

BONEYARD

By T-BONE SLIM

A compulsory strike—a new kind. (It seems like an anomaly or something—good or bad dream.)

"Impossible", you say.

Not at all, fellow workingman, not a tall . . .

The heroic barge captains' wages were cut \$10 per month—a blow than which there is nothing fouler—a blow upon the belt line and below it. The barge-man's eye glistened with unholy light; casually he squinted at the far-away—

Did he wail? Did he struggle to suppress his grief? Did he weigh the advisability of drowning his sorrow in salt water? — — —

Alas! He did not.

He's too horse to wail. He hates to struggle—even to suppress emotion. As to sorrow, he and sorrow are strangers—so why should he sink his sorrow?

He shouldn't ~~didn't~~ and won't.

"Well!" he roars, "what do you knowest about that"—and the timbers of the good ship trembled in suspense, or sixpence.

Thereafter, therefore, no matter how, willingly, cheerfully, gladly he went on strike, his strike was compulsory. He was not attacking—he was defending himself—first law of nature. This system of carrying a strike to the men is called "delivering the goods".

The well-fed "runner" (shore captain) who, as he says, received a cut too, but unfazed proceeded to place scabs from Seamen's Church Institute aboard the barges—Christ, himself, wasn't there, else he too would have been hired—mobbe. Mebbe he would have said, "Get behind me, Satan."

Well, sir, you know how captains are—strict disciplinarians, and in full charge of ship—until paid off. They had as yet not been paid off, so you can imagine their horror at discovering a scab aboard their boat. Full of righteous indignation they proceeded to land the scabs on the sacred soils of Perth Amboy and inviting piers of the great Lehigh Valley Railroad . . .

The "runner" by this time gets terribly self-conscious and finds heels a good substitute for Indian "Scout" motorcycle.

Run? How he did run! Paavo Nurmi has nothing on Mr. Millian.

A bright spot glowing in either cheek, he annihilated space . . .

Witnesses tell me, "that was the fastest time ever made in going after cops"—three of 'em.

The cops came and smiled.

The captain smiled.

The world smiled.

What could they do? Wasn't the captain in "full charge"—and weren't forty captains on the pier there to see that no scab desecrates the sanctity of the coal-barge.

They were.

But, like all good things, the strike didn't last. It was prepared to go on much further—even to the point of trade exposures.

Unfortunately, the wages went up—as fast as the cut came down.

Let's sing:

Springtime, springtime, springtime cannot last;

Like the charms of Lenora its charms now are past—

Like the blossoms in May that were here not to stay;

Like the flowers in June too soon faded away—

So this strike in life's sweet glowing springtime.