburger-nets for everyday wear, or running down the burlaps and gingham.)

Besides, were a man to prance down Henepin Ave. dressed in nothing but sympathy the constables and gendarmories would lay violent hands upon him and invite the lunacy-commissars to sit upon him. Why I've seen otherwise sensible fly-cops cast covetuous eyes at MY bulky form lurching down the boulevard, fully dressed (up to and including four shirts and a superannuated overcoat.) I said four shirt and I mean it AND I mean to keep them on me AND I'd advise any man that has a shirt to stay inside it—my motto is "keep your shirt on, Slim."

Nay, we will not dress up in sympathy yet awhile—at least not until sympathy is made from more substantial goods than parrot-palaver.

"I'm sorry, O, so sorry" is NOT the whole truth. He is not sorry at all—he is going to be sorry, sooner or later.

But we will not make a song of it.

Some day I shall write a novel about the human habitat, House of Sympathy—how the lord and master froze stiff as a herring, in the wintertime and was roasted to a blister in the summer months (I reveal this much, of the novel), fully convinced that I am the only man in this world capable of writing that novel and if others grab the idea they'll look like monkeys after I get mine done—I'd write it this afternoon but the damn pencil keeps breaking off all the time.)

Yessir, sympathy is the phoneyest kind of weather-boarding and as a plaster it is a fly screen minus the netting.

A man would be falling down into the cellar all the time without benefit of stairs to break the fall; for verily, stairs of sympathy drop a man faster than a dog drops a hot cigar butt. A rose under a different title smells just as sweet.

With or without sympathy pork chops is pork chops to a hungry man.

A rose with a thorn is still a rose.

With or without a "bawl-out" pork chops is pork chops.

Sympathy or denunciation do not alter the nature of pork chops—it takes onions or garlic. I'm not saying sympathy is useless. Sympathy benefits the sympathizer (as much as such fallen creature can be benefitted without complete reconstruction—reincarnation, a general re-conditioning you know what I mean.)

Sympathy is very hard to define, to gauge—no table of measure or rule has yet been stumbled on by science to accurately compute or describe that "finer feeling"—thus it frequently happens a hungry hobo has sardines for breakfast instead of grapefruit, shredded wheat and ham and eggs.

Recently a complaint was lodged with me against a parasite who practically refused to "stand and deliver", as the saying goes, when approached on the delicate matter of ham and eggs, by a starving scotchman:

"Why should I help you," means the parasite, seeking knowledge.

Now, as a public sympathizer, it is entirely within my province to take cognizance of the alarmingly increasing number of complaints and lay down a law of procedure in all such cases wherein the matter is gone out of hand—nobody can gainsay the matter is out of joint when "the prospect" says, "why should I help you?"—the answer is:

Dear sir, I know 57 reasons why you should not help me, I know them all, I've given this matter much study; but I also know 999 reasons why you should help me—but let us not make this a matter of debate, "no" or "yes" is sufficient; debate the matter with somebody who has a full stomach—excuse me, I'm in a hurry.

Keep your shirt on!