

Notes from:
The Miners' Advocate and Record, 1873-1874

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MAR = Miners' Advocate and Record

1873-05-03: MAR 008 Cranky: Fragments from the Diary of a Cornish Miner.
Fragment II.

"My parents were very honest people; too honest, in fact, to be respectable - that is, according to the popular notion of respectability, too honest to be anything but poor. Ah! haven't I seen my mother weep over her poverty? and haven't I often heard my father lament his hard lot? Wasn't I, in my boyhood, surfeited with the sweets of this life, in the shape of bread and treacle? And when I used to see the Squire's son munching his nice biscuits and sucking his oranges, didn't I in my indignation long to punch the young monkey's head, knock his eye out, &c., and in that way demonstrate my appreciation of the difference in our fortunes?"

1873-05-03: MAR 002 (Letter to the Editor) A Humble Miner: The *Beehive*
Working Men Leaders' Portraits

"I see the *Beehive* ... is issuing portraits of its presumed leaders of working men. The mode it is adopting to carry out this Act of bidding for popular favour amongst the workers it at once a glaring inconsistency, because the portraits of the persons that have hitherto appeared in connection with it, are to the real leaders and sincere workers trying to elevate the working man. They are those who who [sic] are continually seeking self-glorification, and if they lift the workman up one step they will mind to lift themselves two. They are continually sounding their own trumpets in London, flirting with M.P.'s, and aspiring to become M.P.'s. It is at once evident to all thinking minds that direct working men's representatives in Parliament is an expensive myth. The money wold be better spent in teaching them to use their powerful popular power and influence judiciously.

The editor of the *Beehive* has hitherto pursued a mistaken policy in pandering to those egotists, and the result is it has weakened its influence and crippled its circulation. Does the editor of the *Beehive* think working men capable of discerning the difference between real and assumed friend, betwixt working leaders in their workshops and committee rooms, sharing their interests and aiding them with their counsels; here it is where he will find the real and sincere working men leaders, and nit in the vain presumptuous parliamentary aspirant. It is singularly significative of the favour which is

shown by that editor to the Howells, Potter's, and Odger's tribe, who are always hanging about the Commons lobby when they are allowed to occupy the whole of the columns of the *Beehive* with their peculiar crotchets, while men such as Cacy, Burt, Dixon, Rymer, and Crawford, who are minding their business among their associations, organising and building up working men's power, intelligence, and social influence, are denied both their portraits, and which is perhaps of more importance, its columns also. But take heart, dear old friends and sweet counsellors, you shall have your portraits in a more substantial form one of these days." Therefore welcomes this new journal, which will give these men a chance to speak.

1873-05-03: MAR 004 (Commentary) Capital and Labour: Their Relative Positions

Indirect teaching of the "fortunate possessors of gold and silver": "that money is the mainspring of life, and that in it 'we live, move, and have a being.'"

"There are three great classes of society that hold three different shades of opinion with regard to the true relative positions of Capital and Labour. The first, or aristocratic class holds that Labour should be utterly and entirely subservient to Capital, that it should never aspire to reap any of the fruits of its exertions, but always remain in its place as wage-taking Labour. A second class takes a more modified view of the question. It holds that Capital should *govern* Labour, that Labour should never rise superior and dictate to Capital, but that the labourer deserves a greater share of the produce of his hands - say a slight division of profits; and a third class declares that Capital should have no existence apart from Labour, or, if considered apart, Labour is entitled to the first rank. The first idea is to ridiculously foolish to merit even a passing comment. The second is the opinion of the greater part of the community, including a large number of trades' unionists; while the third theory is believed in but by comparatively few, and thus gold is exalted above manhood. But surely there is a test of some kind by which we might determine which of these antagonistic elements is entitled to the first rank. Does money keep a foremost place because of its value as wealth? If s, it is a usurper, because it is not *wealth*, but simply its representative, in a convenient form, - a representative that admits of the most frightful swindles upon the working classes. We are told that capitalists, by laying out their money on various works, cause the country to prosper. ... [quote Bishop Berkeley 560th query against this] ... We admit that money, under our present system, is used as a stimulant to industry, but labour produces the wealth, and, though Capital is useless without Labour, Labour would be equally useful, equally beneficial without Capital."

Example: prosperity of England depends on coal miner. Money has no role in

this. If gold money were abolished, not ruin would be the result, but a barter system would develop "and monetary panics, those fearful curses of the working class, could never occur". Usury also would be impossible under barter system "and that in itself would amount to a glimmer of the millenium for the wealth-producers.

In trade we do not value money for its intrinsic worth, but simply for what we can procure for it when bartering it for the necessaries of life.

Divesting Capital, then, of the false importance that attaches to it in highly civilized countries, and lifting Labour to its natural sphere as a world-regenerating and all-important thing, which, we ask, should occupy the foremost place in our estimation? which should dictate to the other, which absorb the profits of Labour? The useless owner of useless gold, or he who by his labour - his capital - in conjunction with the four elements, creates all that conduces to the welfare of humanity? Is it not time that the workers, either by a universal strike, or by a resumption of their lands, which have been taken from them by plunder, rapine and murder, and by taking the government into their own hands, declared that he who would eat must work."

1873-04-26: MAR 003 (Letter to the Editor) M. A. Orr, Riverside, Kingston-on-Thames

suggests scheme of collecting money and sending copy of MAR and IH together to each MP

1873-04-19: MAR 004 (Commentary) Hope for the Future

"... ignorance is that gigantic barrier which retards so effectually the progress of social and political reform". Working men are kept in ignorance by the education they get from the "upper classes". But inspite of this and more, "the working classes are awakening to a knowledge of the vile systems of fraud and injustice, which for ages past have crushed us down almost to the level of the brute beast. ... We begin to feel our power; we know that our hands produce the wealth, and that we, the working classes, the wealth producers, constitute the nation." ... "Illiterate they may be, but the sun of education will soon dissipate the darkness of ignorance, and the glorious dawn of freedom will then be *felt* by them, and they will bask in the sunshine of social and political liberty." ...

"The seeds of reform that were scattered broadcast by that noble band of martyrs to the cause of liberty, the pioneers of the grand old Chartist movement, have taken deep root, and, in spite of all the vain efforts to hinder its growth, it is developing itself into a substantial reality; and the glorious Miners' Manhood Suffrage Demonstration of the 12th of April, 1873, has

shown unmistakably that, not for nothing did this noble band of patriots suffer privations, persecutions, and imprisonment." ...

During demonstration "we thought of the vile slanderers who have so readily impugned the miners' character, who have so frequently denounced them as a dissipated, ignorant, lazy, and vicious class of men. What did these vile calumniators think when they saw the thousands of respectable men gathered together, of the one heart and the one mind, and for one purpose, united for the common good?" ...

"Hitherto we have been the dupes of a mischievous class-legislation; now we *demand* that we have a voice in the making of the laws which we are bound to obey, -

'It is our right,

And we will fight

And have it;

Yes, by God, we will.'

Yes, there is hope for the future; hope in our numerous associations for the advancement of the working classes; hope in our trades' unions, hope in our Financial Reform Associations, hope in our Anti-Game Law League, our Land Tenure Reform Association, our International Working Men's Association, and our Republican Clubs.

Reform or Revolution, is the glorious rallying cry throughout the length and breadth of the land; and not only in England, but throughout the civilised world the working classes are demanding their social and political emancipation; and, on the general upheaving, we have our hopes for the future of the working classes of the world." ...

"Fellow-working men, there is hope for the future; but if we wish to hasten the realisation of our social and political emancipation we must work, work individually, work collectively, work earnestly".

1873-04-19: MAR 005 Our Visit to the Great Demonstration

Manhood suffrage demonstration in Newcastle, 12.4.1873.

Some friends distribute back numbers of *Miners' Advocate and Record*

1873-04-12: MAR 003 (Reviews) Bishop Berkeley on Money, by James Harvey.

1873-04-05: MAR 008 Manhood Suffrage

one of several meetings by Northumberland and Durham miners for suffrage reported: at Shadon's Hill, 3000 people, Cowen jun. in chair. John Parkin, John Lucas, John Keir, George Tweddle

1873-04-05: MAR 004 (Commentary) Our Social Burthens

... "Money is not real wealth, or capital, but only its representative; labour is capital, and all wealth is the produce of labour; the accumulation of wealth is

the *natural* result of labour." ...

"Under present arrangements, the workman is benefited by the accumulations of the produce of his labour; in fact, the wealth he has laboured so hard to create, is so grossly misused that it often proves a curse to him rather than a blessing. The wealthy are enabled to add to their wealth; they augment their luxuries; they increase their menials, and thus add to the number of non-producers, and the whole of the burthen is sustained by the working classes.

The wrongs of the workers are incalculable; and when they are fairly considered by the workers themselves, the result will be so astounding that a social revolution will be inevitable. The two classes - the workers and the idlers - the producers and the consumers, hold interests distinct from, and antagonistic to each other. As long as this is so, the working classes cannot effectually, and to any great extent amend their condition. They may gain temporary advantages by uniting their forces to do battle to the overbearing employer; and so far their action has been commendable; but nothing short of an entire social change can permanently cure the evils by which they are afflicted, and raise them to their proper level in society. There are evils which a *strike* can never touch, and they are the direst evils that curse the working classes. A swarm of idlers are preying upon their vitals, and consuming the produce of their labour. Not one-fourth of our population are engaged in useful or productive labour; and these few have to support the great body of non-workers. The land-owners, the capitalists, the money-lenders, the employers, the soldiers, the parsons, the independent gentlemen, the lawyers, have to be supported by the workers. They exact rent, interest, taxes, profit, &c., &c., at will, and then recklessly waste the wealth that industry has produced in the pursuit of their own pleasures. If we add to this list the paupers, the criminals, and the lunatics - and the greater portion of these would be useful workers if Society were properly constituted - we can form some idea of the social burthens which the working classes have to sustain. It is not ignorance, but a false education, that prevents working men from rightly understanding those matters. The press, the pulpit, and the platform are monopolised by the idlers, and are used for the purpose of propagating false notions among the workers.

A social revolution is necessary. Trades' unions have done a great deal, but a great deal more remains to be done. The remedy is not in strikes. Let the working classes study the question for themselves; and when they fairly understand the *disease*, they will not be long in discovering the *antidote*."

1873-03-29: MAR 004 (Commentary) Demagogues and Their Dupes

Defends trades union leaders from being attacked in press, parliament,

sermons, speeches: This is only sign that "aristocracy" and "moneyocracy" are becoming alarmed at the rapid progress which has been made by trades' unions in the past year or two all over the country; and unless they speedily concede unto us our rights as citizens of a free country, our rights as fellow-human beings, our rights to a fair share of the produce of our toil, we warn them that there will yet be greater cause for alarm."

1873-03-29: MAR 004/5 Our Humble Origin

Surprised to find that many write MAR likely to find opposition of some secretaries of miners' unions for humble origin and "extreme advocacy".

Origin: "A party of low-bred working men, who had neither rank, title, money, nor position to recommend them to society wee its originators".

Extreme advocacy: Does this mean they are "too much in earnest when we urge our fellow-workmen to abandon the yoke of bondage"? Or are their reform schemes "too real"? "We will not be the slaves of any clique or party".

Idea/Motivation: "to assist in the propagation of those principles which, if adopted, and carried out, would tend to the elevation of our own class, and the emancipation of labour from the tyranny of capital. We ourselves have suffered keenly from the incongruities of our present social system, we have known what it is to smart under the authoritative rod of petty despotism - we have felt the galling of the degrading chains of British tyranny - we have chafed under the insolence of those who were called our *masters*, because our bread, and the bread of those who depended on our labour was at stake; and now, shall we become a toy in the hands of those who wish to prolong the struggle between capital and labour in order that their own base ends may be served? No." ...

"The cause of true reform is not so isolated as some may imagine; its glorious principles are pervading the minds of the masses." ...

"We are working men - we glory in the name. We invite all true men to assist us in our undertaking. Ye, whose hearts are yearning for the emancipation of British slaves, come and help us; ye, who long for freedom, perfect freedom, from the thraldom of capital, and will accept no compromise, give us the right hand of fellowship." ...

1873-03-29: MAR 001 Mr Roebuck on Demagogues

Roebuck said in Sheffield, "the capitalist made this country what it was"...

"The demagogue taught that the capitalist was the working men's enemy. It was false."

But Capitalists themselves in opinion of MAR are the demagogues.

MAR says "that the miners of the United Kingdom place *implicit confidence* in such well-trying leaders as M'Donald, Burt, Crawford, Halliday, &c., &c."

"We have no wish to see the capitalists and the workmen separated, but we do desire to see the so-called capitalists doing a fair share of work." Does not understand what Roebuck means by Capitalist made this country!

1873-04-26: MAR 004/5 (Commentary) Competition *versus* Co-operation

Competition is presented as "the only means by which trade and industry can be stimulated, and the prosperity of the country guaranteed". This is a "shameful fallacy".

Competition: "It enables one man to secure the profits of labour to the disadvantage of another. To the existence of human society, as the economists have shown us, certain conditions are necessary. the first is, that men shall labour; the second, that they shall accumulate the produce of their labour; the third, that they shall exchange the commodities that labour has produced. If one man in a community evades these conditions, the consequences of his neglect are detrimental to a proper state of society, the extra burden is borne by some other man, or by a number of men. The gain of the capitalist is the loss of the workman." ...

"It is of no use for the working classes to try to better their condition by competition. It is madness to suppose that we can get back what we have lost by such means. The capital, the wealth of the country, is in the hands of a class, consequently that class is too powerful for us to compete with; for, in the very nature of things, where competition is the recognised mode of becoming rich, the wealthy will add to their wealth without expending any labour of their own to do so." ... "such will always be the case, until one grand united effort of co-operation be made by working men, to put an end to the abuses of so foul a system."

Proof for efficacy of co-operation: trades unions, who have not touched the system itself, but "by a comparatively inferior species of co-operation" they have got things against the will of the capitalist, proves "that, in a more developed form, the same remedy would prove a thorough cure for the evils we complain of, and would eradicate the last remains of the great social disease."

Instead of keeping money in banks, it should be used for cooperative production, all different branches of industry could combine.

"Competition has engendered the evils and established the inequalities of our social system; co-operation is the only mode of curing those evils, and of levelling those inequalities."

"It is all very well to demand our political rights, but little argument is necessary to prove the inutility of political measures, when our object is the abolition of social wrongs. We may go on praying and petitioning for ever,

and our condition will remain just the same as it is at present." Therefore united effort at co-operation.

1873-07-19: MAR 005-7 Northumberland Miners' Annual Demonstration ninth annual demonstration and gala, Newcastle.

Platform 1: Cowen in chair, A McDonald, T. Burt, Dr. J. H. Rutherford, T. Glassey; Odger absent due to illness.

Platform 2: W. Grieves, R. Fynes, J. Nixon, J. Bryson, W. Crawford, R. Stapleton, Charles Bradlaugh (reports of speeches taken from Newcastle Daily Chronicle).

S. 7: Bradlaugh: "They knew in the South they could neither fight nor win the battle without the aid and countenance of the North; they knew it was impossible to gain a fair victory without each man worked with them in the struggle in which they were engaged.": abolition of lords, disestablishment. Is against strikes because they caused misery. But he knew men only can use the weapons they possess. But best strike would be: co-operative production.

1873-07-19: MAR 007 West Cumberland Miners' Demonstration at Maryport
Platform: Thomas Halliday (AAM), A. MacDonald (NMA), Lloyd Jones, J. Simpson (Maryport, agent for West Cumberland)

1873-07-26: MAR 001 Co-operative Production

Reasons for it: "Co-operation would accelerate political emancipation." because unfair laws can be abolished.