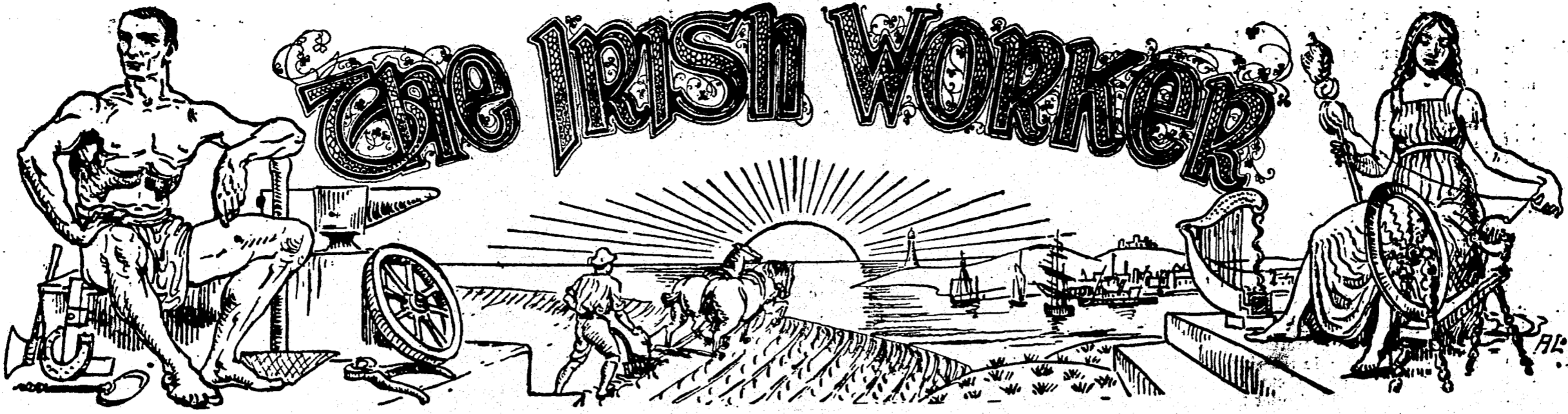


"The principle of state and mean to stand upon is—that the entire ownership of Ireland, moral and material, up to the sun and down to the centre is vested of right in the people of Ireland."
James Fintan Lalor.



Who is it speaks of defeat?
 I tell you a cause like ours;
 Is greater than defeat can know—
 It is the power of powers.
 As surely as the earth rolls round
 As surely as the glorious sun
 Brings the great world moon wave,
 Must our Cause be won!

A TRADE UNION For Coasting Captains and Mates.

The Coming Struggle.

By "SHELLBACK."

Now that shipowners have intimated their kind regards for the officers of their ships, by voluntarily conceding a slight increase in their wages, that has the effect of putting them about on a level with barmen and waiters, although by the shine of their gold lace, and their swanky strutting when in port, countrymen might mistake them for admirals, or picturesque attendants, or samples of some of the other aristocratic professions. I think the time has certainly arrived for the men who officer the vessels in the coasting trade, to table a demand for a similar concession.

Far be it from me to suggest that the concession should take the form of the sop, the very superior gentlemen who go to sea for the fun of the thing, in deep water vessels, have been very much obliged to find in the employers for bestowing, but, on the contrary, the only concession that in this connection would, or could be worthy of such a description, can only be adequate payment, and the full recognition of the valuable services rendered by this class of workers, and having regard to what is generally considered "good wages" by the owners of ships, either coastal or foreign traders, I am confident that adequate wages will only be obtained by and through agitation of the trade union, and not the Tin Bethal variety.

One has only to know something of the conditions under which masters and mates of coasting trade steamers earn their daily bread to properly appreciate how docile they have remained, while all the world and his wife have been conducting a deadly warfare, in order to curtail hours of labour, increase wages, and improve working conditions generally; and although, it must be admitted, a full measure of success has not yet been gained, something has really been accomplished in this direction, and to-day there are many signs that the forces of organised Labour, not only nationally, but internationally, are concentrating in huge masses for the great onslaught that is undoubtedly going to level the one time considered impregnable forces of Capitalism. While all this organising and campaigning has been going on, that important and absolutely necessary body of men, the masters and mates of the steamers that are actually the only connecting link of the British Isles, are not only as they were in the beginning, but in many ways are worse off than ever. The vessels are bigger, carry smaller crews, are of greater power and speed, are continually going, and are run to time with the regularity of railway trains. In comparison with the men of the coasting trade the crews of deep water steamers have an enviable time. There is no part of the world where there is such risk of maritime dangers as in the channels surrounding these islands. It is quite a common thing for men in vessels returning from deep-water voyages to keep their clothes on even while they sleep, all ready for a jump, once the chopets of the Channel is reached, or the Fastnet or Tory Island hoves in sight; yet the coarser plods along, winter or summer, through fog, snow, wind, or smother, and all through it is contemptuously looked down upon by his more fortunate brother in the foreign-going steamer, who would scorn to admit that he had many a time found his port by surreptitiously availing himself of the coarser's superior knowledge and better seamanship.

There can be no two minds about the comparative value of the coasting trade with that of foreign commerce, neither as regards opportunities for employment for workers, service to the community, or profits to its shareholders. Such firms as the Cork Steamship Company can compare very favourably in the matter of tonnage carried in the course of a year with any firm whose business may be with distant foreign countries; and at the same time the expenses are less, therefore the profits must be greater.

Having due regard to all the foregoing, and possessing some knowledge of the many different methods by which the masters and mates in the coasting trade are remunerated—some monthly, some weekly, some by share, and some by bonuses—and also knowing something of the inducements offered to masters in

the shape of "tonnage money," to carry every possible ton of cargo, and further by having some idea of the great strain the continual crossing of such dangerous channels and the responsibilities of life, cargo and property that is under their care entails, coupled with the great amount of actual annual labour they are called upon to do, I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that the formation of a trade union for coasting masters and mates in connection with the Transport Workers' Federation would, in a very short time, result in an actual increase of wages for these men of at least a hundred per cent. upon present rates, as well as reducing considerably their hours of responsible duty and giving them more leisure in port with its greater experience of the pleasures of home life.

Within a very short time shore workers will enjoy the benefits of an eight hours' day. Why not include the masters and mates and the crews of coasting vessels among the workers who will be affected by these hours? It could be done quite easily. Why is it that ordinary cargo boats in the coasting service are pushed out of dock at all hours of the night without the least regard to the time they arrived in port? I have known vessels to leave port so quick that their crews have not had time to obtain the requisite provisions for the voyage, and that without anything in the nature of "overtime" being paid to either master or mates.

Just a word about certificates. The possession or otherwise of certificates should not be allowed to interfere in the enrolling of members in a trade union of coasting masters and mates.

There are many good men in charge (and officers) of the steamer who have no certificate, and whatever may happen in the future under present conditions they do not require them, so that it should not be made a condition of membership that all applicants for enrolment should possess them. The certificate in itself is of no value, and although it may seem to have a monopoly creating power if made compulsory, it can be taken for granted that once there is a scarcity of certificated officers, the owners would take measures to enable them to over-ride the law and employ non-certificated men, as they did in the case of seamen, who at one time had to produce proof of efficiency before engagement.

There is one particular objection that can be urged against the certificate. It provides a means through which men may be punished for faults that, like as not, the owners are the really responsible parties. So much for certificates, but, on the other hand, there are a lot of men who hold pilotage licences for various ports, and these men save their owners a considerable sum that otherwise they would have to pay for pilot service, and in relation to this it should be one of the objects of the Coasting Masters' and Mates' Union to enforce additional adequate payment for men possessing these licences, and so prevent the present wholesale black-legging of pilots.

Many peculiar models of steam driven vessels regularly ply between ports in England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. All are handled and worked by the same class of men. Many of these vessels hail from Irish ports, and a great number of their masters and officers reside in Ireland. Then let them start an organization on Irish ground, attach it to the Irish Transport Workers' Federation, and its immediate effect will be to make the coming summer appear to last longer, and winters usually dark and boisterous length, will lose some of its terrors when it next comes along.

More pleasure will come into life, greater hopes shine in the future. Men will get to know their wives and families better, and fewer bones will carpet the greedy hollows that lie deep at the bottom of the green, choppy waters of the Channels round our coast.

"The Poorer you are the Harder you must Work."

There are phrases and words which express their meaning so forcibly and so tersely that we wonder how we got on before they were coined, or if the feelings they express had ever been experienced before their introduction. They fill the void so often left after choice and chosen language had failed, they so fittingly tell what we mean. They are the breath of the soul, sweeping over the strings of the heart and echoing through every organ of the body. They catch on, they cling on, they hold on. They are the tapestry on the walls of Time—works of art to which so very few contribute a piece." From "Carthage must be destroyed" and "I am a Roman citizen" to "Wait and see" what a list of expressive epithets were cast out to the listening world—messages that went straight from soul to soul, and which still, in unstudied irregularity, attract and hold.

It is many thousands of years ago now since was echoed in the heart of Rome that phrase which expressed so much in so few words, "I am a man and feel for all mankind." It was on the boards of the Queen's Theatre the other night was given to the world a phrase which was so expressive, so terse, so true, that we noticed very little of the play after it was uttered. "And the poorer you are the harder you must work" was the phrase which told so much in so little.

John Stuart Mill railed against the system of robbing the poor because they were poor, and every right-thinking man deprecates the same method, in vogue to-day.

If you are poor, you must take the lowest and meanest drudgery that can be given, because it means life to you.

The work given to the poor is generally the hardest, yet the wages given is such that the strength necessary to do this work cannot be obtained.

Let me amplify. I do not mean that any work is mean in itself, but the fact that so miserable a wage is given for some work that none but the very wretched will take it makes the work itself mean.

There is no escape for these poor. They were born to slave, and each generation means precisely that "the poorer you are the harder you must work."

And as the poor must work the hardest, why should not they be paid the best? Perhaps I will be told their work is not valuable; but it must be done, otherwise they would not get the opportunity of doing it, and the fact that no one else will do it makes it valuable.

There must be something wrong in the social system that tolerates this barefaced robbery of the poor. Because your condition is known, because your employer knows that starvation stares you, and that you dare not budge or refuse his offer, you are ground down, chained to the wheel, whilst you gnash your teeth in despair.

The American army brought the light of Freedom to the slaves of the South; but here around us are slaves who dare not even tell us they are such, dare not even whisper it to a companion, lest they be transformed from slaves to paupers.

This is not preaching a new doctrine nor trumpeting a new millennium; it is a mere review of what we see around us every hour of the day. It is not Socialism, it is truth, stern, inexorable truth, that has to be faced and grappled with.

The Man of Sorrows, He who raised aloft the standards of purity, nobility, and justice, was poor, yet He did not fear to denounce the rotten systems of His time; and, if we have a drop of Christian blood in our veins, we will not fear to do it to-day.

Children born in poverty, selling their labour, because they must, for a fraction of its value, going out into life unable to read or write, because the years given to the acquisition of this knowledge by others had to be spent by them in the factory or somewhere else, morally, physically, and mentally degraded, they stand a living sample of the system that produced them. They are to be met with every day—aye, every hour of the day—men and women who will say, "I cannot write, sir" and every such expression is a stab in the heart to every man and woman with a drop of human nature in them that hears it.

And yet we are asked why this unrest,

why so much murmuring in the ranks of Labour? Can anyone be so blind as not to see what the workers are going through? We know many are deaf, because they heard not the pleadings of the poor, raised for God knows how long, whilst they rolled in the luxury the poor provided. Now, they still are blind, for they cannot see the social upheaval is coming, is nearer than many expect; and, though we have no faith in the idealistic Paradise outlined by our Socialist friends, we hail the coming Revolution with joy. It is useless to tell me that Jim Larkin is the cause of a strike in Dublin; it is useless to tell any thinking man that.

The cause of every strike here or anywhere else is the system which denies a man or woman his or her God-given rights of Freedom and Right to Live. This is the main cause; the details are part of it, and when an attempt is made to ignore one and allowed, the whole is forfeit.

When Michael Davitt raised the standard of revolt for the tenant farmers of Ireland there were men who prophesied defeat, and it required a good deal of optimism to preach anything else. The fingers of landlordism were on their throats and its knees upon their breasts. But see how the struggle has ended—the tenant farmer is now a peasant proprietor, and landlordism is gone. Some suffered in the struggle as some must in every struggle, but the cause triumphed. In the cause of labour some will have to suffer, and I think that there will be no shirking when the call comes.

Then we had better look to our armour and see to our weapons, for the conflict is nigher than many think. Plutocracy is rushing madly onward, blind, deaf, insensible; but let it beware, for the sword of democracy shall leap from its scabbard, and flashing in the sunlight call this demon to halt.

Take your eyes off Poland; never mind what is happening in Cuba, there is slavery at your door and struggles on your streets that you should be aware of. These conditions will last until you finish them yourself.

Davis might have wrote for the workers when he said, "It is by the people the people shall be freed." And it is so.

The issue is straight, the conflict near, and it little matters the menacing looks of our foes. Onward, let the clarion note ring down the ranks until the whole world of labour has heard it! We are the great power in the world to day, and we can paralyse the sympathetic nerve of the universe—production. Let historians afterwards recount it and moralists place the responsibility. If we are driven to it we will do it.

An CLAIRION OUB.

The Death of a Great Man

The great J. Pierpont Morgan is dead. This colossus of finance has now returned to mother earth, no richer than any of the millions not so great, that have played their little part upon the stage of the earth since the creation. The news of his death was flashed along the electric high road to the four corners of the world—to every point where the effect of his enormous schemes of finance was felt, and the news brought with it a feeling akin to relief along with its veiled protest against the Almighty for taking such a great man away.

Morgan was a great man. A man who controlled millions of pounds' worth of profit earning machinery must of necessity be a great man; yet he was a great man the world will be well rid of. He never produced a single thing; yet he taxed the produce of others to such an extent that he earned the prefix of great among the world of money hogs he belonged to. He never did a single useful thing in his life, yet he became great, because he successfully seized control of the useful things done by others and used so well for his own benefit that he unquestionably was entitled to be accounted great. Great in the same sense that Lucifer was great. In the pursuit of that greatness he never for an instant considered the rights of the people, and was the implacable enemy of labour. He

as it were tore the rose vines from the cottage doors. He took the sunshine out of the workers' lives, and sent them to live in slumdom and miserable darkness in order that he could possess the results of their labour and become great.

And the great man is dead, and his wealth is of no use to him, and the world is not one penny the worse because he is dead, no more than it was ever one penny the better because he ever was born.

He early learnt the power of money over the lives of those who had none, and different to him who tries to corner the world's wheat and can only hope to have the world at his mercy until the next crop ripens, he knew that by cornering money and the implements of production and transportation he would have the industry of the world under his heel until the workers would absolutely refuse to give their labour for gold, which was something very unlikely; that he was justified in assuming that it would be considerably longer in materialising than the time covered by the few months that intervene between following harvests, and he so far succeeded in his ambitious though selfish career as to exact millions of unearned toll from the people whose very lives were in his hands.

But he is dead and is poor, although he was great and knew things.

A well-known newspaper, the "Express," of London, has stated that "Morgan's power was greater than kings, for it was illimitable power of money plus extraordinary sagacity and a dominant personality." That combination could only be truly described as power as long as the workers were docile enough to allow it to masquerade as such.

But he is dead and his power has vanished, and the day that was so powerful is being guarded by six hotel wage slaves as if some one wanted to steal it or as if it was a thing of value, because it had been great. The relatives have tried to cover over the carcass of this once great man with flowers. They have endeavoured to kill the taint of putrefaction in the air by filling it with the pleasant scent of flowers, a single bloom of which is far more valuable than a thousand such lives as was lived by the non-inanimate body they are kind enough to shield.

But the flowers won't hide him long. Get him off the earth, that was never his. Hide him in the grave with the millions of his betters that have gone before. The world belongs to the workers, and though Pierpont Morgan was great, he was an alien on the earth, and now he is dead, the rightful owners shall have more room to breathe and live.

DUBLIN CORPORATION.

At the Dublin Corporation on Monday last, on the election of members to represent the Corporation on the Committees of the various institutions of the city.

Mr. Richardson wanted to know why the Dublin Trades Council removed their representative (Mr. Christopher Timmins) from the Richmond Asylum Board.

The Lord Mayor said that was outside their business. As a matter of policy they left them—the Trades Council—representation on that Committee, and they left them the power to nominate their own people. They (the Corporation) had enough to do to mind their own house. Let the Council put on their own representative.

Mr. Richardson was proceeding to speak further on the subject, when Alderman Macken said it was the business for the people on the Trades Council. They were quite capable of minding their own business.

Mr. Richardson—My Lord Mayor, I think I am within my rights. Some people have got hold of the Dublin Trades Council.

Alderman Macken—You won't get hold of it anyway.

Mr. Richardson—Councillor Bohan speaks with regard to my objection. He sits as a representative of Liberty Hall.

Mr. Lawlor—Lord Mayor, if you are going to allow this man to deal with Liberty Hall, will you allow some of us to deal with scab unions? (Applause in the gallery.)

Alderman Macken—And strikebreaker, Lord Mayor—Gentlemen, I don't think there is anything to be gained by this discussion.

Mr. Bohan—He is only trying to advertise himself, Lord Mayor.

Mr. Cosgrave proposed that they adopt

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the recommendation of the Trades Council.

Mr. Richardson—I object to that. I move that we disregard the recommendation of Mr. George Burke for Mr. Christopher Timmins, and in moving that he wished to direct—

Mr. Bohan—I objected to that kind of thing.

Mr. Richardson—There was an attempt made to drive out John Simmons, a man who filled the position of Secretary of the Trades Council for thirty years; a man who filled the position with credit to himself because he did what he conscientiously thought was right.

The Trades Council recommendations were accepted, Messrs. Richardson and John S. Kelly dissenting.

Mr. Cosgrave moved that Mr. Beattie be placed on the Committee in succession to Mr. Farrelly.

Alderman T. Kelly—Cosgrave has turned Tory (laughter).

Councillor M'Carthy proposed Mr. Gallagher on the Port and Docks Committee. Mr. O'Carroll (Labour) never attended the meetings.

Alderman Macken proposed Mr. Bohan, and Mr. Lawlor seconded.

The following voted for Mr. Gallagher—Aldermen Coffey, Maguire, Downes, Murray, Doyle, O'Reilly, Flanagan, Councillors Rooney, Crozier, Higginbotham, Bradshaw, Ireland, Derwin, Murray, Gallagher, Delaney, Vaughan, Scully, O'Brien, Fox, Richardson, Byrne, Shortall, Doyle, J.; Cogan, Doyle, H.; Beattie, O'Beirne, and M'Carthy—29.

For Mr. Bohan—Aldermen Keegan, Thomas Kelly, O'Connor, M'Walter, Macken, Councillors Nugent, Bohan, O'Hanlon, Brohoon, L. O'Neill, O'Toole, Hopkins, Cosgrave, Tierney, Lawlor, Miss Harrison—16.

Mr. Lawlor said it came very bad from a minority in that Council to deprive another minority of a seat. It was very bad taste.

A Councillor said it was only by accident the former Labour representative (Mr. O'Carroll, T.C.) was elected on the Committee.

Mr. Lawlor—I quite understand that. It is only by accident we get anything here (laughter).

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