

## The Freight Handlers' Strike

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It was at Cooper's Institute Jack Burke and I chanced to meet  
It's years since last we parted, leaving on Hudson Street.  
He introduced me to his friends, the Doyles, the O's, the Macs;  
And our subject of the evening was about the railroad strike.

There's Field, Jay Gould and Vanderbilt, their millions they did save  
By paying starvation wages and working men like slaves  
They hum 'round honest labor as the bee does round the flower  
And suck the sweetness of your toil for seventeen cents an hour.

They advertised in English, French, Irish and Dutch  
They got a sample of all nations to work in place of us  
They marched them to the depot and told them not to fear  
And to shake their courage up in them, they gave them lager beer.

The lager beer and sandwiches with them did not agree  
In place of handling merchandise they all got on the spree;  
The Russian Jews soon spread the news about their jolly times  
And all the bums from Baxter Street rushed for the railroad lines.

The Italians made themselves at home and soon began to call  
For William H., the railroad king, to pass the beer along.  
Jay Gould was making sandwiches and Field began to cry  
Because he couldn't snatch up the man that blew up his English spy.

Those mean monopolizers had the cheek to take the stand  
And ask to get protection from the honest working man  
Who tires to sell his labor in a manly upright way,  
And will not handle railroad freight for less than two a day.

Does the devil make those fools believe that they are smart and clever?  
Does he tell them wealth will bring them health and make them live forever?  
Does he lead them from their gambling dens and to some shady bower  
To make them fix a workman's pay at seventeen cents an hour?

note: The freight handlers of the New York Central and Hudson River and the New York Lake Erie and Western railroads went on strike in 1882, asking for a three-cent raise from seventeen to twenty cents an hour. They were total incompetents; when the companies later hired experienced strikebreakers, the strike was broken. RG]

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