

REPUDIATION

By T-Bone Slim

Old gray-beard fossils war declared
And to their counting-room house repaired,
Their courage, faith quite unimpaired,
For they were well prepared.
But little Johnnie little cared
As with his toys his time be shared
And in his mouth his toes he snared,
Or lustily his views he aired.

And lustily war-bugles blared—
The half-wits grinned, the colonels glared,
And thru the night the rockets flared
For war had been declared . . .
The youth to instant glory fared,
As for the front their shoulder squared.
And nary one of them despaired—
The sweethearts stood and stared . . .

They fought for God and country fair;
For fireside and frigidaire;
For shoes and hats and underwear,
And even for the old arm-chair.
They fought for the good pantry—bare—
Forgetting not the old gray mare
And Ford "that needs another spare"—
That's what they fought for there.
But what they got was woe and care
And bullets—this is very rare;
A thing a christian good will swear
Was never included in the prayer—
(Of course the darn thing wasn't fair)
A man goes out to get somewhere,
Not thinking of "machine-gun lair",
And lands upon the golden stair . . .

The gray-beard fossil has a stroke,
He saw his war was not a joke;
Composed of this and that and smoke,
It made the time-worn rascal choke.
At last it was his time to croak
And leave upon the world his yoke—
And as he came (naught in the poke)
Just so he went—bent, old and broke.

Came to John's shack and cabin door
A great ambassador and hoar
And in his hand a bill he bore
Requesting John remit "dinor"
To pay for late lamented war,
And every blasted church restore.
Now John a wisp of whisker wore
And such proceeding made him sore
Indeed I believe he all but swore
"Why man alive! I fought no war"
"I've never spilt a drop of gore
Why war is something I abhor.

"This bill of course I can deplore,
Although it talks of too much yore
And smacks of money—lenders lore"—
With this—the bill in two he tore
And tossed it on the cabin floor,
As one who lightly feels the chore.

"You'd better hunt another door,"
Said John, "My God! how you can snore!"
"Wake-up! for Christ sake,"
(John could roar)

His guest asweat in every pore.
"And as you leave this peaceful shore,
Lean heavily on either oar—
Keep this in mind, and nothing more!
I will not pay that score . . .

"Go dig those fossils from their graves
And make them ante-up to knaves
The capital your system craves;
The price that stultifies, depraves,
That robs the nation of its braves
And slaughters-off the new-born slaves."