A LABOR POET.

CASSELL'S MACKAY THE SINGER OF BRITISH DEMOCRACY

Sketch of His Career A Writer of Songs Full of Enthusiasm for the Cause of Humanity

(From the *Coming Man*.)

Charles Mackay was justly be called the poet of labor as well as the lyrist of love and hope. Reached the hearts of the people. There were few singers to compare with the lyrics of the toiling mass of which Mackay first appeared as a poet. Nothing his long and laborious career of forty years, which only closed when death claimed him twelve months ago, he was recognized as the laureate of the love of the long head toiling people's poets, none the, perhaps, during lifetime, enjoyed such wide popularity. Several of his poems took the nation by storm on their first publication, while such songs as "Tullal Cam," "There's a good time Coming," and "Cheer Boys, Cheer," retain their hold on the popular imagination many parts of the world. Unlike some of his brother Scottish bards, Mackay did not pen chivalric ballads to the memory of the princes, instead of revelling in the deeds of the men of the blue bonnet and plaid, he occupied himself with the present, and earnestly ministered to the cares of the toilers. He was one of those practical singers who cared not to look back into the past, but, constituting himself a teacher of the people, he moved with the age, marked his tendencies and aspirations, and hailed every progressive step as an advance to that great time coming of which he sings with the spirit of the prophet.

WAIT A LITTLE LONGER

There is a good time coming, boys,
A good time coming,
The pen shall supersede the sword,
And Right, not Might, shall be the lord
In the good time coming.
Work, not Birth, shall rule mankind,
And be acknowledged stronger;
The proper impulse has been given—
Wait a little longer.

* * * *

There's a good time coming, boys,
A good time coming;
And a poor man's family
Shall not be his misery
In the good time coming.
Every child shall be a help,
To make his night arm stronger;
The happier he the more he has:
Wait a little longer.

Charles Mackay was a native of Scotland, a country rich in its people's poets. He was born in Perth in 1814, and at an early age he was sent to London. He completed his education in Belgium, where he was a witness of the stirring events connected with the Revolution. On his return to London he became a journalist, [illegible] poems, which attracted the notice of the editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, who invited the young poet to join his staff. Here he remained for nine years, when he returned to his native country and took in hand the editorship of a Glasgow journal. In the meantime he had published his "Voices from the Crowd," a series of short poems which he contributed to the *Daily News* when that journal was founded by Charles Dickens, and which gained him a considerable reputation as a song writer. In this collection are the following inspiring stanzas in which he addresses us concerning

DAILY WORK

Who lags for dread of daily work,
And his appointed task would shirk,
Commits a folly and a crime:
A soulless slave—a paltry knave—
A clog on the wheels of Time
With work to hand store of health,
The man is unworthy to be free,
Who will not give, that he may live,
His daily toil for daily fee.

So! Let us work! We only ask
Reward proportioned to our task—
We have no quarrel with the great;
No feud with rank—with mill or land;
No envy of a lord's estate
We can earn sufficient store
To satisfy our daily need,
And can retain, for age and pain,
A fraction, we are rich indeed.

A dread of toil have we or ours;
We know our worth, and weigh our powers.
The more we work the more we win
Success as to trade, success to spade,
And to the corn that is coming in
And joy to him, who ne'er his task
Remembers toil as nature's plan
Who, working, thinks and never sinks
His independence as a man

During his stay in Glasgow the Liberty of that city conferred on Mackay the freedom of L.L.D. in recognition of his literary merits. He subsequently wrote for the London journals, visited America, lectured there, and published his impressions under the title, "Life and Liberty in America." His journey to the United States inspired not the least singing of his poems, for we find him singing of the boldness of dependence that labor wins in that country, and how the humblest may share the fruits of the soil. While living in New York for some years, Mackay was engaged as part of the time as correspondent of *The Times*, and it was at this period he had the only blot on his life work. As he chronicled the events of the war between North and South he championed in his letters to *The Times* the cause of the Southern States in their effort to build up a nation on the basis of slavery. By this action he disappointed many of his best admirers, and cost him for ever the friendship of John Bright, who was unbending in the matter of principle.

On his return to England Mackay was [illegible] as a lecturer. His lectures [illegible] "Egeria," which contains his ripest powers as a poet. Conversant with all assumptions and [illegible] of truth with Mackay a great part of his life was a labor of love. He never courted popularity, but it stimulated and fed his daily bread while striving to elevate the tone of his land by his inspiring verses. Though Mackay published some interesting works of a general character in his late years, it is upon his labors as a poet of the people that his chief claim to recognition is based. He had to treat of the sympathies and aspirations of the masses, and to impart instruction as well as to give pleasure. The great merit of his poems are their humanity. None of them are rendered obscure in the spirit of the dreamer or speculator. There is above all, a song of cheerful hope and an expression of plain facts in them that are truly impressive. It is the manly vigour and sincere independence of feeling that rule life to his writings. He continued to weave his songs up to the last day of his life, his death taking place just Christmas Eve at Brompton at the age of seventy five. A little epitaph might be formed of the words which he inscribed, in fancy, on the pedestal of "Egeria," the name of his principal poem. "Love was his light, and purity his guide."

CORRESPONDENCE.

(To the Editor of THE LABOR ADVOCATE.)

SIR, In the LABOR ADVOCATE of Dec 19th, 1890, there appears under the heading of "Coming Changes," an article by Mr Charles Watts, editor of *Secular Thought*, on the industrial situation. It is stated editor ally to be a very clear and well reasoned summary of his views on the Labor question. They are arranged in eight paragraphs, and it is on these statements that I desire some enlightenment. I will take them up as nearly as I can, in their consecutive order.

1st When Mr. Watts affirms that "Labor is the source of wealth, does he not leave out other very important constituents of wealth, viz., Natural Objects, upon which labor may be exerted in order to create or fashion utilities, having a value in accordance with their adaptability to the requirements of society?"

2nd When he affirms that capital of itself has no real value * * * and is simply employed as a medium of exchange, is Mr Watts not confounding terms? viz., capital with money. When a manufacturer speaks of having a capital of $100,000 in his business we are not to understand him as having that invested in machinery, raw material, etc. The one machinery being fixed capital, the other raw material being circulating capital, out of which the workmen create their wages. In accordance with the theory of Henry George, "that every workman creates his wages as he goes along with his work."

3rd. "Money is not an absolute necessity of life." Which I think may be granted, but when the writer begins to analyze its function, does he not destroy his definition of Capital. Again it is possible that a piece of paper might be made the medium of exchange, and that a scarcity of gold or silver does effect prices somewhat, but if those pieces of paper, which might be substituted for gold and silver as a medium of exchange, where required by governments, bankers or merchants for transmission abroad, to pay interest on loans, liquidate balances, or pay for imported goods (of course this assumes that bills of exchange are so far above par value as to make it more profitable to send the medium of exchange, viz., pieces of paper) how would you maintain the value of the new medium of exchange and prevent a fall of prices owing to the scarcity of the pieces of paper?

4th, 5th and 6th. How would co-operative industry, along with the co-operative distribution of the products of labor, coupled with the Single Land Tax, meet those paragraphs. If these three things would solve the apparently endless disputes between labor and capital, why are the two first never tried, while we are manfully battling for the third requisite?

With the seventh and eighth paragraphs I most certainly agree with the writer, and in conclusion, if I have through lack of understanding failed to comprehend the precise meaning of Mr. Chas. Watts' views on the Industrial Situation, I will only be too glad to stand corrected.

Yours etc.,
J. H. WOOD.

218 Major St., Toronto.

AN ERA OF PROFIT-SHARING

One result of the great labor movement which has not had sufficient attention devoted to it, and which has been more or less secure during the past three years, has been the marked increase in profit sharing enterprises. Many of the ablest thinkers and writers on labor problems have fondly hoped for the emergence through time of some perfect form of industrial partnership which while giving due play to the forces of self interest, would yet supply a higher motive for work than the mere wages one which at present obtains. In this direction it was hoped would be found the solution of some of the most vexed questions of capital and labor. A list of British profit sharing firms, compiled by Messrs. J. W. Bushill and D. F. Schloss, brought up to "autumn 1890," would seem to show that we have fairly entered on a profit sharing era. Since last autumn no fewer than twenty seven firms have adopted the system. The figures as to the increase in profit sharing firms during the present year, as compared with previous years, are so significant that we shall quote the statistics for the past four years. In 1887 twelve firms adopted profit sharing with their employees; in 1888, four; in 1889, eight; and in 1890 no fewer than nineteen firms started this mode of working. Twenty seven firms indicate [illegible] complied with the profit sharing [illegible] which [illegible] in the [illegible] printers, three [illegible] farming, Tramway Company, gas manufacturers, builders, drapers, etc. The total of firms with profit sharing [illegible] amounts to fifty five industrial concerns employing 30,000 persons, and [illegible] seven profit sharing firms employing over 11,000 employees. Needless to say the increase in this as it desirable form of industrial production has been stimulated by the great movement towards united action on the part of skilled and unskilled workmen. But it is also a high tribute to the growing intelligence of the workers that such a large increase in this higher form of the production of wealth has become possible. *People's Journal.*

GIVE LESS LABOR

HOW THE ENGLISH DOCKERS SOLVED WHAT THE QUESTION OF WORK AND WAGES

BENJAMIN MCHENRY, President of the British Dock Laborers National Union, has been making speeches to the Government in Ireland. Following is the substance of one of his addresses and it is interesting because of the somewhat novel advice given.

Thirty five thousand men came out last March. The employers had told them that they could get plenty of blackleg labor. The union knew that it would take three of these blackleg laborers to do the work of an ordinary dock laborer. They said to the men was not to give more than one third the work they were giving in the past, and they described that system as a canny, that is "pull gently" in plain English. The union later when the strike was over, went back to their work and before a week the employers were begging that the men would, at any terms, give the same quality and quantity of labor as before the strike. They replied "you tied us and you told the public that you were perfectly well satisfied with the amount of labor you got from the men who were working when our men were on strike, and now you ought to be equally well satisfied with the same amount of work from our men; but at any rate, you are not going to get any more." Well that was the weapon they used in every port where they had made what they believed was a just demand and where it was refused.

There is an old Scotch saying that the minister preaches the best of sermon he is paid for, and there is a sort of saying that the tailor cuts his coat according to the cloth and so we say to the laborer who is not receiving what we believe he should get for his labor, give less labor, and very soon you will notice the labor problem. I think it is equally moral to preach the doctrine that in addition to giving less you should not give it of such a good quality. When the Lancashire cotton manufacturers and the Yorkshire woollen manufacturers were asked by the Indian commission [illegible] the prices per yard of the two countries gave them cotton mixed with paste, and for wool so shoddy, and by that means solved the problem, and every one was satisfied all round.

If the laborers did not get justice and they had as much right to define what justice is as their employers had, they could give less of the article and give it to them in shoddy. I am satisfied that if they put that system into practice they would not long have to stand on the streets out strike. He was humbly of opinion that the very worst thing they could do was to strike, because although it would be a severe blow to the employer it would also be a severe blow to them. He thought the Dock Laborers' union had proved itself a match for the skilled unions, and he wanted also to say that he knew no class of work where skill is so much required as that of the dock laborer. If they wanted a cargo well stowed it requires immense practice and skill.

One line in Liverpool he did not like to mention the line, because he did not like, great as the temptation was, to expose them over the country, but in one line in Liverpool the ambulance books demonstrate that one working man in every week has been killed for years. This line of ships is owned by a respectable firm of Christian shipowners who go to Church every Sunday, and who sometimes built churches, and in that line of steamers one dock laborer was killed at his work every week, or fifty two in the year. Since the union went along to Liverpool and got a firm footing there in March last, there has not been a single accident in that line. The first thing they did was to weed out those men who were unfit to be dock laborers.

Why, last Friday down in Cork one of these incompetent fellows was nearly killed; he was so wounded that he was taken to hospital, and has since died. Men may say, why don't you accept the non unionists as well as unionists? The reason they do not work with them is because they are incompetent men, they are generally men who the moment they begin work risk the lives and limbs of their fellows, and as the shipowners do not care about these lives and limbs, they told them that they dismiss themselves, and they care about them so much that they will have to employ all union men or all non union men.

Incidentally, General Miles says, is the especial evil of the army. We are glad to hear that desertion is the especial evil of the army. We sincerely hope that every man in the army, from major-general down to the most depraved vagabond in it, will desert within the next six months. Civilization cannot be civilization in reality until there is no army on the face of the earth. A Christian nation one that even proceeds to follow in the footsteps of Christ has no serious use for barbarism, cannibalism, life-consuming army. — *Lend Overpower.*

ELECTORS OF

St. Stephen's Ward

YOUR VOTE AND INFLUENCE

Are respectfully solicited for the election of

Wm. Bell,
R. H. Graham,
John Bailey.

Election takes place

JANUARY 5, 1891.

St. David's Ward

Your Vote and Influence are respectfully requested for the election of

J. A. McIlwain

As Alderman for 1891.

Election takes place on Monday, January 5, 1891

St. David's Ward.

Your Vote and Influence

Are respectfully solicited for

K. C. MARSHALL

—AS—

School Trustee for 1891-2.

St. Patrick's Ward.

YOUR VOTE AND INFLUENCE

Are respectfully solicited for

Fred Phillips

—AS—

ALDERMAN FOR 1891.

ELECTION

MONDAY, JANUARY 5, 1891.

ST. ANDREW'S WARD.

YOUR VOTE AND INFLUENCE

Are respectfully solicited for the re-election of

ALD. W. CARLYLE

—AS—

ALDERMAN FOR 1891.

St. Andrew's Ward

YOUR VOTE AND INFLUENCE

Are respectfully requested for the election of

W. W. HODGSON

—FOR—

SCHOOL TRUSTEE

Election takes place on January 5, 1891

St. Alban's Ward,

MUNICIPAL ELECTION

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Are respectfully solicited for

W. P. Atkinson

—AS—

Alderman for 1891.

Election, Monday, January 5, 1891.

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