



The Coddling of Molly-Coddles

The guts of those scissorbills are in comparable, incomprehensible, uncanny—they get right on a train run by union men, union men who have paid dues to the various brotherhoods all their lives. Yes, they hop right on those trains and try to steal a ride right under the eyes of organized men and the organized men, sympathetic souls, pretend they do not see them.

But they do see them and most heartily they despise those creatures to whom the good lord hath not given enough brains to make union men of them.

Rumors are afloat that railroad trainmen actually let the milk of human kindness overflow "their containers" and take those imbecile "no bills" under their wings and entertain them on the rear veranda of the little red caboose while in transit. This is inconceivable—and I for one am unwilling to believe it. Yes, I refuse to believe an organized union man would so far forget his obligation and book of rules as to elect to carry non-union men into the harvest fields to sponge upon the good things established by organized labor—sometimes with blood and tears, tears a parcel of accomplishment. Nevertheless, it is true those non-union men have the unutterable crust to swing onto those trains, ride them, establish themselves in favorable localities and proceed to partake of the bounties they had no hand in creating; have the unmitigated nerve to underbid sincere union men and offer themselves to employers at a figure that can but worsen the lot of every union man; insofar as their deviation from the established schedule serves as a break in the levee—such or several such "breaks" precedes the deluge. A deluge pre-supposes that even the railroad man cannot escape without wetting his garters.

Far be it from me to tell the railroad man what or what not to do—I'm not that presumptuous—he is eating well and is able to formulate his own plans and lay out his own line of action: I do not expect him to roll up his sleeves and throw those "wicks" off the trains, the railroad does not expect him to do so and provides him plenty of other work to occupy his attention, but I do maintain in my humble soul, neither I, or the railroad, expect him to shield and shelter those non-union men within the cabooses; thereby jeopardizing the good name built up by the more sincere union men of the brotherhoods.

The incident I have in mind I have purposely called a rumor—an ugly rumor that cannot be explained away by saying "I had an unprovoked 'run-in' with the I. W. W.," for verily, when scabs are falling like tenpins the provocation is present.

When the I. W. W. says bread, it means bread—not wafers; when it says meat, it means meat—not boloney. . . .

The I. W. W. ever has been a friend of the railroad man and desires to continue in that capacity whether or no the railroad

man returns the compliment. In every trouble "the rail" has had the I. W. W. has been ready and willing to assist, is so today, will be tomorrow—not a scab in a carload.

May I suggest, by the way, brother: every six cars added to your train is a wage-cut—then, you ARE in trouble.

Personally, I have the utmost respect for the "rail"—possibly I have more reasons for the high esteem in which I hold them than has other mortals: They have fed me, when I was hungry—D. & S. S. R. R., Thomaston, Mich., 40 below zero, "go to the eating house, tell them Turbble sent you."—

When I was cold engineer Mile-And-Half-A-Minute MAIL carried me alongside the fire-box—dead of winter. The hot-shot, "cannonball," P. & I. R. R., milepost 49, stopt and pulled me from a snowdrift—saved me the trouble of thawing out in the next world . . .

No doubt, the "rails" would have got quite a kick out of seeing me swat icicles in the next world if they themselves didn't have to come too near the fires. . . .

Be that as it may be, they saw their duty and went out of their way to soften the rough places—their good deeds are many. Not a better body of men exist as a whole and just because an odd conductor acts in a shady manner is no reason for condemning the others—the others can reform the shady ones with a few kind words and fatherly advice.

The time has come when the undermining of union men must stop. The men who have organized, fought for improvements, gave of their time and energies to establish decent living conditions, shall they be doomed to stand aside and let others reap where they have sown?

Are we to nurture a nation of molly-coddles, men with not the gumption of a jack-rabbit, haul them around "in state" on freight trains to dip in here and there for choice morsels at the expense of earnest union men? Because, if we are, what shall this country do in the event of being attacked by a world-power such as Liberia, Afghanistan, Montenegro or South Chicago—why, those scissorbills, our defenders, would run themselves to death and—alas—to the victors go the spoils.