

ARCHARD,
Charles J.

THE LATE MR. C. J. ARCHARD

A FRIEND'S APPRECIATION.

Not many in Newark, where he spent and
sincerely over half a lifetime, were admitted to
such close intimacy with the late Mr. C. J.
Archard as the present writer. And now that
his striking and familiar form has forever
vanished from the sight of his fellow-citizens,
I esteem it a privilege to be permitted to place
on record my appreciation of his character and
ability—an appreciation which, however inade-
quate, is at any rate sincere.

I made his acquaintance when he first came
to Newark, considerably over thirty years ago.
We were drawn together by a similarity in our
political views and our literary tastes. We had
passed through pretty much the same sort of
boyhood and youth—a youth very self-contained
and lacking in ordinary youthful friendships and
intimacies, but full of ambitions in the direction
of mental and intellectual improvement. We were
both very enthusiastic in the pursuit of our
political ideals. For the late 'sixties and 'seventies
were stirring times; reform filled the air. They
were the glorious times of Gladstone and Disraeli,
of Cobden and Bright. The old Chartist leaders
had not yet passed away. We had revelled with
keen delight in the rhetorical and intellectual
combats of the times. Mr. Archard often spoke
regretfully in his later years of the passing of
these political giants and the coming of the age
of mediocrity and practicality with its expediency
and compromise. And these expressions of regret,
coming from such a earnest Radical as my friend,
and failing to recognize the law that "the old
order changeth" and must ever change if its
deserted positions are to be retained, always
served to me as a salutary reminder.

His sympathy for the condition of his poor
fellow-citizens, and his heart towards the poor,
and his dream in this direction with a
tittle of the vast expenditure now being lavished
on this terrible war. His sympathies were on
the side of the weak and poor, and yet, strangely
enough, he could not at the last see that the
plain duty of England lay in the championship
of the small nationalities so ruthlessly being
trampled on by Germany.

Mr. Archard might be, and no doubt was, often
mistaken in his views, but he was always pas-
sionately sincere in the opinions he held, and
equally earnest and outspoken in their advocacy.
It was his ambition years ago, when public senti-
ment against Germany began to crystallise into
a "scare," to do something to bring about a
better state of feeling between the two nations.
He longed, as an old-fashioned Radical, for the
time when

"Men should brethren be,
And form one family,
The wide world o'er."

And to this end he wrote a life of the German
Emperor, in which, by an infinitely painstaking
bringing together of the public utterances and
actions of that monarch, he endeavoured to place
him in the most favourable light. But as he wrote
public feeling grew in intensity. He approached
publisher after publisher, but none was willing
to bring out the book, and to-day it lies among
his effects a bulky mass—thousands of folios, just
so many "scraps of paper." And I believe it was
the disappointment of this failure, with its con-
sequent overthrow of all the hopes he had so
loftily cherished, which had much to do with the
ultimate physical collapse that hastened his end.

He was always frail and unequal to much
physical exertion: his life and habits as a jour-
nalist made greater demands on his strength than
he could meet. But his mind was alert and
vigorous, and the conversations we had weekly
together for over twenty years, sparkling and
original as they were, had a wonderfully stimulat-
ing effect on me, his solitary listener. And I
often wished he could have had a larger auditory.
But he was very reserved, and shrank from
publicity.

Influenced by the prevailing fashion, he set up
a tricycle, and I recall with melancholy pleasure
some of the rides we took together to the Dukeries
and the district round Newark, accounts of which,
written in his own pleasant style, occasionally
appeared in the paper of which at the time he
was editor. I remember especially how on one
of these excursions, as we toiled up Dabdale Hill,
we stopped about halfway. He thought the
machines surely needed oil, they dragged so ter-
ribly up that long slope. And after oiling, the
little cap was missing, and search as we would
it could not be found. And so as I went on
hunting he sprawled lazily on the roadside grass
and discoursed whimsically on the total depravity

of inanimate things. And, behold, as if to prove
the truth of his quaint theory, we discovered the
thing missingly graining at us from the perch on
the hub of the wheel, where it had dropped.

But he was no believer in the total depravity
of the human race. He had a firm belief that
there was some good in every man, and that it
was the end of right government to discover and
foster it. And so it was always a grief to him
that the English worker should be so apparently
blind to his best interests and take so little
interest in local and national politics, and should
be so low-thoughted and selfish in his habits and
aspirations. This he thought was due very largely
to the immunity of the working men from direct
taxation; the compounding system in the col-
lection of rates, he maintained, was altogether
demoralising in its effects on local government,
notwithstanding any slight economy effected by it.

His manner with women was always marked
by a charming, if somewhat old-fashioned, defer-
ence and courtesy. He worshipped his mother,
and, I believe, remained unmarried for her sake.
He placed her on a very lofty pedestal, and the
feeling she inspired tinged all his thoughts and
words and actions towards the rest of her sex.

In his religious views he was tolerant—so broad,
indeed, that many who only knew him superficially
deemed him loose, if not downright Atheistic.
But in the rare moments when he disclosed his
inner mind on sacred topics he was devout and
reverential, saying that his creed was all summed
up in the Lord's Prayer. I shall never forget,
as we spoke together on the last Sunday night of
his life, how, in great weakness, he repeated in
a whisper, "Our Father," and said, "I am not
content to believe He is my Father; that is quite
sufficient for me." His mother was a devoted
member of the Baptist Church, and he always
regarded that Church with great esteem, although
not a recognised member himself. But coming
of an old Puritan stock, he was a strong believer
in Free Church principles. Priestly intolerance
and assumption were very repugnant to his nature.
He was fond of sacred music. Handel was his
favourite composer.

Of his public life and work I will say but little.
He would champion any cause he was convinced
was right, however unpopular it made him. He
fought the battle of Liberalism in the Newark
Division at a time when his abilities and ser-
vices, as he often said, would have commanded
a far better price on the other side. He threw
himself wholeheartedly into the struggle on behalf
of the conscientious anti-vaccinator, and mainly
through his advocacy the character of the Newark
representation on the Board of Guardians was
entirely changed. He himself became a member,
and materially assisted in bringing about legisla-
tion for the relief of those whose cause he had
taken up. He was terribly disappointed with the
compromise effected over the Education question,
and deplored the failure of the Liberal Govern-
ment of 1906 to tackle the question in a bold,
logical, and effective manner, so as to bring about
a real and lasting settlement.

He was a diligent reader, but could not tolerate
the modern novel. The Victorian novelists,
Dickens, Thackeray, Lytton, Anthony Trollope,
George Eliot, James Payne—these were his
masters in fiction, and since them he maintained
there had been none but sensationalists and
piffles. But his reading apart from fiction was
of a very solid type, chiefly historical and con-
troversial. In going through his papers and books
we were astonished at the immense diligence and
method that must have been displayed in their
collection and arrangement with a view to future
use.

This severe application and strain, scarcely
ever interrupted by a holiday or a change, and
aggravated by the war, resulted in the final
breakdown, and he died an apparently worn-out
old man at a comparatively early age. He was
laid to rest during the terrible storm of last
week, and my friend and fellow-mourner ob-
served, as we left the lone grave, the wind
howling and the sleet and snow beating furiously,
and dead branches, twigs, and leaves whirling
madly, "What a comment on the life of our
departed friend! He has spent most of his life
in the service of others, and to pass away so unnoticed,
if not quite forgotten! But that will not trouble
him—he has his reward." Yes, he is all the
richer for the change; but the world is all the
poorer for the loss of such a brave, modest, and
uncomplaining soul.

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