

The Fool-Killer

THIS PAPER, IN SPITE OF ITS NAME, DOES NOT BELIEVE IN KILLING PEOPLE.

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A NEW SPRING SERMON

Well, beloved, I spoze it's gittin about time for me to oil up my sermon mill and preach you another sermon on Spring. If you remember, I have been giving you one or more sermons on Spring in The Fool-Killer for the past six years. You have allers smacked your lips like they were good, and I dreamed last night you wanted another one. So here it am.

Of course, judgin by the temperature of the March wind as it plays tag with a feller's thread-bare coat-tail, Spring ain't hardly got here yet; but I can smell her comin over the hill just tuther side of next week.

After going through the sufferings and hardships of a rough winter, the timely arrival of gentle Spring is like swapping castor oil for sourwood honey. It is like being waked up out of a bad dream by the kiss of an angel. It is like getting a divorce from cold feet and marrying the queen of comfort.

The man who does not feel a two-hoss thrill of unutterable joy eaper through his frost-bitten soul at the coming of Spring has got something bad the matter with himself. He was either made wrong, or put together wrong after he was made.

When young Spring takes old Winter by the slack of the pants and tosses him back into the Valley of Used-to-be, there is a general jubilee of rejoicing throughout the kingdom of Nature. All the young green things come out and take off their hats and bow to each other as pelitely as a young rooster presenting his pullet sweetheart with a new-found worm.

Even the green young men and the green girls catch the infection of Spring, and before the doctor can get there it has developed into a hopeless case of puppy-love and they swear they don't want to get well.

Spring is very modest, and also very uncertain, especially during the first stages of her coming. You can't always know just what to expect. Sometimes she will send a warm day ahead to advertise for her, and then she will fail to fill the appointment. Again she will drop in as unexpectedly as a man who has borrowed money from you and has come to—borrow more.

Woodpile says he always accepts an invitation to a fight. He means, of course, that he likes to look on from a safe distance and see somebody else fight. So did Nero of Rome.

REPUBLICAN PRAYER.

Oh, thou almighty, all-toothy and all-specky Toothadore Specksvelt; thou who kickest mountains out of thy way and swalloweth bears and lions even as a boy swalloweth watermelon seeds; thou whose whisper soundeth like the escaping steam from a busted boiler, and whose frown withered thine enemies even as the August sun withereth a cabbage leaf. Behold, we come sneaking into thy terrible presence once more in the attitude of meekest humility. Even as a nigger's foot flatteneth itself in the mud, so flatten we ourselves upon our bellies before thee.

O thou great T. R. Eat-em-alive, thou rememberest the good old days when thou didst go in and out before us; yea, verily, when thou didst lead us to victory as easy as a purty gal jumpeth a branch. The mere mention of thy name scattered all opposition, even as the smell of itch-grease scattereth a Sunday School class. Thou didst preside at the pie-counter with great dignity, and we were always on hand at meal time.

Thou didst raise thy finger at us, and we stood still to recieve thy commands.

Thou didst command us to holler, and we hollored.

Thou didst command us to vote, and we voted.

Thou didst take snuff, and we sneezed.

Thou didst eat onions, and our breath was strong.

Sweet and pleasant to us, Great Toothadore, is the memory of these happy days when thou and we were one and inseparable. No thought of discord entered our minds, and the man who could have prophecied a break between us would have been laughed to scorn.

Time passed.

It always does.

And no man has yet been able to stop it.

An then, great Prophet, there came the evil days in Chicago, when the devil got into us and we rolled the cruel Steam Roller over thy prostrate form. Then thou didst get up and shake thyself and organize the Bully Moosevelt-ers. Also thou swore a terrible swearment against us and declared that thou wouldst never pitch hoss-shoes in our back yard any more. In our strange frenzy, O Prophet of Pank, we rejoiced at thy undoin—but beheld in the same hour we were undone also.

And we are still undone.

To-day we are seeking diligently for a leader who can pilot us

out of the swamp of defeat into the highway of victory. We have raked over the political remains of our party with a fine-tooth comb, and our search has been as fruitless as hunting for the rainbow's end. Therefore we again turn our longing eyes toward thee, O thou Shadow of Forlorn Hope. We humbly beseech thee to forget the past and stick thy number tens under our political table again. Let us give thee another joy-ride on the Elephant's back.

O great Toothadore, we are ashamed of ourselves for what we have done. We can now see that it was all a terrible mistake. We therefore gladly repent of it in hog-hair and ashes. If we had not fought against thee at Chicago four years ago we would not now be in such a sad plight, and our enemies, the Woodenrollercrats, would not be gloating over us as they are to-day.

Therefore, O Babblers of Bunk, hear us! Give heed to our supplication! Take note of our distress signal! And may all former ill feeling be melted away in the warmth of our appeal. Bring thy crowd and come baek to us. Or else let us bring our name and come over to thee. Anything, Master Toothadore, just so we get together. That's what it will take to beat the Scrats and get the pie. Even so be it. Amen.

BOOMING AT BOOMER.

Some folks said it would kill The Fool-Killer to move it. But if they could see the way the clubs are rolling in here at Boomer they would talk out of tuther side of their mouths. It has actually surprised me the way the business has gone right on booming in spite of the fact that I got awfully behind with the work and haven't caught up yet. I naturally expected the moving to slow it down a little for a month or two, but it didn't. On the other hand, it seems like the folks have just fallen in love with Boomer. The name is so short and easy to remember that they just delight in addressing letters here. Keep it up, friends! Let's make BOOMER the publishing center of the South. There is nothing to hinder The Fool-Killer from having a million subscribers if you will all just keep your shoulders to the wheel. Hurrah, everybody!

The average soldier has no country to lose,

And therefore he has none to save;

His real estate is all stuck to his shoes—

He don't own enough for a grave.

"FOOL-KILLER" STYLE."

I dunno why, but somehow a great many people throughout the country have sorter tooken a fancy to my home-made style of gab. I didn't know I was doing anything great, but if my forty-five thousand subscribers are good judges it must be a fact that I have blazed a new trail through the editorial wilderness. Every day's mail bring dozens of letters just slopping over with praises of the fool stuff I write for these colyums.

And I have been trying to figger it all out and discover the cause of The Fool-Killer's wonderful popularity. One conclusion I have reached is this: Plain honesty and sincerity of purpose, mixed with a little wholesome fun, must be the key to the whole thing. I have always tried to impress my readers with the fact that I am terribly in earnest about what I say, even though I DO say it in a droll, home-made sort of manner. Some writers are funny, and others are serious, but I have managed to mix fun and seriousness a little more successfully than any other writer ever did.

When I first started out to be a writer I made the same mistake that so many others do. I tried to out-do the Dictionary in the use of big, high-sounding, devil-choking words that hadn't been used enough to wear the paint off of 'em. But a few years of experience cured me of that foolishness. I gradually got wise to the fact that a writer must keep his feet on the ground. Especially if he is writing for common folks to read, he must use the plain, everyday language of the common folks.

I never in my life dreamed of being a "funny writer," but just as soon as I dropped into the natural, easy, everyday dialect of the masses, my readers began to laugh like they would split their fool sides open, and they have been laughing ever since. To save my gizzard I can't see what they are so tickled about, but I shore do love to hear 'em haw-haw, just the same.

And I guess that's the way this here "Fool-Killer Style" got started. I see lots of little editors over the country are trying to imitate it. I am the originator of "Johndee," "Woodpile," "Toothadore Specksvelt," and other similar expressions now in common use. But if you want the shonuff original, I 'speat you better read The Fool-Killer.