

**THE REDEMPTION
OF LABOR, AND
OTHER POEMS**

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The Redemption of Labor, and Other Poems by Charles P. Shiras

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CHARLES P. SHIRAS

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BY
CHARLES P. SHIRAS.

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P R E F A C E .

THE first and longest poem in this small collection is here originally printed; the others (with two or three exceptions) have before been presented to the public in the magazines and periodicals of the day. I desire to offer no other preface than a few explanatory remarks: and first I would speak of the "REDEMPTION OF LABOR."

There is now, probably more than ever, a prevailing desire to reform the world. Conscious of the almost miraculous superiority of the present age over all that have preceded, men of daring hopes have thought to accomplish, at a single stroke, the redemption of the human family from the ills which have so long been deemed a natural and inevitable inheritance. These men have invented systems, or as it were *panaceas*, to cure the diseases of the world. Almost all modern reformers belong to this class, and have attached them-

selves to different schools. While I honor their enthusiasm, and acknowledge that they do much good, I must protest that each and all are in error in the ultimate point of their faith. There is no panacea for social evils. But the world will surely progress to a greatness which we cannot conceive. This I hold to be a present necessity. Civilization has gained such a foothold, that it can never again be overturned. So that if all who call themselves reformers were to change their front, and labor to prevent this progress, they could not, in the slightest, affect the result.

Devotion to SCIENCE is the great element of modern civilization. It will be perceived that to SCIENCE I have given the first place, as the agent of this present advancement. By SCIENCE I mean the legitimate development of the resources of Nature. To explain my theory fully, would occupy much space, but believing that I hold these ideas in common with many others, I have little fear of being misunderstood. The poem should explain itself, without the assistance of an "Argument," and if it should inspire others with the same fixed and cheerful faith in which it was written, then, indeed, will I rejoice that I have given it to the world.

"THE BRIDE OF BROEK-IN-WATERLAND" was written (after a journey through Holland) in the simple belief

PREFACE.

that there might be as much romance about a canal in Amsterdam as a canal in Venice.

In the "IRON CITY" I have endeavored to convey the impression which the sight of my native city of Pittsburgh makes upon the mind of one who sees it for the first time.

The "BLOODHOUND'S SONG" was written and published, when I and others were asking for the repeal (not the nullification) of the notorious 'Fugitive Slave Law.' At first thought, it seemed wrong to include, in a collection like this, a poem having a political bearing; but my final, and, I believe, better judgment was to print it with the rest.

The idea of the little song of "THE CHAPEL" is taken from a popular German chorus.

To make a volume, I have included some songs which were written when I was a boy, and had little experience, but they were the best I could then write; and in fact I may add that whatever is here printed is the best that I was able, at the time of writing, to produce. Therefore I am not ashamed to ask that my few poems may have readers, since my conscience tells me that I have done my utmost to deserve them.

C. P. S.

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