



T-Bone Slim

WHAT WAS IN THE WRAPPER?

This article, editor, is written on the paper that was around the wieners a cat stole from me in the wilderness of Glendale, California, while I was eating them—I'd be a very poor man to trust with organization matters, I am that gullible and trustful—they'd steal the seal.

But, I wish to say, editor, that cat traveled, we both traveled, and the wieners unraveled. They were strung out a full yard behind the cat—you have the paper right in front of you, take a sniff at it, if you do not believe my words. Only one extenuation for my malepheasants of stewardship—the cat was black.

Despite the fact the cat clearly registered a guilty conscience when it said good morning to me, I trusted it too far—so I did—a man never should trust a cat as far as the wieners—never.

Had the cat been snow white moer'n likely I would have tossed it in the pot; I've got no use for hypocrites and I'm happy to say that is the attitude of all leading cannibals the world over—yes.

The way this calamity befell your great author (accent on thor) is as follows: unaccustomed as I am to "slipping in soft beds," those devilish creations wherein the mattress fairly reaches out and hugs you the whole night long, I had the misfortune to give way to weakness and surrender my precious person to one such, two nights hand running, in Los Angeles.

I woke up a ruined man!—let this be a warning, editor, stretch out on the floor—lest you too shall be moved to chase a cat around the block, your mouth watering for wieners.

Further, it always was my impression a great author is supposed to sleep in gutters, under tables, in blindpigs and snake rooms, where the inspiration, you know, runs heavy—and where you are entertained by reptiles of all descriptions and purple alligators. And here I went and ran counter to tradition and slept in one of these damnable contrivances for the second time this year.

Hardly knowing what I was doing I wrote an article entitled Laissez Faire, it was terrible—nothing like this great masterpiece. Luckily, editor, I had a lucid spell and forthwith went into a tantrum, tore the article into a million pieces, ground my leadpencils to powder under my heels, tore the tablet to shreds and chucked it in a drawer, and "flew the country," like Cheeseborough used to say. We ain't gonna have no such stuff in our papers, are we?

You're right, editor, I agree with you.

That cat just now came back and I did manage to stroke its beautiful fur and let by-gones be by-gones, so I did—cats ain't getting a fair break with the families, and hunger is a driving force . . .

But let us not lose sight of our brave author who is going across lots just as if he had a date to outfoot seventeen devils and three beelzebobs. Night ran upon him and he ran upon a box car—the box car was lonesome. There in the sanitary atmosphere fumigated by the aromatic fumes of sulphuric acid, fertilizers and various other sterilizers and purifiers the great man was soon in the arms of Morpheus—let him sleep. In the morning his slumbers were interrupted by the realization that his brain was back on the job. Just as if the great man had never slept in a bed in all his life—calculating, inventing, creating: This morning the burden of his brain pan is: There is no such a thing as freedom of silence. No man has a right to sulk in his tent and contain in himself the thought, the knowledge, the experience, the eloquence, the prestige that might remove injustice from our fair land; that might free Mooney and Billings, illegally convicted and illegally held in the state of California; that might be just the instrument in the hands of justice, that might re-establish the right of self-defense in the state of Washington and be the means of freeing the Centralia victims; that might arrest the so called legal murders now in the making in the state of Kentucky . . .

There are many such men capable and measuring the above specifications in this country—but I have in mind three in particular:

Clarence Darrow, Henry L. Mencken. Heywood Brown. There be three men that can, if they will, wallop injustice so hard that it shall not lift its nozzle for twenty years—if they will.

PART II.

I need not introduce those men, they are well known: Darrow is a lawyer, a good lawyer, a lawyer whose mind runs strictly in correct channels, where mind can grasp the finest shade of injustice as well as the rawest deals known to human depravity. Law (justice) is his bread and butter and is being kicked around in the dust of California, Washington and now in Kentucky to end that they are horse-racing the whole state over desperately trying to find a locality sufficiently LOCO to convict a set of coal miners of a crime that should have come under the head of birth-control years ago—convict them and burn them for the blessing showered upon the good state of Kentucky.

Mencken, the man of turbulent eloquence and a vocabulary that sizzles in both ends, is well known to most of us. I have known Henry to write a few gentle remarks that took 40 pounds off a 300 lb. burly and never disturbed the hide. Brave men have fallen in a dead faint and cowards have

rushed to the holy fathers any old ti Mencken pulled his brows together. Th many moons, true enough, since his hon moon, his life has hung in the balance I have always felt that at the critical ment his vocabulary will rush to his r cue and that Hank will rise to the occas and explain it all away.

There's Heywood Brown. Well, why he wrapped up in that Navajo blanket?

Ah citizens of the republic, Heywood ain't hot. (A feminine voice) "Hey, Heywood, didn't I tell you to go down to the New York Central tracks and steal a big ket of coal; you'll ketch your death of cold."

"Odds bodkins," (it means what's the difference) "There's lots of warmth and comfort in the next republic."

Editor, what can you do with men like that?

I hear a child crying. Brown becomes as galvanized. I see him breaking out from his shell and blanket; with one sweep, see him catapult adown the stairway. A punch my head thru the window light as behold Heywood B. tearing the pavement up for half a city block, to rescue and return to the heartbroken lad a penny that fell thru the grating—America's latest man!

Is it within reason to think such men shall stand stoic like a wooden indian while injustice flowers like a thistle, sheds its seeds and covers the earth? That they shall take refuge behind the filmy "freedom of silence?"

Well, sir, we ain't gonna have no such in this country. This does not mean we're gonna make them talk. Nossir, it means we're gonna make them shut up—compulsory silence. Do you get the idea?

But isn't that injustice?

Injustice? Good Lord! Didn't I just now tell you about Mooney and Billings Centralia victims and a shrudlu of Kentucky miners too numerous to mention and you ask, isn't that injustice?

Of course it's injustice—what else have we.

PART III.

It was always a source of bewilderment to me to see an officer of the law trying to arrest freedom of speech by pounding the speaker over the head with a billy-club. And the bewilderment, no doubt, revealed itself to the speaker, momentarily, with equal force.

If we continue that method we shall have a row of soreheads—scabs and running sores all over their cranium.

That will not do . . .

But just as the hour seemed darkest, in our search for painless injustice, T-bone Slim, the great man of letters, steps into his breeches and solves the thing.

Ever since the B. & O. R. R., put rubberheels on its passenger coaches to deaden sound and absorb shocks (so as to prevent false teeth from bouncing out of a man's mouth every mile or so) I have been working on an invention that will cut-out all FREE GRATIS remarks and reduce them to a wheeze. Maxim shall not be allowed to run off with all the honors, with his silencer.

You all remember when good old Dobbin lost his job, was weened of his nose-bag, killed and sold as provender to the poor people, at a price that would hardly cover the skinning? Well, sir, when Dobbin displaced Bossy on the meat-block there was lots of horse-collars left over and those collars had sweat-pads, many of them—a tale hangs by those pads, I'm gonna cut those pads in two and rivet a strap to them.

Heywood Brown, STOP! Don't you dare to run. Come over here, till we test this out, this invention.

What's that you say, that it's an outrage?

Outrage? Outrage nothing, it's a sweat-pad.

I'm gonna defy you to talk over it or even see over it—the best you can do is stand there and admire the heavens—and people will nudge one another and whisper, "He's a great elocutionist." We're gonna make the country soundproof by abolishing sound—anywhere where a torrent of words burst out we'll jerk out a sweat-pad from a receptacle on the corner marked "Peace-Preservers," clap them over the flow and buckle them behind—we shall prove silence is not only golden but the spelling got wet and it is also ghoulden.

And we shall be just. We shall announce to the public: "Justice and Human Rights are about to share the bonds of wedlock: Is there anyone here that knows why these two shall not be made one? If so, let him (and I shall flash the sweat-pad) speak NOW!—or forever be silent."

—T-b-a.