

RICHARD MCGHEE



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At last, as at first, Richard McGhee was identified with Glasgow and Scotland. His Parliamentary career was associated with Ireland, but his best work was done in Scotland. Irishman as he was he made a Scots phrase—"Ca' Canny"—famous all over the world. It was, I believe, first associated with hand loom weavers in Paisley but then only had local associations. In the dock troubles of the late 'eighties and early 'nineties, when, as Henry George stated in Glasgow, the dockers had asserted—and not too soon—their manhood, Dick McGhee along with his departed comrade Edward McHugh persuaded the Glasgow dock labourers to realize that "Man is man and who is more?" Cradled in storm he passes out in peace. The torch that he lighted has passed into other hands; his day's work is done and he passes on to the great adventure; to associate with that great multitude of all kindreds and nations and peoples and tongues such as were seen in that vision at Patmos. Some quizzical elder shall say in that "Rosa Dartle" way that such people have of asking questions: "What are these and whence came they?" Losing patience we can say: "Sir! thou knowest." He was of the people and for the people.

Richard McGhee was many-sided in his interests. His outstanding characteristic was his devotion to and work for the principles enunciated by Henry George with whom he formed a close friendship nearly half a century back. In the *Life of Henry George*, page 389, a reference will be found to two meetings held in Glasgow, one on 17th March, and the other on 20th March, 1882. The late Bailie John Ferguson ("Benburb") was chairman at the first, and Mr Richard McGhee presided at the second gathering. His contemporaries can tell of his work in founding, along with others, the Scottish Land Restoration movement. In 1885 he ran several candidates at the General Election of that year, as enthusiasm was running high in the new crusade for land restoration. The Leagues have since been indebted to him for the use of plates for reprints of Henry George's pamphlets. It can be said of him that he was the friend of all friends of the movement. With his Parliamentary career we are not, here, so much concerned. In two Parliaments he represented Irish constituencies, South Louth and Mid Tyrone, and apart from his official connection with the Irish Parliamentary Party, he was able to do much good work in permeating Members of Parliament with sound principles of land tenure and taxation. His other work was associated with Temperance propaganda and Trade Unionism. His connection with the Seamen's Union was in process of coming to an end before he died, but probably the negotiations for his resignation had not been completed.

One short obituary notice will not suffice to outline all that Dick McGhee put into a long and useful life. He is survived by his wife, daughter and five sons. His qualities deserved all the success they gained and more. Courage was a commonplace with him; energy radiated from him; logic and commonsense were his constant companions, and loyalty to friends and principles

his supreme virtue. We shall miss him at the Scottish League, and the movement generally will mourn his loss.

WM. REID.

A Tribute at the Graveside by Joseph Davidson

The last post has sounded for our dear friend Richard McGhee. He has passed beyond our ken, but his life work remains—a sweet memory to us all and an inspiration to those who would help in the great uphill struggle for human liberty and emancipation. His passing was just as he would have it—no prolonged ebbing away—but the terminus reached in the fullness of mental vigour.

It might be said of him in the words of Browning:—

"Here had been the general and chief
Through the whole campaign
Of the world's lives and deaths
Doing the King's work all the dim day long."

If there ever was a man who lived an unselfish life—who gave of his best to the service of humanity, Richard McGhee was that man. His sympathy for human suffering, his resentment to injustice of any kind—his intolerance of hypocrisy and sham were his outstanding characteristics. Had his wonderful energy been devoted to the material things of life he would have ranked high among the world's successes. But he chose to stand for truth and justice as he saw them, regardless of personal consequences and in the sum of things who can say but he chose the better part? As the Master mind of Henry George put it: "Success! Why falsehood has often that to give and Injustice often has that to give. Must not Truth and Justice have something to give that is their own by proper right—theirs in essence and not by accident?"

We part with him in sorrow and I would close with the words of his great teacher and friend Henry George:

"The only thing certain to any of us is death.

"Like the swallow darting through thy hall, such, O King, is the life of man! We come from where we know not; we go—who shall say? Impenetrable darkness behind, and gathering shades before. What when our time comes, does it matter whether we have fared daintily or not, whether we have worn soft raiment or not, whether we leave a great fortune or nothing at all, whether we shall have reaped honours or been despised, have been counted learned or ignorant

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