



ON POPULAR SANITATION

Am not feeling so good; I'm sick, that's the word—but I guess a man has a right to be sick if he wants to. A man has certain inalienable rights such as strife, tribulation, pursuit of happiness and among these we find sickness—a man can be just as sick as he damn pleases without offending the sacred statutes; for which heaven be praised. That is one "right" not yet taken near away from us.

It is early as yet to start celebrating my illness—I may change my mind and become as one of perfect health; altho, I admit, I've been tempted to throw myself away or feed myself to the dogs, if they would have me.

But I'm not squawking about it for, verily, what's the sense of being sick if your going to squawk about it—why not be healthy and squawk long and lustily on that phenomenon—and well.

Being the last remaining champion of the people, alive and able to brag about it, never hung, burnt at stake, crucified or tortured—a playful way the people have of showing their profound appreciation of championships—it behooves me to announce to the amazed public that indisputable evidence of the presence of civilization has been found in these United States of America—not much, of course, but genuine; which proves conclusively, the rumor, "civilization is all used up" is pure canard or hokey. One can step out of his haze any day and verify my statement by seeing civilization come marching up the thoroughfare, arm in arm, with barbarism.

To illustrate:

We have no community loafing place—one must either loaf on the streets or seek a loafing place in the fastness of the wilderness. No man can gainsay these times of unemployment call for communal loafsterias—excuse the ribaldry—where the former workers can loaf in an organized way.

But no. Each loafer must needs step out and find for himself a loafing place with the result that instead of one up-to-date loafing place Chicago has 200,000 loafing places minus all conveniences, scattered over the city. Can you imagine—that much barbarism left after all these years!

To illustrate:

There are dirtier people than I am but that does not mean a bath would hurt me. Indeed, as I remember it, yesterday I was astounded to discover I had accumulated a complete set of lice; as a result of sleeping in high-toned hotels—too high-tone to change the linen—and boycotting the regulation scratch-houses.

Unversed as I am in cootie-culture, I went into consultation with a couple of rising merchant princes and they assured me my trepidation was totally uncalled for in this civilized age, that "we have bath houses, if not in Chicago, at least in South Chicago—you go right down to 83rd St. . . ."

Eighty-third St.? Well, that's only two miles from here, is the bathhouse on this street?

"No, you'll have to go to the right a few miles or you can go to 99th St. (98th) if you're traveling that way. . . ."

The bath was all that has been said for it, a clear symptom of trenchant civilization—I revealed in its sprays and drowned every cootie, impartially, without pity, mercy or remorse. Yes, but how, about those seven miles? Barbarism!

The placing of those seven miles between me and the bath may have been miscalculation, (if Chicago placed them there) and denotes poor judgment of distances—then again it may have been well intended to give each "bathee" a chance to walk and raise a beautiful sweat before entering the fountains of sanitation. Yes, but how about those "crums?"

I do not consider it fair to drown them twice; place them in jeopardy of their lives by this preliminary drowning in sweat . . .

Imagine the feelings of a crum when he wakes up from his after-dinner nap and finds himself engulfed in a torrent of sweat racing south into your shoes?—my shoes?—

Mebbe this art is getting a little too lousy but my dear reader, let me say in extenuation: The population of lice in this country exceeds and out-breeds all other forms of life, as the late lamented census should show.

I make this statement deliberately and argue that if were going to clutter our pages with most inhuman remarks about other parasites and cockroaches my gentle reference to the great American louse be put right next to pure reading matter.

Now let me point out we cannot much longer survive if every man must drag along a washtub for toilet purposes; neither does it make for the better sanitation to do your ablutions in a box-car from a gallon tomato can; likewise it is passe to ankle down to Lake Michigan, dampen your towel, warm it over a distant radiator and rub down in the depot toilet—all that is unscientific, far removed from civilized procedure.

Not only that. The tubs and tomato-cans would aggravate the traffic problem and there are those who think there are already enough tincans and lizzies, as it is—on the streets. I subscribe to that viewpoint.

I can not find an ointment
To heal my wounded pride—
My life is disappointment,
My sorrow high and wide.