

Cobre Days

Oh the Hec- la is a good old barque on the Swan- sea Cu- ba
 run. She brings cop- per ore from Co- bre, ev' ry trip four hun- dred tons. For the
 car- go on our lat- est trip, there's a bit- ter price to pay: Oh don't
 let us have to face more Co- bre days. Co- bre days, Co- bre days, Co- bre
 days oh Co- bre days, oh don't let us have to face more Co- bre days.

Oh the Hecla is a good old barque on the Swansea-Cuba run,
 She brings copper ore from Cobre, every trip 400 tons,
 For the cargo on our latest trip, there's a bitter price to pay,
 Oh don't let us have to face more Cobre days.

(Chorus)

*Cobre days, oh Cobre days,
 Cobre days, oh Cobre days,
 Oh don't let us have to face more Cobre days.*

We anchored off the Mumbles, and we knew that it was bad,
 We'd lost three men in the tropics, and a fourth was raving
 mad,
 But the Cobre men said "Bring her in, we've shareholders to
 pay"

So the scene was set for deadly Cobre days.

(Chorus)

So we tied up at the Cobre wharf under hot blue sunny skies,
 The men swarmed all around her, and so did all the flies,
 But working hot and thirsty seemed to sap our strength away,
 As we staggered through those weary Cobre days.

(Chorus)

And soon the folk were shivering, despite the sticky heat,
 The sorters and the grinders, the patrolman on his beat,
 They sickened and they perished, turning yellow as they lay,
 Oh don't let us have to face more Cobre days.

(Chorus)

And you who give the orders, you who count up all the costs,
 Can you enter in your ledgers all the lives that have been lost?
 When you make your next decision, when you've had your
 final say,

Will we have to face another Cobre day?

(Chorus)

*Cobre days, oh Cobre days,
 Cobre days, oh Cobre days,
 Oh don't let us have to face more Cobre days.*



The Cobre Mining Company was set up in Swansea to exploit the copper mines of El Cobre, Cuba. They had their own wharf in Swansea's North Dock. The problem with Cuba was yellow fever, which we now know is spread by mosquitoes. In 1875, the barque *Hecla* returned from Cuba during a period of unusually warm weather. Despite sickness amongst the crew, the company insisted on unloading the cargo immediately, releasing hungry flies in the centre of town and causing an outbreak of fever from which many people died. Will industry ever put public safety ahead of profit? Don't hold your breath.