

Brainworkers: The Middle-Class Labour Reformer and the Late-Victorian Canadian Industrial Novel

Although Canada began to feel the social and economic stresses created by the industrial revolution later than both Britain and the United States, by the 1870s problems such as rural dislocation, urban slums, and the development of a dissatisfied urban working class were evident. The National Policy (1879), with its protectionist agenda and pro-industry ambitions, furthered the swell of urban industry and commercial growth. While factories had been a part of the urban landscape for some time, under the new government policy “they became an important feature of Canadian life” (Waite 342). Industrial expansion was thus fundamentally linked to the act of nation-building. Because the National Policy sought to stimulate Canadian industries, it “committed the country to industrial urban expansion as rapidly as world economic conditions would allow” (Watt 458). Indeed, as Paul Rutherford notes, one of the main sources of opposition to the National Policy was the “fear that the tariff would foster the very kind of excessive industrialization which had resulted in the degradation of New York, Chicago, and other American manufacturing centres” (xv). The Macdonald government’s response to the industrial stress and excesses of the 1870s and 1880s was to initiate a series of investigations, including studies of manufacturing conditions in 1882 and 1885. The reports contained disturbing information on the use of child and female labourers and the poor sanitary and safety conditions of the factories; however, no legislation was passed for the protection of workers or the regulation of industries despite the fact that “Factory acts were introduced at nearly every session of the federal parliament in the eighties” (Kealey *Canada* ix). At the

same time, new unions were organized and union membership increased in such international labour organizations as the American-based Knights of Labor.¹

The status of the working poor became the subject of polemical writing in both the labour and the popular press, and some of the most determined supporters of the cause of labour were middle-class intellectuals, or “brainworkers,” who undertook a specific kind of intellectual labour on behalf of the cause of physical labourers. Christina Burr observes that brainworkers were radical intellectuals “whose role was to educate . . . working men and women about the problems of capitalist accumulation at the expense of others, and thereby bring about social change. This task involved nothing less than a complete and radical change in sentiment and habits of thought among male workers who had been taught to ‘exalt money before manhood’” (54). Although the “labour question”² was emerging as a prominent concern in this period, only a handful of Canadian novels offer sustained examinations of the industrial milieu, and of the role and character of organized labour. Two such works, *Roland Graeme: Knight* (1892) by Agnes Maule Machar (1837-1927), and *The Preparation of Ryerson Embury* (1900) by Albert Richardson Carman (1865-1939), reflect the growing concern among Canadian middle-class intellectuals with the necessity for middle-class participation and engagement with the labour question. They share this focus on middle-class roles and responsibilities with mid-Victorian social problem novelists like Gaskell, Dickens, Kingsley, Disraeli, and Eliot. Like their earlier British counterparts, Machar and Carman caution against violent revolution and instead preach a doctrine of reconciliation and compromise, rooted in a reorientation of conventional notions of justice, a rejuvenation of social institutions, and the imperative of individual moral responsibility. Both Canadian novelists focus on the figure of the intellectual middle-class labour reformer, and the process of his education about the labour question. Both novels are explicitly Christian, and spend much of their respective narratives exploring the protagonists’ crisis of faith, before ultimately making a connection between the rejuvenation of the Christian spirit and the vitality of the labour reform movement. Religion is thus directly connected to the more radical subject matter of strikes, unions, and labour activity.³ Both narratives invoke the image of the Knights of Labor as a model of gradualist reform, working-class activity, and chivalric idealism. Roland and Ryerson accept the Knights’ argument for the necessary education of the working classes and adopt the role of the brainworker who labours in the cause of

reform. The young men's identity as brainworkers is reflected in both novels' focus on the role of education, as the heroes are shown reading from the leading works of economic reform of the period, including, most prominently, Henry George's 1879 treatise, *Progress and Poverty*, and assimilating their acquired knowledge into their work as labour advocates. The novels reflect the concern with social justice issues that Machar and Carman also explored in their non-fiction writing from the same period. The authors' polemical writing echoes this sense of the relation between Christian fellow-feeling and labour activism. Examining the novels' focus on the role of the middle-class intellectual and their authors' own political engagement with labour issues reveals the role of the brainworker in late-nineteenth century labour reform fiction and in the real-life struggle.

A Modern Crusade

Born in Kingston, Ontario, where she spent most of her life, Machar was a prolific writer whose concerns ranged broadly across the spectrum of life in Victorian Canada. Raised in "an environment that was both religious and intellectual" (Gerson 9)⁴, she received a private education at home under the tutelage of her father, a Scottish-born minister who was principal of Queen's University from 1846-1854. She was a determined social critic and a firm nationalist who was engaged in most of the lively debates of the day. Her causes included the welfare and status of labourers, the education of women, temperance, nationalism, and the humane treatment of animals. The indefatigable Machar produced poetry, novels, biographies, histories, and children's stories, as well as numerous articles in Canadian and international periodicals during a career that spanned five decades, in the process "earn[ing] a name for herself as one of Canada's best-loved literary nationalists" (Fiamengo 17). Although her fiction is decidedly anti-modern, characterized as it is by an earnest didacticism, Christian morality, and faith in the divine destiny of the British empire, Machar remains a fascinating figure whose breadth of intellectual inquiry secures her central position among the influential writers of late-Victorian Canada. As Ramsay Cook notes, Machar was "one of the most gifted intellectuals and social critics in late nineteenth-century Canada" (186).

In her 1892 novel, *Roland Graeme: Knight*, Machar united many of the themes she had explored (and would continue to treat⁵) in her non-fiction writing. Two essays from the beginning of 1891, "Voices Crying in the Wilderness" (*The Week*, 13 February 1891) and "Our Lady of the Slums"

(*The Week*, 13 March 1891), demonstrate the range of social concerns that Machar would address in *Roland Graeme: Knight*, including urban poverty, starvation, sanitation, and slums. The essays also reflect Machar's general belief that "class privilege created a debt to be repaid in Christian service" (Hallman 30). In these articles, Machar articulates a role for Christian social reformers (with a particular emphasis on the role of women) in remaking the world. Referring to "our common Christianity, whose foundation-stone is love" ("Voices" 169), Machar begins with the premise that her reading audience shares her strong faith. She argues that if the church recognized "that the command, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' was, by the highest authority, inseparably bound up with the other, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart'" ("Voices" 169), there would not be "the spectacle of capital endeavouring everywhere to screw down the receipts of a labourer to the minimum for which men, otherwise starving, can be induced to work" or "the complementary spectacle of labour everywhere organizing to free from the reluctant grasp of capital a fairer share of the profits that labour toils to gain" ("Voices" 169). Machar's sense of Christian responsibility is revealed in her stark query: "Is it not time that easy-going, self-indulgent Christians should be confronted with the question, in tones as stern as those of an Amos or an Isaiah: 'What are you going to do about it?'" ("Voices" 170). As Hallman observes, "Machar was no mere commentator on social conditions; she always tried to connect thought with action" (30), and this rhetorical question reflects her belief that principles must be sustained by action.⁶

In her non-fiction writing, as in her fiction, Machar defends the workers' right to unionization. As she observes, "One thing . . . in which all true friends of the working classes will agree [with General Booth and "Father" Huntington⁷] is in the approval of the principle of co-operation and organization among workmen, as absolutely necessary to protect their rights in these days of 'combines' of capital" ("Voices" 170). A month later, she reiterates the same point, noting that "the principle of cooperation" among the workers is one "which should be looked upon as the natural and legitimate complement of the use of the same principle by the capitalists with so much advantage to themselves" ("Our Lady" 235). Machar remarks that despite the clear Christian imperative to support the working class in their struggle for survival "there are many who look askance at the organization of the workman; at his 'strike' for fair wages and a sufficient livelihood, who seem to feel no such disapproval of the combination of rich employers to fleece the public! It is the world's way with 'the under dog in the fight.' And

the Church has been too much like the world” (“Voices” 170). Machar emphasizes in her essays, as she later will in *Roland Graeme*, that “the service of God on earth is actually the service of man” (“Our Lady” 234). Her novel thus reflects the serious social subjects upon which Machar expounded in her non-fiction writing.

In *Roland Graeme: Knight*, Machar focuses on the labour question, and, through it, on the woman question. Other topical subjects such as temperance and sanitation also emerge as strong concerns. *Roland Graeme* tells the story of a young Canadian social reformer who starts a small labour journal called *The Brotherhood* in the fictional American town of Minton. Located somewhere in the north-eastern United States, Minton is predominantly a manufacturing town, and many of its poorest citizens suffer from the effects of overwork, malnourishment, and slum housing, effects which Machar reads as symptomatic of unregulated urban industrialism. Shortly after Roland’s arrival in Minton, the idealistic young hero discovers that “there were many wrongs around him calling for redress” (54), and he takes it as his own mission to answer that call.

The novel charts Roland’s development, both as a labour reformer and as a Christian; Machar suggests that these two roles are intimately connected since it is Roland’s status as “a lover of man” (271) that prompts his commitment to social reform. Roland’s evolution is echoed in the development of Nora Blanchard, another visitor to Minton, who is appalled by her discovery of the poverty and misery of the factory workers. It is not her first exposure to industrialization, because her own rural hometown, Rockland, is home to what Machar describes as “model mills” (270), an operation run for profit, but with great attention to the comfort, dignity, and collective well-being of its workers. Rather, it is Nora’s first experience of the effects of *laissez-faire* capitalism, a system in which Social Darwinism becomes the implicit excuse for non-interference. Nora’s strong sense of social justice is roused and she begins to question the starkly apparent inequalities between the classes. Roland and Nora both approach the issue of labour reform from a Christian perspective, a point that Machar reinforces by casting two of the novel’s other characters as ministers: the Reverend Mr. Alden, who practices what he preaches, and the Reverend Mr. Chillingworth, who preaches well, but who cannot implement the Christian philosophy of brotherhood in his own practice. This deeply Christian work, in many ways conventional in tone and style, nevertheless manages to offer a powerful critique of the

relations between labour and capital in the industrial world of the late nineteenth century.

Machar's solution to most of the social ills she represents in *Roland Graeme* is a simple one: she encourages the application of Christian ideals to the various problems of life in the contemporary industrial city. This Christian idealism most often takes the form of the "Golden Rule" which, in its petition to treat others as you would wish yourself to be treated, argues for reciprocal kindness both between friends and strangers. More than the idea of simple fair dealing, however, is Machar's strong sense of one's moral obligation to aid and care for one's fellow citizens. The argument, then, is one of inter-class fraternalism, or "brotherhood," a concept which is central to the rhetoric of nineteenth-century labour reform, and which is promoted by leading mouthpieces of the workingman, such as the Knights of Labor, of which the protagonist is a member.⁸ In the regeneration of Christian fellow-feeling, and in the performance of good deeds, Machar sees the potential for a distinctly urban Christian social renewal. Machar's rhetoric in the novel reflects her "[deep commitment] to her Presbyterian heritage" (McKillop 137). Ramsay Cook notes that "What lay at the basis of her thought was her firm conviction that Christianity, once brought into line with contemporary intellectual developments, provided the surest method of both comprehending and reforming modern industrial society" (187). Machar's novel describes the human consequences of urban industrialism and, in so doing, forces her genteel middle-class readership to acknowledge the world of human suffering and need that coexists with their own world of comfort and ease; indeed, her novel pushes the point that even the modest luxury of the middle class is sustained by the work of the labouring classes. The book's subtitle, *A Novel of Today*, clearly orients it as a work engaged with the vexed issues of contemporary society. While it is true, as Nancy Miller Chenier observes, that Machar's fiction is "less daring in any social criticism than her essays" (63), the novel nevertheless offers an indictment of unregulated industrialization.

Machar's belief in the transformative power of Christian cooperation and fellowship, founded on the principles of the Social Gospel movement,⁹ is, however, more complicated than it may initially appear. Frank Watt's observation that *Roland Graeme* "preaches not social or political revolution but *noblesse oblige*" (461) is an accurate assessment: the novel's middle-class characters learn to cherish their Christian responsibilities and they endeavour,

through small and seemingly insubstantial gestures, to improve the lives of the town's less-fortunate citizens, while the workers do not seem to have gained any more control over their own collective destiny by the novel's conclusion than they had at its beginning. The phrase *noblesse oblige* ("privilege entails responsibility") captures the tone but perhaps misses the essence of Machar's narrative of Christian-based social reform. She deliberately stops short of allowing her protagonist the satisfaction of seeing his goals of social reorganization achieved, and tempers the dominance of his youthful enthusiasm and idealism by injecting other voices (most notably those of Sandy Dunlop and the Reverend Mr. Alden) that combine "Christian socialism" (10) with Christian patience. Machar's narrative of transformation, of characters awakened to their Christian duty, is simultaneously a narrative of deferral, for the point is made on many occasions that the changes Roland hopes to effect will not be seen within his lifetime. Roland's belief in the benefit of his reform efforts to future generations thus parallels the Christian belief in an afterlife: both are predicated upon faith and deferral, the performing of good works in the present for the benefit of some future blessing. The point is clearly made throughout *Roland Graeme* that change can only occur slowly and gradually; that such change must occur, but that it must be by evolution rather than revolution; and that anarchy from below is just as dangerous and divisive a force as oppression from above. Throughout the novel, Machar argues for the integration of theoretical notions of Christian duty with their practical application. She focuses on the pressing need to rehabilitate society through changing the way her modern Christian readers think, both about religious responsibility and about workers' rights.

The Gospel of Justice

Albert Richardson Carman (1865-1939), born at Belleville, Ontario, was the son of the Reverend Albert Carman, a prominent educationist and long-serving superintendent of the Methodist Church of Canada. Throughout his long journalistic career, Carman authored only two novels, published within several years of each other: *The Preparation of Ryerson Embury: A Purpose* (1900) and *The Pensionnaires; The Story of an American Girl who took a Voice to Europe and Found—Many Things* (1903).¹⁰ This period of novelistic activity is bracketed by Carman's successful career as a journalist. While Carman worked for both the *Toronto Globe* and *Philadelphia Ledger* early in his career, he spent the bulk of his professional life at the *Montreal Star*, where he ultimately became editor-in-chief. His obituary quotes the praises of his

colleagues and of “men prominent in every station of life”: “Canadian journalism has lost an outstanding figure. . . . His contribution to the highest standards of journalism have been second to none . . . Canada loses a brilliant mind” (*Globe and Mail*, 18 October 1939).

While neither of Carman’s novels bears witness to the literary talent implied by this elaborate praise, they do demonstrate his keen power of observation and his eye for telling cultural details. In both novels, Carman relies on stereotypical and quickly drawn secondary characters; however, his creation of the eponymous protagonist in *The Preparation of Ryerson Embury* suggests an effort to create a genuinely complex character. The novel focuses on a period of several years of Ryerson’s life as he completes his university education and embarks on his career, moving from a state of innocent self-absorption, through a series of personal and spiritual tests that eventually transform him into a committed labour advocate and economic reformer. The narrative trajectory in some ways parallels that of *Roland Graeme: Knight*, for both novels chart the development of country boys who have moved to manufacturing towns, both young men experience a crisis of faith early in the narrative, and Ryerson and Roland each must struggle to reconcile his ideas of Christian living with the practice of Christianity he sees around him. *The Preparation of Ryerson Embury* is a novel of education and formation, but rather than witnessing the growth and development of a boy into manhood, the reader witnesses the transformation of an already grown man, still boyish in his thinking, into a deeper maturity as he confronts his experiences of Christianity, ethics, compassion, and sympathy, and makes decisions about the direction of his life and his chosen vocation. Early in the novel, unable to sense the grace of God’s salvation at the spiritual revivals he attends at his local Methodist church, Ryerson resolves to pursue purposeful action rather than introspection, to labour on God’s behalf rather than to repent. His ultimate rejection of the revivals is not, however, a rejection of God, for he commits himself to “God’s service in the world” and is content to act “without any promise from the Deity of salvation” (10).

The novel may be broken into two parts: the first follows Ryerson’s undergraduate career; the second, longer section focuses on his education and experiences in the Free Thought Club and labour activist circles that he begins to frequent as a recent graduate.¹¹ Carman shows Ryerson’s real social education occurring in the context of a lengthy strike by local workers, during which he moves from a detached observation of their plight to an active engagement with their cause. Through this contrast between Ryerson’s

formal and his informal education, Carman suggests that Ryerson's true intellectual awakening has little connection to what he learns in the college classroom, which is here figured as the realm of abstraction. Instead, Ryerson's self-directed course of study, and his new acquaintance with a working-class family, give him the knowledge he needs to make himself a powerful ally to the workers and to put theory into practice.

In a polemical essay titled "The Gospel of Justice," which appeared in *The Canadian Methodist Quarterly* in 1891, Carman offers a radical critique of the present-day Church, which he would later echo and advance in *The Preparation of Ryerson Embury*.¹² Beginning with the premise that the "masses" of people are no longer drawn to the church as they were in Biblical times, Carman attempts to diagnose the church's failure to appeal to its traditional audience among the "common people" (286). Although he proposes that the opinions he offers are of the world "as one humble soul sees it, speaking with reverent lips" (287), his critique of the modern church is nevertheless a vigorous and stringent one. Carman observes,

Should the suddenly rich, the monopolists, those who have filched the savings of the people, all who live by the labor of others, meet in secret council to frame a religion under which they would like the world to live; what better could they enact than that the oppressed would bear with Christian humility their oppression, and that the wronged would live on with silent lips, looking for right only beyond the grave? And yet that is in practical effect the Gospel heard to-day in many an upholstered pew—the gospel of charity on the part of the rich and humble gratitude on the part of the poor—of exhortation to the rich to give that they may evidence their goodness and of promises to the poor of a fairer distribution of God's mercies in the future life. (287)

His forceful censure here emphasizes two themes that will be treated at fuller length in his fiction almost a decade later: his concern for ineffectual charity, which shifts the focus from real social reform to various palliatives which may ease the social disease of poverty without curing it; and the necessity for justice and fair dealing for the working classes.

Later in this essay, Carman draws a parallel between the modern capitalist and the Biblical Pharisee. Noting that the "Pharisees had made the remarkable mistake of neglecting that part of the old gospel requiring justice between man and man in their holy eagerness to get everybody safely into heaven," he remarks on the "coincidence" that this mistake "redounded to the wealth and power of the neglectful Pharisee. Other grievous burdens . . . came from the same quarter, for the religion of the people had fallen wholly into these corrupt and oppressive hands—hands that, we are told on high

authority, bound heavy burdens and grievous to be borne and laid them on men's shoulders, but would not move them with one of their fingers" (289). This censure directly parallels the critique offered by the Rev. Tommy Tracy in *The Preparation of Ryerson Embury*, who declares to his ideological opponent, the young Rev. Walters: "the Pharisees were the religious leaders of the people. They took upon themselves the responsibility of interpreting God's truth to man. . . . They betrayed that truth; and the merciful Christ, who had condemnation for so few, poured His fiercest indignation upon them. And I believe in my soul that the section of the clergy who this day fail to preach the Gospel of brotherhood, letting the Mastersons [the chief industrialist family] think they are following Jesus when they sweat the poor and divide the spoil with the Church, come under the very condemnation that Christ thundered out on the Scribes and Pharisees" (210).

The article shares another prominent feature with the novel, in that the two are divided between a focus on land reform and on raising workers' wages. In "The Gospel of Justice," Carman notes that the average annual wage of workers in Ontario ("exclusive of brain workers" [295]) is \$420.07. After expenses for food, rent, clothing, and fuel, the average family is left with a little over 50 dollars "for all of life that lifts man above the animal" (295). Carman takes pains to remind his reader that the situation he describes "is not a case of a few of the harder pressed men, but is the average of the workingmen of the Province," adding that "these men—industrious, honest, capable—must furnish their homes, educate their children, pay their taxes, buy any books they get, and purchase such of the bright things of life as they would like their families to enjoy" (295). Rather than advocating an increase in charity, Carman calls upon Biblical evidence to assert that what is truly needed is a Christian approach to economics. "The reason," he maintains, "why the seamstress starves is because she does not get what she earns, and somebody else gets more than he earns; because somebody else steals from her what is hers. . . . The remedy for this case is not charity, but honesty" (295). Carman reflects that true Christianity "is not an alleviation of the ills of life, but a cure. It is not intended to merely patch the fabric here and oil the machinery there, so that this great multiple whole we call the world may grind and creak and blunder on without utter collapse; but it is capable of making out of present materials an ideal world in which every man, woman and child will be just where, in divine justice and infinite love, they ought to be" (293). He further notes that "A Christianity of compromise is a contradiction of terms" (293). "The Gospel of Justice" elucidates the

argument Carman later offers in *The Preparation of Ryerson Embury*, elaborating upon the Biblical evidence which supports Georgeite land reform and clarifying how a thoughtful young Christian could experience a crisis of faith when he or she confronts the disjunction between true Christian ethics and the practice of Christianity in the modern church. As Ryerson reflects after reading *Progress and Poverty*, “If there were a good God, this man [i.e., Henry George] was His prophet. The succour of the poor—the lifting of man out of brutalising environment—was surely the work God would have men do. And the churches? They stood aside with alms in hands which should have borne a sword—they distracted our attention to the next world” (158).

Carman’s novel reflects a powerful concern with education and faith and, in particular, with the necessity for both endeavours to have practical ends. The novel’s setting in a college town and the protagonist’s formal identification as a student foregrounds the weighty role of education in the narrative, something which is further emphasized by the attention given to self-directed programs of study, such as those that the heroine, Grace Brownell, and later Ryerson himself embark upon. The fictional Canadian town of Ithica clearly has a lively intellectual climate. Carman includes references to other forms of self-education, including the papers given and heard by the intellectuals of the Free Thought Club (of which there are two: one at the college and one, apparently more dangerous in its “free thinking,” in the town), and by the workers at the meetings at “Black’s.” Carman also mentions “the popular lectures that the college professors had been giving during the winter at the Mechanics’ Institute” (77) and “a society of scientific research” (26). While Ryerson’s private study initially seems to lead him further away from his once-strong faith, as he questions the authority of the Bible and the Church, he is eventually able to connect his new liberal ideology and secular focus with the more socially engaged form of faith that he sees in the Rev. Tommy Tracy. Both Ryerson and Tracy concentrate on performing good works and take the idea of truth, rather than authority, as a guiding principle. Through the wise counsel of Tracy, a Methodist preacher, and Crawford, a radical Free Thinker, Ryerson is ultimately able to connect the idea of good works with his labour reform agenda, leading him to remark near the novel’s conclusion that Jesus, in his insistence upon the “equality of the human family” (228), thinks like the great American economic reformer, Henry George. Carman does not privilege one kind of knowledge (be it academic or religious knowledge) over the other; rather, he privileges active knowledge, which tends toward praxis, over abstract or

theoretical knowledge, which is content with acquiring knowledge for its own sake. Through Carman's depiction of Ryerson's intellectual and moral education, the narrative suggests the sterility of intellectual debate in the absence of any simultaneous commitment to social action. Carman's preoccupation with the theme of finding one's true vocation arises out of this conviction that knowledge must have practical and social ends.

The spiritual crisis that initiated the novel is resolved in its concluding pages when Ryerson is finally able to reconcile social reform and faith, echoing the doctrine of liberal theology in which "Christ became first and foremost a social revolutionary who attempted to transform, not simply modify, society" (Semple 265). Despite Carman's efforts to craft a complex and realistic character in Ryerson, he remains in many ways a symbolic character, for he embodies the movement toward liberal theology in Methodism. As Neil Semple notes, liberal theology "exalted the intellect and replaced certainty and conformity with a healthy prescription of doubt and questioning" (266). In this sense, the novel functions almost as a *roman à clef* about the necessary future direction of Canadian Methodism. Carman reflects the growing belief at the end of the nineteenth century that Christian teachings require reinterpretation in order "to bring them into closer touch with the requirements of modern man" (Cook 105). Cook observes that such reinterpretation "was part of an effort to discover a social ethic and a political economy that would challenge the injustices of the emerging capitalist industrial order" (105). Carman's focus on good works, rather than spiritual revivals, as the path to salvation echoes a general shift in the Methodist Church away from the precepts that had marked the church of his father, the last Bishop, toward a distinctly modern social and religious agenda. In *The Preparation of Ryerson Embury*, Carman argues for the necessity of action, accountability, and compassion in both public and private life.

Taken together, the fiction and non-fiction writing of these two nineteenth-century Canadian intellectuals suggests both the vitality of the public debate about labour reform, and the broad social interest and significance attributed to the labour question as one of the issues that would define the moral character of the period. Both Machar and Carman approach the labour question as Christian intellectuals, and their sense of the middle class's social responsibility is clearly articulated in both their novels and their essays. These writers suggest that what is needed is not an increase in charity but a rejuvenation of each citizen's sense of moral responsibility. The idea of "brotherhood," emphasized in the writing of both Carman and

Machar, connects the church's rhetoric of spiritual brotherhood to the labour reform movement's emphasis on the practical brotherhood that unites workers and which is manifested in their drive toward combination and unionization. Machar and Carman's own efforts as brainworkers who speak out about the urgent necessity for reform are echoed in their fictional heroes' quest to create a more egalitarian society.

NOTES

- 1 The Noble and Holy Order of the Knights of Labor, the first important labour organization in the United States, was founded in Philadelphia in 1869 by Uriah S. Stephens. Kealey and Palmer note that the Knights had at least 450 Local Assemblies and 12 District Assemblies across Canada, "making it far and away the largest labor organization in nineteenth-century Canada" (57).
- 2 The labour question may be defined in its simplest form as the enquiry into the cause of social inequality and the debate about its possible remedies. T. Phillips Thompson, perhaps the prototypical Canadian brainworker, interprets the labour question, in its North American context, as "simply the question as to whether America shall in the future be a free democratic land, with equal rights and opportunities, as far as may be, for every citizen—or a country where the many are ruled, as in Europe, by the privileged few" (5).
- 3 Another industrial novel of the period, Robert Barr's *The Mutable Many* (1896), addresses similar social anxieties without, however, seeing a solution to the exploitation of workers in the rejuvenation of Christian fellow-feeling. Barr's hero, an earnest young labour reformer, must navigate the complexities and contradictions revealed during the course of two strikes at a London factory. The novel's cynical ending reflects Barr's secular, rather than spiritual, focus.
- 4 Refer to Carole Gerson's *Three Writers of Victorian Canada* and Dianne M. Hallman's "Cultivating a Love of Canada through History" for more biographical information about Machar.
- 5 Machar would later address the plight of female factory workers in essays such as "Healthy and Unhealthy Conditions of Woman's Work" (*The Week* [27 March 1896]: 421-22) and "The Unhealthy Conditions of Woman's Work in Factories" (*The Week* [8 May 1896]: 566-69).
- 6 Machar clearly believed that the written word could inspire action. In her review of *In Darkest England*, she notes that General Booth's exhortation to his readers to aid the poor of London "has penetrated to the Christian conscience generally [as] is clear from the prompt response accorded to his plan for rescue" ("Our Lady" 234).
- 7 Machar's characterization of Roland echoes her description of the radical Reverend J.O.S. Huntington, an Episcopalian minister from New York, who was also a Knight of Labor and Georgeite. Machar comments that the "deep impression" he produces upon his audience is due, "in great measure, to his own passionate realization of the brotherhood of man—not as a mere poetical figure, but as a solemn truth—and also of the untold misery of a large mass of suffering humanity—produced, in a great measure, by the unbrotherly conduct of many—even of those who 'profess and call themselves Christians'" ("Voices" 169).

- 8 Roland's designation in the title as "Knight" refers to his membership in this prominent labour organization.
- 9 Proponents of the Social Gospel believed that Christian principles could be applied to remedy current social and industrial conflicts. Cook notes that the Social Gospel movement "was not merely a response to a perceived social crisis. It was also, perhaps principally, a reaction to a profound intellectual crisis, and as part of that a questioning of the role of the clergy and the church in modern society" (Cook 174-75).
- 10 Carman also contributed dozens of essays and sketches to periodicals including *The Canadian Magazine*, *Canadian Methodist Magazine*, and *The Canadian Methodist Quarterly*.
- 11 In Canada, the free-thought movement (propagated by secularists and agnostics, who debated various facets of religious and scientific knowledge) flourished, particularly in the 1880s when local societies were organized in Toronto, Welland, St. Thomas, Aylmer, Gananoque, Napanee, Ottawa and Belleville (Cook 52). Carman may have had some exposure to the Belleville group during his time at Albert College.
- 12 Cook attributes this radical essay to Carman's deeply conservative father, Albert Carman senior, the one-time bishop and long-serving superintendent of the Methodist Church (119, 192). The confusion between the two men is natural given their virtually identical names. However, since the authorship is attributed to Albert R. Carman (and Carman consistently used his middle initial in all of his writing, presumably to distinguish himself from his like-named father), the essay is more likely to be the work of the son. This differentiation helps to reconcile some of the more radical aspects of the essay with the identity of its author, for Albert R. Carman continued to espouse these ideas (and, indeed, called upon the same Biblical evidence) to support his argument for social reform in *The Preparation of Ryerson Embury*.

WORKS CITED

- Atherton, Jay. Introduction. *The Politics of Labor*. by T. Phillips Thompson. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1973.
- Burr, Christina. *Spreading the Light: Work and Labour Reform in Late-Nineteenth-Century Toronto*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1999.
- Brouwer, Ruth Compton. "The 'Between-Age' Christianity of Agnes Machar." *Canadian Historical Review* 65.3 (1984): 347-70.
- Carman, Albert R. "The Gospel of Justice." *The Canadian Methodist Quarterly* (July 1891), 286-306.
- . *The Preparation of Ryerson Embury: A Purpose*. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1900.
- Chenier, Nancy Miller. "Agnes Maule Machar: Her Life, Her Social Concerns, and A Preliminary Bibliography of Her Writing." M.A. Diss. Institute for Canadian Studies, Carleton University, 1977.
- Cook, Ramsay. *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1985.
- Fiamengo, Janice. "'Abundantly Worthy of its Past': Agnes Maule Machar and Early Canadian Historical Fiction." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 27.1 (2002): 15-31.
- George, Henry. *Progress and Poverty*. 1879. New York: Modern Library, 1938.
- Gerson, Carole. *Three Writers of Victorian Canada: Rosanna Leprohon, James De Mille, Agnes Maule Machar*. Toronto: ECW Press, 1983.

- Hallman, Dianne M. "Cultivating a Love of Canada through History: Agnes Maule Machar, 1837-1927." *Creating Historical Memory: English-Canadian Women and the Work of History*. Ed. Beverly Boutilier and Alison Prentice. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997. 25-50.
- Kealey, Gregory S. *Canada Investigates Industrialism: The Royal Commission on the Relations of Labor and Capital, 1889 (Abridged)*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1973.
- and Bryan D. Palmer. *Dreaming of What Might Be: The Knights of Labor in Ontario, 1880-1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982.
- Machar, Agnes Maule. "Our Lady of the Slums." *The Week* (13 March 1891): 234-35.
- . *Roland Graeme: Knight: A Novel of Our Time*. 1892. Ottawa: Tecumseh P, 1996.
- . "Voices Crying in the Wilderness." *The Week* (13 February 1891): 169-70.
- McKillop, A.B. *A Disciplined Intelligence: Critical Inquiry and Canadian Thought in the Victorian Era*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1979.
- Rutherford, Paul. *Saving the Canadian City: the First Phase 1880-1920*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1974.
- Semple, Neil. *The Lord's Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1996.
- Thompson, T. Phillips. *The Politics of Labor*. 1887. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1973.
- "Tributes Paid to A.R. Carman" [Obituary]. *Globe and Mail* (18 October 1939): 85.
- Waite, Peter. "Between Three Oceans: Challenges of a Continental Destiny, 1840-1900." *The Illustrated History of Canada*. Ed. Craig Brown. Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1997. 280-374.
- Watt, Frank William. "Literature of Protest." *Literary History of Canada: Canadian Literature in English*. Ed. Carl F. Klinck. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1965. 457-477.
- Woodcock, George. *The Century that Made Us: Canada, 1814-1914*. Toronto: Oxford UP, 1989.

