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Condition of the Working Class in England

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To The Working-Classes of Great-Britain

Working Men!

To you I dedicate a work, in which I have tried to lay before my German Countrymen a faithful picture of your condition, of your sufferings and struggles, of your hopes and prospects. I have lived long enough amidst you to know something about your circumstances; I have devoted to their knowledge my most serious attention, I have studied the various official and non-official documents as far as I was able to get hold of them -- I have not been satisfied with this, I wanted more than a mere abstract knowledge of my subject, I wanted to see you in your own homes, to observe you in your everyday life, to chat with you on your condition and grievances, to witness your struggles against the social and political power of your oppressors. I have done so: I forsook the company and the dinner-parties, the port-wine and champagne of the middle-classes, and devoted my leisure-hours almost exclusively to the intercourse with plain Working-Men; I am both glad and proud of having done so. Glad, because thus I was induced to spend many a happy hour in obtaining a knowledge of the realities of life -- many an hour, which else would have been wasted in fashionable talk and tiresome etiquette; proud, because thus I got an opportunity of doing justice to an oppressed and calumniated class of men who with all their faults and under all the disadvantages of their situation, yet command the respect of every one but an English money-monger; proud, too, because thus I was placed in a position to save the English people from the growing contempt which on the Continent has been the necessary consequence of the brutally selfish policy and general behaviour of your ruling middle-class.

Having, at the same time, ample opportunity to watch the middle-classes, your opponents, I soon came to the conclusion that you are right, perfectly right in expecting no support whatever from them. Their interest is diametrically opposed to yours, though they always will try to maintain the contrary and to make you believe in their most hearty sympathy with your fates. Their doings give them the lie. I hope to have collected more than sufficient evidence of the fact, that -- be their words what they please -- the middle-classes intend in reality nothing else but to enrich themselves by your labour while they can sell its produce, and to abandon you to starvation as soon as they cannot make a profit by this indirect trade in human flesh. What have they done to prove their professed goodwill towards you? Have they ever paid any serious attention to your grievances? Have they done more than paying the expenses of half-a-dozen commissions of inquiry, whose voluminous reports are damned to everlasting slumber among heaps of waste paper on the shelves of the Home Office? Have they even done as much as to compile from those rotting blue-books a single readable book from which everybody might easily get some information on the condition of the great majority of "free-born Britons"? Not they indeed, those are things they do not like to speak of -- they have left it to a foreigner to inform the civilised world of the degrading situation you have to live in.

A foreigner to *them*, not to *you*, I hope. Though my English may not be pure, yet, I hope, you will find it *plain* English. No workingman in England -- nor in France either, by-the-by -- ever treated me as a foreigner. With the greatest pleasure I observed you to be free from that blasting curse, national prejudice and national pride, which after all means nothing but *wholesale selfishness* -- I observed you to sympathise with every one who earnestly applies his powers to human progress -- may he be an Englishman or not -- to admire every thing great and good, whether nursed on your native soil or not -- I found you to be more than mere *Englishmen*, members of a single, isolated nation, I found you to be Men, members of the great and universal family of Mankind, who know their interest and that of all the human race to be the same. And as such, as members

of this Family of "One and Indivisible" Mankind, as Human Beings in the most emphatical meaning of the word, as such I, and many others on the Continent, hail your progress in every direction and wish you speedy success.

Go on then, as you have done hitherto. Much remains to be undergone; be firm, be undaunted -- your success is certain, and no step you will have to take in your onward march will be lost to our common cause, the cause of Humanity!

Barmen (Rhenan Prussia)

March 15th, 1845

Preface

The book prefaced by the following pages treats of a subject which I originally intended to deal with in a single chapter of a more comprehensive work on the social history of England. However, the importance of that subject soon made it necessary for me to investigate it separately.

The condition of the working-class is the real basis and point of departure of all social movements of the present because it is the highest and most unconcealed pinnacle of the social misery existing in our day. French and German working-class Communism are its direct, Fourierism and English Socialism, as well as the Communism of the German educated bourgeoisie, are its indirect products. A knowledge of proletarian conditions is absolutely necessary to be able to provide solid ground for socialist theories, on the one hand, and for judgments about their right to exist, on the other; and to put an end to all sentimental dreams and fancies pro and con. But proletarian conditions exist in their *classical form*, in their perfection, only in the British Empire, particularly in England proper. Besides, only in England has the necessary material been so completely collected and put on record by official enquiries as is essential for any in the least exhaustive presentation of the subject.

Twenty-one months I had the opportunity to become acquainted with the English proletariat, its strivings, its sorrows and its joys, to see them from near, from personal observation and personal intercourse, and at the same time to supplement my observations by recourse to the requisite authentic sources. What I have seen, heard and read has been worked up in the present book. I am prepared to see not only my standpoint attacked in many quarters but also the facts I have cited, particularly when the book gets into the hands of the English. I know equally well that here and there I may be proved wrong in some particular of no importance, something that in view of the comprehensive nature of the subject and its far-reaching assumptions even an Englishman might be unable to avoid; so much the more so since even in England there exists as yet not a single piece of writing which, like mine, takes up all the workers. But without a moment's hesitation I challenge the English bourgeoisie to prove that even in a single instance of any consequence for the exposition of my point of view as a whole I have been guilty of any inaccuracy, and to prove it by data as authentic as mine.

A description of the classical form which the conditions of existence of the proletariat have assumed in Britain is very important, particularly for Germany and precisely at the present moment. German Socialism and Communism have proceeded, more than any other, from theoretical premises; we German theoreticians still knew much too little of the real world to be driven directly by the real relations to reforms of this "bad reality". At any rate almost none of the avowed champions of such reforms arrived at Communism otherwise than by way of the Feuerbachian dissolution of Hegelian speculation. The real conditions of the life of the proletariat are so little known among us that even the well-meaning "societies for the uplift of the working-classes", in which our bourgeoisie is now mistreating the social question, constantly start out from the most ridiculous and preposterous judgments concerning the condition of the workers. We Germans more than anybody else stand in need of a knowledge of the facts concerning this question. And while the conditions of existence of Germany's proletariat have not assumed the classical form that they have in England, we nevertheless have, at bottom, the same social order, which sooner or later must necessarily reach the same degree of acuteness as it has already attained across the North Sea, unless the intelligence of the nation brings about in time the adoption of measures that will provide a new basis for the whole social system. The root-causes

whose effect in England has been the misery and oppression of the proletariat exist also in Germany and in the long run must engender the same results. In the meantime, however, the established fact of wretched conditions in *England* will impel us to establish also the fact of wretched conditions in *Germany* and will provide us with a yardstick wherewith to measure their extent and the magnitude of the danger -- brought to light by the Silesian and Bohemian disturbances -- which directly threatens the tranquillity of Germany from that quarter.

Finally, there are still two remarks I wish to make. Firstly, that I have used the word *Mittelklasse* all along in the sense of the English word middle-class (or middle-classes, as is said almost always). Like the French word *bourgeoisie* it means the possessing class, specifically that possessing class which is differentiated from the so-called aristocracy -- the class which in France and England is directly and in Germany, figuring as "public opinion", indirectly in possession of political power. Similarly, I have continually used the expressions workingmen (*Arbeiter*) and proletarians, working-class, propertyless class and proletariat as equivalents. Secondly, that in the case of most of the quotations I have indicated the party to which the respective authors belong, because in nearly every instance the Liberals try to emphasise the distress in the rural areas and to argue away that which exists in the factory districts, while the Conservatives, conversely, acknowledge the misery in the factory districts but disclaim any knowledge of it in the agricultural areas. For the same reason, whenever I lacked official documents for describing the condition of the industrial workers, I always preferred to present proof from *Liberal* sources in order to defeat the liberal bourgeoisie by casting their own words in their teeth. I cited Tories or Chartists in my support only when I could confirm their correctness from personal observation or was convinced of the truthfulness of the facts quoted because of the personal or literary reputation of the authorities I referred to.

Barmen, March 15, 1845

Introduction

The history of the proletariat in England begins with the second half of the last century, with the invention of the steam-engine and of machinery for working cotton. These inventions gave rise, as is well known, to an industrial revolution, a revolution which altered the whole civil society; one, the historical importance of which is only now beginning to be recognised. England is the classic soil of this transformation, which was all the mightier, the more silently it proceeded; and England is, therefore, the classic land of its chief product also, the proletariat. Only in England can the proletariat be studied in all its relations and from all sides.

We have not, here and now, to deal with the history of this revolution, nor with its vast importance for the present and the future. Such a delineation must be reserved for a future, more comprehensive work. For the moment, we must limit ourselves to the little that is necessary for understanding the facts that follow, for comprehending the present state of the English proletariat.

Before the introduction of machinery, the spinning and weaving of raw materials was carried on in the workingman's home. Wife and daughter spun the yarn that the father wove or that they sold, if he did not work it up himself. These weaver families lived in the country in the neighbourhood of the towns, and could get on fairly well with their wages, because the home market was almost the only one and the crushing power of competition that came later, with the conquest of foreign markets and the extension of trade, did not yet press upon wages. There was, further, a constant increase in the demand for the home market, keeping pace with the slow increase in population and employing all the workers; and there was also the impossibility of vigorous competition of the workers among themselves, consequent upon the rural dispersion of their homes. So it was that the weaver was usually in a position to lay by something, and rent a little piece of land, that he cultivated in his leisure hours, of which he had as many as he chose to take, since he could weave whenever and as long as he pleased. True, he was a bad farmer and managed his land inefficiently, often obtaining but poor crops; nevertheless, he was no proletarian, he had a stake in the country, he was permanently settled, and stood one step higher in society than the English workman of today.

So the workers vegetated throughout a passably comfortable existence, leading a righteous and peaceful life in all piety and probity; and their material position was far better than that of their successors. They did not need to overwork; they did no more than they chose to do, and yet earned what they needed. They had leisure for healthful work in garden or field, work which, in itself, was recreation for them, and they could take part besides in the recreations and games of their neighbours, and all these games -- bowling, cricket, football, etc., contributed to their physical health and vigour. They were, for the most part, strong, well-built people, in whose physique little or no difference from that of their peasant neighbours was discoverable. Their children grew up in the fresh country air, and, if they could help their parents at work, it was only occasionally; while of eight or twelve hours work for them there was no question.

What the moral and intellectual character of this class was may be guessed. Shut off from the towns, which they never entered, their yarn and woven stuff being delivered to travelling agents for payment of wages -- so shut off that old people who lived quite in the neighborhood of the town never went thither until they were robbed of their trade by the introduction of machinery and obliged to look about them in the towns for work -- the weavers stood upon the moral and intellectual plane of the yeomen with whom they were usually immediately connected through their little holdings. They regarded their squire, the greatest landholder of the region, as their natural superior; they asked advice of him, laid their small disputes before him for settlement, and

gave him all honour, as this patriarchal relation involved. They were "respectable" people, good husbands and fathers, led moral lives because they had no temptation to be immoral, there being no groggeries or low houses in their vicinity, and because the host, at whose inn they now and then quenched their thirst, was also a respectable man, usually a large tenant-farmer who took pride in his good order, good beer, and early hours. They had their children the whole day at home, and brought them up in obedience and the fear of God; the patriarchal relationship remained undisturbed so long as the children were unmarried. The young people grew up in idyllic simplicity and intimacy with their playmates until they married; and even though sexual intercourse before marriage almost unfailingly took place, this happened only when the moral obligation of marriage was recognised on both sides, and a subsequent wedding made everything good. In short, the English industrial workers of those days lived and thought after the fashion still to be found here and there in Germany, in retirement and seclusion, without mental activity and without violent fluctuations in their position in life. They could rarely read and far more rarely write; went regularly to church, never talked politics, never conspired, never thought, delighted in physical exercises, listened with inherited reverence when the Bible was read, and were, in their unquestioning humility, exceedingly well-disposed towards the "superior" classes. But intellectually, they were dead; lived only for their petty, private interest, for their looms and gardens, and knew nothing of the mighty movement which, beyond their horizon, was sweeping through mankind. They were comfortable in their silent vegetation, and but for the industrial revolution they would never have emerged from this existence, which, cosily romantic as it was, was nevertheless not worthy of human beings. In truth, they were not human beings; they were merely toiling machines in the service of the few aristocrats who had guided history down to that time. The industrial revolution has simply carried this out to its logical end by making the workers machines pure and simple, taking from them the last trace of independent activity, and so forcing them to think and demand a position worthy of men. As in France politics, so in England manufacture and the movement of civil society in general drew into the whirl of history the last classes which had remained sunk in apathetic indifference to the universal interests of mankind.

The first invention which gave rise to a radical change in the state of the English workers was the jenny, invented in the year 1764 by a weaver, James Hargreaves, of Stanhill, near Blackburn, in North Lancashire. This machine was the rough beginning of the later invented mule, and was moved by hand. Instead of one spindle like the ordinary spinning-wheel, it carried sixteen or eighteen manipulated by a single workman. This invention made it possible to deliver more yarn than heretofore. Whereas, though one weaver had employed three spinners, there had never been enough yarn, and the weaver had often been obliged to wait for it, there was now more yarn to be had than could be woven by the available workers. The demand for woven goods, already increasing, rose yet more in consequence of the cheapness of these goods, which cheapness, in turn, was the outcome of the diminished cost of producing the yarn. More weavers were needed, and weavers' wages rose. Now that the weaver could earn more at his loom, he gradually abandoned his farming, and gave his whole time to weaving. At that time a family of four grown persons and two children (who were set to spooling) could earn, with eight hours' daily work, four pounds sterling in a week, and often more if trade was good and work pressed. It happened often enough that a single weaver earned two pounds a week at his loom. By degrees the class of farming weavers wholly disappeared, and was merged in the newly arising class of weavers who lived wholly upon wages, had no property whatever, not even the pretended property of a holding, and so became workingmen, proletarians. Moreover, the old relation between spinner and weaver was destroyed. Hitherto, so far as this had been possible, yarn had been spun and woven under one roof. Now that the jenny as well as the loom required a strong hand, men began to spin, and whole families lived by spinning, while others laid the antiquated, superseded spinning-wheel aside; and, if they had not means of purchasing a jenny, were forced to live upon

the wages of the father alone. Thus began with spinning and weaving that division of labour which has since been so infinitely perfected.

While the industrial proletariat was thus developing with the first still very imperfect machine, the same machine gave rise to the agricultural proletariat. There had, hitherto, been a vast number of small landowners, yeomen, who had vegetated in the same unthinking quiet as their neighbours, the farming weavers. They cultivated their scraps of land quite after the ancient and inefficient fashion of their ancestors, and opposed every change with the obstinacy peculiar to such creatures of habit, after remaining stationary from generation to generation. Among them were many small holders also, not tenants in the present sense of the word, but people who had their land handed down from their fathers, either by hereditary lease, or by force of ancient custom, and had hitherto held it as securely as if it had actually been their own property. When the industrial workers withdrew from agriculture, a great number of small holdings fell idle, and upon these the new class of large tenants established themselves, tenants-at-will, holding fifty, one hundred, two hundred or more acres, liable to be turned out at the end of the year, but able by improved tillage and larger farming to increase the yield of the land. They could sell their produce more cheaply than the yeoman, for whom nothing remained when his farm no longer supported him but to sell it, procure a jenny or a loom, or take service as an agricultural labourer in the employ of a large farmer. His inherited slowness and the inefficient methods of cultivation bequeathed by his ancestors, and above which he could not rise, left him no alternative when forced to compete with men who managed their holdings on sounder principles and with all the advantages bestowed by farming on a large scale and the investment of capital for the improvement of the soil.

Meanwhile, the industrial movement did not stop here. Single capitalists began to set up spinning jennies in great buildings and to use water-power for driving them, so placing themselves in a position to diminish the number of workers, and sell their yarn more cheaply than single spinners could do who moved their own machines by hand. There were constant improvements in the jenny, so that machines continually became antiquated, and must be altered or even laid aside; and though the capitalists could hold out by the application of water-power even with the old machinery, for the single spinner this was impossible. And the factory system, the beginning of which was thus made, received a fresh extension in 1767, through the spinning throstle invented by Richard Arkwright, a barber, in Preston, in North Lancashire. After the steam-engine, this is the most important mechanical invention of the 18th century. It was calculated from the beginning for mechanical motive power, and was based upon wholly new principles. By the combination of the peculiarities of the jenny and throstle, Samuel Crompton, of Firwood, Lancashire, contrived the mule in 1785, and as Arkwright invented the carding engine, and preparatory ("slubbing and roving") frames about the same time, the factory system became the prevailing one for the spinning of cotton. By means of trifling modifications these machines were gradually adapted to the spinning of flax, and so to the superseding of handwork here, too. But even then, the end was not yet. In the closing years of the last century, Dr. Cartwright, a country parson, had invented the power-loom, and about 1804 had so far perfected it, that it could successfully compete with the hand-weaver; and all this machinery was made doubly important by James Watt's steam-engine, invented in 1764 and used for supplying motive power for spinning since 1785.

With these inventions, since improved from year to year, the victory of machine-work over hand-work in the chief branches of English industry was won; and the history of the latter from that time forward simply relates how the hand-workers have been driven by machinery from one position after another. The consequences of this were, on the one hand, a rapid fall in price of all manufactured commodities, prosperity of commerce and manufacture, the conquest of nearly all the unprotected foreign markets, the sudden multiplication of capital and national wealth; on the

other hand, a still more rapid multiplication of the proletariat, the destruction of all property-holding and of all security of employment for the working-class, demoralisation, political excitement, and all those facts so highly repugnant to Englishmen in comfortable circumstances, which we shall have to consider in the following pages. Having already seen what a transformation in the social condition of the lower classes a single such clumsy machine as the jenny had wrought, there is no cause for surprise as to that which a complete and interdependent system of finely adjusted machinery has brought about, machinery which receives raw material and turns out woven goods.

Meanwhile, let us trace the development of English manufacturers¹⁴ somewhat more minutely, beginning with the cotton industry. In the years 1771-1775, there were annually imported into England rather less than 5,000,000 pounds of raw cotton; in the year 1841 there were imported 528,000,000 pounds, and the import for 1844 will reach at least 600,000,000 pounds. In 1854 England exported 556,000,000 yards of woven cotton goods, 76,500,000 pounds of cotton yarn, and cotton hosiery to the value of £1,200,000. In the same year over 8,000,000 mule spindles were at work, 110,000 power and 250,000 hand-loom, throstle spindles not included, in the service of the cotton industry; and, according to McCulloch's reckoning nearly a million and a half human beings were supported by this branch, of whom but 220,000 worked in the mills; the power used in these mills was steam, equivalent to 53,000 horsepower, and water, equivalent to 11,000 horsepower. At present these figures are far from adequate, and it may be safely assumed that, in the year 1845, the power and number of the machines and the number of the workers is greater by one-half than it was in 1834. The chief centre of this industry is Lancashire, where it originated; it has thoroughly revolutionised this county, converting it from an obscure, ill-cultivated swamp into a busy, lively region, multiplying its population tenfold in eighty years, and causing giant cities such as Liverpool and Manchester, containing together 700,000 inhabitants, and their neighbouring towns, Bolton with 60,000, Rochdale with 75,000, Oldham with 50,000, Preston with 60,000, Ashton and Stalybridge with 40,000, and a whole list of other manufacturing towns to spring up as if by a magic touch. The history of South Lancashire contains some of the greatest marvels of modern times, yet no one ever mentions them and all these miracles are the product of the cotton industry. Glasgow, too, the centre for the cotton district of Scotland, for Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire, has increased in population from 30,000 to 300,000 since the introduction of the industry. The hosiery manufacture of Nottingham and Derby also received one fresh impulse from the lower price of yarn, and a second one from an improvement of the stocking loom, by means of which two stockings could be woven at once. The manufacture of lace, too, became an important branch of industry after the invention of the lace machine in 1777; soon after that date Lindley invented the point-net machine, and in 1809 Heathcoat invented the bobbinnet machine, in consequence of which the production of lace was greatly simplified, and the demand increased proportionately in consequence of the diminished cost, so that now, at least 200,000 persons are supported by this industry. Its chief centres are Nottingham, Leicester, and the West of England, Wiltshire, Devonshire, etc. A corresponding extension has taken place in the branches dependent upon the cotton industry, in dyeing, bleaching, and printing. Bleaching by the application of chlorine in place of the oxygen of the atmosphere, dyeing and printing by the rapid development of chemistry, and printing by a series of most brilliant mechanical inventions, received a yet greater advance which, with the extension of these branches caused by the growth of the cotton industry, raised them to a previously unknown degree of prosperity.

The same activity manifested itself in the manufacture of wool. This had hitherto been the leading department of English industry, but the quantities formerly produced are as nothing in comparison with that which is now manufactured. In 1782 the whole wool crop of the preceding three years lay unused for want of workers, and would have continued so to lie if the newly

invented machinery had not come to its assistance and spun it. The adaptation of this machinery to the spinning of wool was most successfully accomplished. Then began the same sudden development in the wool districts which we have already seen in the cotton districts. In 1738 there were 75,000 pieces of woollen cloth produced in the West Riding of Yorkshire; in 1817 there were 490,000 pieces, and so rapid was the extension of the industry that in 1854, 450,000 more pieces were produced than in 1825. In 1801, 101,000,000 pounds of wool (7,000,000 pounds of it imported) were worked up; in 1855, 180,000,000 pounds were worked up, of which 42,000,000 pounds were imported. The principal centre of this industry is the West Riding of Yorkshire, where, especially at Bradford, long English wool is converted into worsted yarns, etc., while in the other cities, Leeds, Halifax, Huddersfield, etc., short wool is converted into hard-spun yarn and cloth. Then come the adjacent part of Lancashire, the region of Rochdale, where in addition to the cotton industry much flannel is produced, and the West of England, which supplies the finest cloths. Here also the growth of population is worthy of observation:

		in 1801	and in 1831	
Bradford	contained	29,000	"	77,000 inhabitants
Halifax	"	63,000	"	110,000 "
Huddersfield	"	15,000	"	34,000 "
Leeds	"	53,000	"	123,000 "
And the whole West Riding	"	564,000	"	980,000 "

A population which, since 1831, must have increased at least 20 to 25 per cent further. In 1835 the spinning of wool employed in the United Kingdom 1,313 mills, with 71,300 workers, these last being but a small portion of the multitude who are supported directly or indirectly by the manufacture of wool, and excluding nearly all weavers.

Progress in the linen trade developed later, because the nature of the raw material made the application of spinning machinery very difficult. Attempts had been made in the last years of the last century in Scotland, but the Frenchman Girard, who introduced flax spinning in 1810, was the first who succeeded practically, and even Girard's machines first attained on British soil the importance they deserved by means of improvements which they underwent in England, and of their universal application in Leeds, Dundee, and Belfast. From this time the British linen trade rapidly extended. In 1814, 3,000 tons of flax were imported, in 1833, nearly 19,000 tons of flax and 3,400 tons of hemp. The export of Irish linen to Great Britain rose from 52,000,000 yards in 1800 to 55,000,000 in 1825, of which a large part was re-exported. The export of English and Scotch woven linen goods rose from 24,000,000 yards in 1820 to 51,000,000 yards in 1833. The number of flax spinning establishments in 1835 was 347, employing 33,000 workers, of which one-half were in the South of Scotland, more than 60 in the West Riding of Yorkshire, Leeds, and its environs, 25 in Belfast, Ireland, and the rest in Dorset and Lancashire. Weaving is carried on in the South of Scotland, here and there in England, but principally in Ireland.

With like success did the English turn their attention to the manufacture of silk. Raw material was imported from Southern Europe and Asia ready spun, and the chief labour lay in the twisting of fine threads. Until 1824 the heavy import duty, four shillings per pound on raw material, greatly retarded the development of the English silk industry, while only the markets of England and the Colonies were protected for it. In that year the duty was reduced to one penny, and the number of mills at once largely increased. In a single year the number of throwing spindles rose from 780,000 to 1,180,000; and, although the commercial crisis of 1825 crippled this branch of industry for the moment, yet in 1827 more was produced than ever, the mechanical skill and

experience of the English having secured their twisting machinery the supremacy over the awkward devices of their competitors. In 1835 the British Empire possessed 263 twisting mills, employing 30,000 workers, located chiefly in Cheshire, in Macclesfield, Congleton, and the surrounding districts, and in Manchester and Somersetshire. Besides these, there are numerous mills for working up waste, from which a peculiar article known as spun silk is manufactured, with which the English supply even the Paris and Lyons weavers. The weaving of the silk so twisted and spun is carried on in Paisley and elsewhere in Scotland, and in Spitalfields, London, but also in Manchester and elsewhere.

Nor is the gigantic advance achieved in English manufacture since 1760 restricted to the production of clothing materials. The impulse, once given, was communicated to all branches of industrial activity, and a multitude of inventions wholly unrelated to those here cited received double importance from the fact that they were made in the midst of the universal movement. But as soon as the immeasurable importance of mechanical power was practically demonstrated, every energy was concentrated in the effort to exploit this power in all directions, and to exploit it in the interest of individual inventors and manufacturers; and the demand for machinery, fuel, and materials called a mass of workers and a number of trades into redoubled activity. The steam-engine first gave importance to the broad coal-fields of England; the production of machinery began now for the first time, and with it arose a new interest in the iron mines which supplied raw material for it. The increased consumption of wool stimulated English sheep breeding, and the growing importation of wool, flax, and silk called forth an extension of the British ocean carrying trade. Greatest of all was the growth of production of iron. The rich iron deposits of the English hills had hitherto been little developed; iron had always been smelted by means of charcoal, which became gradually more expensive as agriculture improved and forests were cut away. The beginning of the use of coke in iron smelting had been made in the last century, and in 1780 a new method was invented of converting into available wrought-iron coke-smelted iron, which up to that time had been convertible into cast-iron only. This process, known as "puddling", consisted in withdrawing the carbon which had mixed with the iron during the process of smelting, and opened a wholly new field for the production of English iron. Smelting furnaces were built fifty times larger than before, the process of smelting was simplified by the introduction of hot blasts, and iron could thus be produced so cheaply that a multitude of objects which had before been made of stone or wood were now made of iron.

In 1788, Thomas Paine, the famous democrat, built in Yorkshire the first iron bridge, which was followed by a great number of others, so that now nearly all bridges, especially for railroad traffic, are built of cast-iron, while in London itself a bridge across the Thames, the Southwark bridge, has been built of this material. Iron pillars, supports for machinery, etc., are universally used, and since the introduction of gas-lighting and railroads, new outlets for English iron products are opened. Nails and screws gradually came to be made by machinery. Huntsman, a Sheffielder, discovered in 1740 a method for casting steel, by which much labour was saved, and the production of wholly new cheap goods rendered practicable; and through the greater purity of the material placed at its disposal, and the more perfect tools, new machinery and minute division of labour, the metal trade of England now first attained importance. The population of Birmingham grew from 73,000 in 1801 to 200,000 in 1844; that of Sheffield from 46,000 in 1801 to 110,000 in 1844, and the consumption of coal in the latter city alone reached in 1836, 515,000 tons. In 1805 there were exported 4,300 tons of iron products and 4,600 tons of pig-iron; in 1834, 16,200 tons of iron products and 107,000 tons of pig-iron, while the whole iron product, reaching in 1740 but 17,000 tons, had risen in 1834 to nearly 700,000 tons. The smelting of pig-iron alone consumes yearly more than 5,000,000 tons of coal, and the importance which coal-mining has attained in the course of the last 60 years can scarcely be conceived. All the English and Scotch deposits are now worked, and the mines of Northumberland and Durham alone yield annually

more than 5,000,000 tons for shipping, and employ from 40 to 50,000 men. According to the *Durham Chronicle*, there were worked in these two counties:

In 1755, 14 mines; in 1800, 40 mines; in 1836, 76 mines; in 1843, 130 mines.

Moreover, all mines are now much more energetically worked than formerly. A similarly increased activity was applied to the working of tin, copper, and lead, and alongside of the extension of glass manufacture arose a new branch of industry in the production of pottery, rendered important by the efforts of Josiah Wedgwood, about 1765. This inventor placed the whole manufacture of stoneware on a scientific basis, introduced better taste, and founded the potteries of North Staffordshire, a district of eight English miles square, which, formerly a desert waste, is now sown with works and dwellings, and supports more than 60,000 people.

Into this universal whirl of activity everything was drawn. Agriculture made a corresponding advance. Not only did landed property pass, as we have already seen, into the hands of new owners and cultivators, agriculture was affected in still another way. The great holders applied capital to the improvement of the soil, tore down needless fences, drained, manured, employed better tools, and applied a rotation of crops. The progress of science came to their assistance also; Sir Humphry Davy applied chemistry to agriculture with success, and the development of mechanical science bestowed a multitude of advantages upon the large farmer. Further, in consequence of the increase of population, the demand for agricultural products increased in such measure that from 1760 to 1834, 6,840,540 acres of waste land were reclaimed; and, in spite of this, England was transformed from a grain exporting to a grain importing country.

The same activity was developed in the establishment of communication. From 1818 to 1829, there were built in England and Wales, 1,000 English miles of roadway of the width prescribed by law, 60 feet, and nearly all the old roads were reconstructed on the new system of McAdam. In Scotland, the Department of Public Works built since 1805 nearly 900 miles of roadway and more than 1,000 bridges, by which the population of the Highlands was suddenly placed within reach of civilisation. The Highlanders had hitherto been chiefly poachers and smugglers; they now became farmers and hand-workers. And, though Gaelic schools were organised for the purpose of maintaining the Gaelic language, yet Gaelic-Celtic customs and speech are rapidly vanishing before the approach of English civilisation. So, too, in Ireland; between the counties of Cork, Limerick, and Kerry, lay hitherto a wilderness wholly without passable roads, and serving, by reason of its inaccessibility, as the refuge of all criminals and the chief protection of the Celtic Irish nationality in the South of Ireland. It has now been cut through by public roads, and civilisation has thus gained admission even to this savage region. The whole British Empire, and especially England, which, sixty years ago, had as bad roads as Germany or France then had, is now covered by a network of the finest roadways; and these, too, like almost everything else in England, are the work of private enterprise, the State having done very little in this direction.

Before 1755 England possessed almost no canals. In that year a canal was built in Lancashire from Sankey Brook to St. Helen's; and in 1759, James Brindley built the first important one, the Duke of Bridgewater's Canal from Manchester and the coal-mines of the district to the mouth of the Mersey passing, near Barton, by aqueduct, over the river Irwell. From this achievement dates the canal building of England, to which Brindley first gave importance. Canals were now built, and rivers made navigable in all directions. In England alone, there are 2,200 miles of canals and 1,800 miles of navigable river. In Scotland, the Caledonian Canal was cut directly across the country, and in Ireland several canals were built. These improvements, too, like the railroads and roadways, are nearly all the work of private individuals and companies.

The railroads have been only recently built. The first great one was opened from Liverpool to Manchester in 1830, since which all the great cities have been connected by rail. London with Southampton, Brighton, Dover, Colchester, Exeter, and Birmingham; Birmingham with

Gloucester, Liverpool, Lancaster (via Newton and Wigan, and via Manchester and Bolton); also with Leeds (via Manchester and Halifax, and via Leicester, Derby, and Sheffield); Leeds with Hull and Newcastle (via York). There are also many minor lines building or projected, which will soon make it possible to travel from Edinburgh to London in one day.

As it had transformed the means of communication by land, so did the introduction of steam revolutionise travel by sea. The first steamboat was launched in 1807, in the Hudson, in North America; the first in the British Empire, in 1811, on the Clyde. Since then, more than 600 have been built in England; and in 1836 more than 500 were plying to and from British ports.

Such, in brief, is the history of English industrial development in the past sixty years, a history which has no counterpart in the annals of humanity. Sixty, eighty years ago, England was a country like every other, with small towns, few and simple industries, and a thin but *proportionally* large agricultural population. Today it is a country like *no* other, with a capital of two and a half million inhabitants; with vast manufacturing cities; with an industry that supplies the world, and produces almost everything by means of the most complex machinery; with an industrious, intelligent, dense population, of which two-thirds are employed in trade and commerce, and composed of classes wholly different; forming, in fact, with other customs and other needs, a different nation from the England of those days. The industrial revolution is of the same importance for England as the political revolution for France, and the philosophical revolution for Germany; and the difference between England in 1760 and in 1844 is at least as great as that between France under the *ancien régime* and during the revolution of July. But the mightiest result of this industrial transformation is the English proletariat.

We have already seen how the proletariat was called into existence by the introduction of machinery. The rapid extension of manufacture demanded hands, wages rose, and troops of workmen migrated from the agricultural districts to the towns. Population multiplied enormously, and nearly all the increase took place in the proletariat. Further, Ireland had entered upon an orderly development only since the beginning of the eighteenth century. There, too, the population, more than decimated by English cruelty in earlier disturbances, now rapidly multiplied, especially after the advance in manufacture began to draw masses of Irishmen towards England. Thus arose the great manufacturing and commercial cities of the British Empire, in which at least three-fourths of the population belong to the working-class, while the lower middle-class consists only of small shop-keepers, and very very few handicraftsmen. For, though the rising manufacture first attained importance by transforming tools into machines, work-rooms into factories, and consequently, the toiling lower middle-class into the toiling proletariat, and the former large merchants into manufacturers, though the lower middle-class was thus early crushed out, and the population reduced to the two opposing elements, workers and capitalists, this happened outside of the domain of manufacture proper, in the province of handicraft and retail trade as well. In the place of the former masters and apprentices, came great capitalists and working-men who had no prospect of rising above their class. Hand-work was carried on after the fashion of factory work, the division of labour was strictly applied, and small employers who could not compete with great establishments were forced down into the proletariat. At the same time the destruction of the former organisation of hand-work, and the disappearance of the lower middle-class deprived the workingman of all possibility of rising into the middle-class himself. Hitherto he had always had the prospect of establishing himself somewhere as master artificer, perhaps employing journeymen and apprentices; but now, when master artificers were crowded out by manufacturers, when large capital had become necessary for carrying on work independently, the working-class became, for the first time, an integral, permanent class of the population, whereas it had formerly often been merely a transition leading to the bourgeoisie. Now, he who was born to toil had no other prospect than that of remaining a

toiler all his life. Now, for the first time, therefore, the proletariat was in a position to undertake an independent movement.

In this way were brought together those vast masses of working-men who now fill the whole British Empire, whose social condition forces itself every day more and more upon the attention of the civilised world.

The condition of the working-class is the condition of the vast majority of the English people. The question: What is to become of those destitute millions, who consume today what they earned yesterday; who have created the greatness of England by their inventions and their toil; who become with every passing day more conscious of their might, and demand, with daily increasing urgency, their share of the advantages of society? -- This, since the Reform Bill, has become the national question. All Parliamentary debates, of any importance, may be reduced to this; and, though the English middle-class will not as yet admit it, though they try to evade this great question, and to represent their own particular interests as the truly national ones, their action is utterly useless. With every session of Parliament the working-class gains ground, the interests of the middle-class diminish in importance; and, in spite of the fact that the middle-class is the chief, in fact, the only power in Parliament, the last session of 1844 was a continuous debate upon subjects affecting the working-class, the Poor Relief Bill, the Factory Act, the Masters' and Servants' Act', and Thomas Duncombe, the representative of the working-men in the House of Commons, was the great man of the session; while the Liberal middle-class with its motion for repealing the Corn Laws, and the Radical middle-class with its resolution for refusing the taxes, played pitiable roles. Even the debates about Ireland were at bottom debates about the Irish proletariat, and the means of coming to its assistance. It is high time, too, for the English middle-class to make some concessions to the working-men who no longer plead but threaten, for in a short time it may be too late.

In spite of all this, the English middle-class, especially the manufacturing class, which is enriched directly by means of the poverty of the workers, persists in ignoring this poverty. This class, feeling itself the mighty representative class of the nation, is ashamed to lay the sore spot of England bare before the eyes of the world; will not confess, even to itself, that the workers are in distress, because it, the property-holding, manufacturing class, must bear the moral responsibility for this distress. Hence the scornful smile which intelligent Englishmen (and they, the middle-class, alone are known on the Continent) assume when any one begins to speak of the condition of the working-class; hence the utter ignorance on the part of the whole middle-class of everything which concerns the workers; hence the ridiculous blunders which men of this class, in and out of Parliament, make when the position of the proletariat comes under discussion; hence the absurd freedom from anxiety, with which the middle-class dwells upon a soil that is honeycombed, and may any day collapse, the speedy collapse of which is as certain as a mathematical or mechanical demonstration; hence the miracle that the English have as yet no single book upon the condition of their workers, although they have been examining and mending the old state of things no one knows how many years. Hence also the deep wrath of the whole working-class, from Glasgow to London, against the rich, by whom they are systematically plundered and mercilessly left to their fate, a wrath which before too long a time goes by, a time almost within the power of man to predict, must break out into a revolution in comparison with which the French Revolution, and the year 1794, will prove to have been child's play.

The Industrial Proletariat

The order of our investigation of the different sections of the proletariat follows naturally from the foregoing history of its rise. The first proletarians were connected with manufacture, were engendered by it, and accordingly, those employed in manufacture, in the working up of raw materials, will first claim our attention. The production of raw materials and of fuel for manufacture attained importance only in consequence of the industrial change, and engendered a new proletariat, the coal and metal miners. Then, in the third place, manufacture influenced agriculture, and in the fourth, the condition of Ireland; and the fractions of the proletariat belonging to each, will find their place accordingly. We shall find, too, that with the possible exception of the Irish, the degree of intelligence of the various workers is in direct proportion to their relation to manufacture; and that the factory-hands are most enlightened as to their own interests, the miners somewhat less so, the agricultural labourers scarcely at all. We shall find the same order again among the industrial workers, and shall see how the factory-hands, eldest children of the industrial revolution, have from the beginning to the present day formed the nucleus of the Labour Movement, and how the others have joined this movement just in proportion as their handicraft has been invaded by the progress of machinery. We shall thus learn from the example which England offers, from the equal pace which the Labour Movement has kept with the movement of industrial development, the historical significance of manufacture.

Since, however, at the present moment, pretty much the whole industrial proletariat is involved in the movement, and the condition of the separate sections has much in common, because they all are industrial, we shall have first to examine the condition of the industrial proletariat as a whole, in order later to notice more particularly each separate division with its own peculiarities.

It has been already suggested that manufacture centralises property in the hands of the few. It requires large capital with which to erect the colossal establishments that ruin the petty trading bourgeoisie and with which to press into its service the forces of Nature, so driving the hand-labour of the independent workman out of the market. The division of labour, the application of water and especially steam, and the application of machinery, are the three great levers with which manufacture, since the middle of the last century, has been busy putting the world out of joint. Manufacture, on a small scale, created the middle-class; on a large scale, it created the working-class, and raised the elect of the middle-class to the throne, but only to overthrow them the more surely when the time comes. Meanwhile, it is an undenied and easily explained fact that the numerous petty middle-class of the "good old times" has been annihilated by manufacture, and resolved into rich capitalists on the one hand and poor workers on the other.¹⁵

The centralising tendency of manufacture does not, however, stop here. Population becomes centralised just as capital does; and, very naturally, since the human being, the worker, is regarded in manufacture simply as a piece of capital for the use of which the manufacturer pays interest under the name of wages. A manufacturing establishment requires many workers employed together in a single building, living near each other and forming a village of themselves in the case of a good-sized factory. They have needs for satisfying which other people are necessary; handicraftsmen, shoemakers, tailors, bakers, carpenters, stonemasons, settle at hand. The inhabitants of the village, especially the younger generation, accustom themselves to factory work, grow skilful in it, and when the first mill can no longer employ them all, wages fall, and the immigration of fresh manufacturers is the consequence. So the village grows into a small town, and the small town into a large one. The greater the town, the greater its advantages. It offers roads, railroads, canals; the choice of skilled labour increases constantly, new establishments can

be built more cheaply, because of the competition among builders and machinists who are at hand, than in remote country districts, whither timber, machinery, builders, and operatives must be brought; it offers a market to which buyers crowd, and direct communication with the markets supplying raw material or demanding finished goods. Hence the marvellously rapid growth of the great manufacturing towns. The country, on the other hand, had the advantage that wages are usually lower than in town, and so town and country are in constant competition; and, if the advantage is on the side of the town today, wages sink so low in the country tomorrow that new investments are most profitably made there. But the centralising tendency of manufacture continues in full force, and every new factory built in the country bears in it the germ of a manufacturing town. If it were possible for this mad rush of manufacture to go on at this rate for another century, every manufacturing district of England would be one great manufacturing town, and Manchester and Liverpool would meet at Warrington or Newton; for in commerce, too, this centralisation of the population works in precisely the same way, and hence it is that one or two great harbours, such as Hull and Liverpool, Bristol and London, monopolise almost the whole maritime commerce of Great Britain.

Since commerce and manufacture attain their most complete development in these great towns, their influence upon the proletariat is also most clearly observable here. Here the centralisation of property has reached the highest point; here the morals and customs of the good old times are most completely obliterated; here it has gone so far that the name Merry Old England conveys no meaning, for Old England itself is unknown to memory and to the tales of our grandfathers. Hence, too, there exist here only a rich and a poor class, for the lower middle-class vanishes more completely with every passing day. Thus the class formerly most stable has become the most restless one. It consists today of a few remnants of a past time, and a number of people eager to make fortunes, industrial Micawbers and speculators of whom one may amass a fortune, while ninety-nine become insolvent, and more than half of the ninety-nine live by perpetually repeated failure.

But in these towns the proletarians are the infinite majority, and how they fare, what influence the great town exercises upon them, we have now to investigate.

The Great Towns

A town, such as London, where a man may wander for hours together without reaching the beginning of the end, without meeting the slightest hint which could lead to the inference that there is open country within reach, is a strange thing. This colossal centralisation, this heaping together of two and a half millions of human beings at one point, has multiplied the power of this two and a half millions a hundredfold; has raised London to the commercial capital of the world, created the giant docks and assembled the thousand vessels that continually cover the Thames. I know nothing more imposing than the view which the Thames offers during the ascent from the sea to London Bridge. The masses of buildings, the wharves on both sides, especially from Woolwich upwards, the countless ships along both shores, crowding ever closer and closer together, until, at last, only a narrow passage remains in the middle of the river, a passage through which hundreds of steamers shoot by one another; all this is so vast, so impressive, that a man cannot collect himself, but is lost in the marvel of England's greatness before he sets foot upon English soil.¹⁶

But the sacrifices which all this has cost become apparent later. After roaming the streets of the capital a day or two, making headway with difficulty through the human turmoil and the endless lines of vehicles, after visiting the slums of the metropolis, one realises for the first time that these Londoners have been forced to sacrifice the best qualities of their human nature, to bring to pass all the marvels of civilisation which crowd their city; that a hundred powers which slumbered within them have remained inactive, have been suppressed in order that a few might be developed more fully and multiply through union with those of others. The very turmoil of the streets has something repulsive, something against which human nature rebels. The hundreds of thousands of all classes and ranks crowding past each other, are they not all human beings with the same qualities and powers, and with the same interest in being happy? And have they not, in the end, to seek happiness in the same way, by the same means? And still they crowd by one another as though they had nothing in common, nothing to do with one another, and their only agreement is the tacit one, that each keep to his own side of the pavement, so as not to delay the opposing streams of the crowd, while it occurs to no man to honour another with so much as a glance. The brutal indifference, the unfeeling isolation of each in his private interest, becomes the more repellent and offensive, the more these individuals are crowded together, within a limited space. And, however much one may be aware that this isolation of the individual, this narrow self-seeking, is the fundamental principle of our society everywhere, it is nowhere so shamelessly barefaced, so self-conscious as just here in the crowding of the great city. The dissolution of mankind into monads, of which each one has a separate principle, the world of atoms, is here carried out to its utmost extreme.

Hence it comes, too, that the social war, the war of each against all, is here openly declared. Just as in Stirner's recent book [The Ego and Its Own], people regard each other only as useful objects; each exploits the other, and the end of it all is that the stronger treads the weaker under foot; and that the powerful few, the capitalists, seize everything for themselves, while to the weak many, the poor, scarcely a bare existence remains.

What is true of London, is true of Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, is true of all great towns. Everywhere barbarous indifference, hard egotism on one hand, and nameless misery on the other, everywhere social warfare, every man's house in a state of siege, everywhere reciprocal plundering under the protection of the law, and all so shameless, so openly avowed that one

shrinks before the consequences of our social state as they manifest themselves here undisguised, and can only wonder that the whole crazy fabric still hangs together.

Since capital, the direct or indirect control of the means of subsistence and production, is the weapon with which this social warfare is carried on, it is clear that all the disadvantages of such a state must fall upon the poor. For him no man has the slightest concern. Cast into the whirlpool, he must struggle through as well as he can. If he is so happy as to find work, i.e., if the bourgeoisie does him the favour to enrich itself by means of him, wages await him which scarcely suffice to keep body and soul together; if he can get no work he may steal, if he is not afraid of the police, or starve, in which case the police will take care that he does so in a quiet and inoffensive manner. During my residence in England, at least twenty or thirty persons have died of simple starvation under the most revolting circumstances, and a jury has rarely been found possessed of the courage to speak the plain truth in the matter. Let the testimony of the witnesses be never so clear and unequivocal, the bourgeoisie, from which the jury is selected, always finds some backdoor through which to escape the frightful verdict, death from starvation. The bourgeoisie dare not speak the truth in these cases, for it would speak its own condemnation. But indirectly, far more than directly, many have died of starvation, where long-continued want of proper nourishment has called forth fatal illness, when it has produced such debility that causes which might otherwise have remained inoperative brought on severe illness and death. The English working-men call this "social murder", and accuse our whole society of perpetrating this crime perpetually. Are they wrong?

True, it is only individuals who starve, but what security has the working-man that it may not be his turn tomorrow? Who assures him employment, who vouches for it that, if for any reason or no reason his lord and master discharges him tomorrow, he can struggle along with those dependent upon him, until he may find some one else "to give him bread"? Who guarantees that willingness to work shall suffice to obtain work, that uprightness, industry, thrift, and the rest of the virtues recommended by the bourgeoisie, are really his road to happiness? No one. He knows that he has something today and that it does not depend upon himself whether he shall have something tomorrow. He knows that every breeze that blows, every whim of his employer, every bad turn of trade may hurl him back into the fierce whirlpool from which he has temporarily saved himself, and in which it is hard and often impossible to keep his head above water. He knows that, though he may have the means of living today, it is very uncertain whether he shall tomorrow.

Meanwhile, let us proceed to a more detailed investigation of the position in which the social war has placed the non-possessing class. Let us see what pay for his work society does give the working-man in the form of dwelling, clothing, food, what sort of subsistence it grants those who contribute most to the maintenance of society; and, first, let us consider the dwellings.

Every great city has one or more slums, where the working-class is crowded together. True, poverty often dwells in hidden alleys close to the palaces of the rich; but, in general, a separate territory has been assigned to it, where, removed from the sight of the happier classes, it may struggle along as it can. These slums are pretty equally arranged in all the great towns of England, the worst houses in the worst quarters of the towns; usually one- or two-storied cottages in long rows, perhaps with cellars used as dwellings, almost always irregularly built. These houses of three or four rooms and a kitchen form, throughout England, some parts of London excepted, the general dwellings of the working-class. The streets are generally unpaved, rough, dirty, filled with vegetable and animal refuse, without sewers or gutters, but supplied with foul, stagnant pools instead. Moreover, ventilation is impeded by the bad, confused method of building of the whole quarter, and since many human beings here live crowded into a small space, the atmosphere that prevails in these working-men's quarters may readily be imagined. Further, the streets serve as drying grounds in fine weather; lines are stretched across from house to house, and hung with wet clothing.

Let us investigate some of the slums in their order. London comes first,¹⁷ and in London the famous rookery of St. Giles which is now, at last, about to be penetrated by a couple of broad streets. St. Giles is in the midst of the most populous part of the town, surrounded by broad, splendid avenues in which the gay world of London idles about, in the immediate neighbourhood of Oxford Street, Regent Street, of Trafalgar Square and the Strand. It is a disorderly collection of tall, three- or four-storied houses, with narrow, crooked, filthy streets, in which there is quite as much life as in the great thoroughfares of the town, except that, here, people of the working-class only are to be seen. A vegetable market is held in the street, baskets with vegetables and fruits, naturally all bad and hardly fit to use obstruct the sidewalk still further, and from these, as well as from the fish-dealers' stalls, arises a horrible smell. The houses are occupied from cellar to garret, filthy within and without, and their appearance is such that no human being could possibly wish to live in them. But all this is nothing in comparison with the dwellings in the narrow courts and alleys between the streets, entered by covered passages between the houses, in which the filth and tottering ruin surpass all description. Scarcely a whole window-pane can be found, the walls are crumbling, door-posts and window-frames loose and broken, doors of old boards nailed together, or altogether wanting in this thieves' quarter, where no doors are needed, there being nothing to steal. Heaps of garbage and ashes lie in all directions, and the foul liquids emptied before the doors gather in stinking pools. Here live the poorest of the poor, the worst paid workers with thieves and the victims of prostitution indiscriminately huddled together, the majority Irish, or of Irish extraction, and those who have not yet sunk in the whirlpool of moral ruin which surrounds them, sinking daily deeper, losing daily more and more of their power to resist the demoralising influence of want, filth, and evil surroundings.

Nor is St. Giles the only London slum. In the immense tangle of streets, there are hundreds and thousands of alleys and courts lined with houses too bad for anyone to live in, who can still spend anything whatsoever upon a dwelling fit for human beings. Close to the splendid houses of the rich such a lurking-place of the bitterest poverty may often be found. So, a short time ago, on the occasion of a coroner's inquest, a region close to Portman Square, one of the very respectable squares, was characterised as an abode "of a multitude of Irish demoralised by poverty and filth". So, too, may be found in streets, such as Long Acre and others, which, though not fashionable, are yet "respectable", a great number of cellar dwellings out of which puny children and half-starved, ragged women emerge into the light of day. In the immediate neighbourhood of Drury Lane Theatre, the second in London, are some of the worst streets of the whole metropolis, Charles, King, and Park Streets, in which the houses are inhabited from cellar to garret exclusively by poor families. In the parishes of St. John and St. Margaret there lived in 1840, according to the Journal of the Statistical Society, 5,566 working-men's families in 5,294 "dwellings" (if they deserve the name!), men, women, and children thrown together without distinction of age or sex, 26,850 persons all told; and of these families three-fourths possessed but one room. In the aristocratic parish of St. George, Hanover Square, there lived, according to the same authority, 1,465 working-men's families, nearly 6,000 persons, under similar conditions, and here, too, more than two-thirds of the whole number crowded together at the rate of one family in one room. And how the poverty of these unfortunates, among whom even thieves find nothing to steal, is exploited by the property-holding class in lawful ways! The abominable dwellings in Drury Lane, just mentioned, bring in the following rents: two cellar dwellings, 3s., one room, ground-floor, 4s.; second-storey, 4s. 6d.; third-floor, 4s.; garret-room, 3s. weekly, so that the starving occupants of Charles Street alone, pay the house-owners a yearly tribute of £2,000, and the 5,566 families above mentioned in Westminster, a yearly rent of £40,000.

The most extensive working-people's district lies east of the Tower in Whitechapel and Bethnal Green, where the greatest masses of London working-people live. Let us hear Mr. G. Alston, preacher of St. Philip's, Bethnal Green, on the condition of his parish. He says:

"It contains 1,400 houses, inhabited by 2,795 families, comprising a population of 12,000. The space within which this large amount of population are living is less than 400 yards square (1,200 feet), and it is no uncommon thing for a man and his wife, with four or five children, and sometimes the grandfather and grandmother, to be found living in a room from ten to twelve feet square, and which serves them for eating and working in. I believe that till the Bishop of London called the attention of the public to the state of Bethnal Green, about as little was known at the West-end of the town of this most destitute parish as the wilds of Australia or the islands of the South Seas. If we really desire to find out the most destitute and deserving, we must lift the latch of their doors, and find them at their scanty meal; we must see them when suffering from sickness and want of work; and if we do this from day to day in such a neighbourhood as Bethnal Green, we shall become acquainted with a mass of wretchedness and misery such as a nation like our own ought to be ashamed to permit. I was Curate of a parish near Huddersfield during the three years of the greatest manufacturing distress; but I never witnessed such a thorough prostration of the poor as I have seen since I have been in Bethnal Green. There is not one father of a family in ten

throughout the entire district that possesses any clothes but his working dress, and that too commonly in the worst tattered condition; and with many this wretched clothing forms their only covering at night, with nothing better than a bag of straw or shavings to lie upon."

The foregoing description furnishes an idea of the aspect of the interior of the dwellings. But let us follow the English officials, who occasionally stray thither, into one or two of these workingmen's homes.

On the occasion of an inquest held Nov. 16th, 1843, by Mr. Carter, coroner for Surrey, upon the body of Ann Galway, aged 45 years, the newspapers related the following particulars concerning the deceased: She had lived at No. 5 White Lion Court, Bermondsey Street, London, with her husband and a nineteen-year-old son in a little room, in which neither a bedstead nor any other furniture was to be seen. She lay dead beside her son upon a heap of feathers which were scattered over her almost naked body, there being neither sheet nor coverlet. The feathers stuck so fast over the whole body that the physician could not examine the corpse until it was cleansed, and then found it starved and scarred from the bites of vermin. Part of the floor of the room was torn up, and the hole used by the family as a privy.

On Monday, Jan. 15th, 1844, two boys were brought before the police magistrate because, being in a starving condition, they had stolen and immediately devoured a half-cooked calf's foot from a shop. The magistrate felt called upon to investigate the case further, and received the following details from the policeman: The mother of the two boys was the widow of an ex-soldier, afterwards policeman, and had had a very hard time since the death of her husband, to provide for her nine children. She lived at No. 2 Pool's Place, Quaker Court, Spitalfields, in the utmost poverty. When the policeman came to her, he found her with six of her children literally huddled together in a little back room, with no furniture but two old rush-bottomed chairs with the seats gone, a small table with two legs broken, a broken cup, and a small dish. On the hearth was scarcely a spark of fire, and in one corner lay as many old rags as would fill a woman's apron, which served the whole family as a bed. For bed clothing they had only their scanty day clothing. The poor woman told him that she had been forced to sell her bedstead the year before to buy food. Her bedding she had pawned with the victualler for food. In short, everything had gone for food. The magistrate ordered the woman a considerable provision from the poor-box.

In February, 1844, Theresa Bishop, a widow 60 years old, was recommended, with her sick daughter, aged 26, to the compassion of the police magistrate in Marlborough Street. She lived at No. 5 Brown Street, Grosvenor Square, in a small back room no larger than a closet, in which there was not one single piece of furniture, in one corner lay some rags upon which both slept; a chest served as table and chair. The mother earned a little by charring. The owner of the house said that they had lived in this way since May 1843, had gradually sold or pawned everything that they had, and had still never paid any rent. The magistrate assigned them £1 from the poor-box.

I am far from asserting that all London working-people live in such want as the foregoing three families. I know very well that ten are somewhat better off, where one is so totally trodden under foot by society; but I assert that thousands of industrious and worthy people – far worthier and more to be respected than the rich of London – do find themselves in a condition unworthy of

human beings; and that every proletarian, everyone, without exception, is exposed to a similar fate without any fault of his own and in spite of every possible effort.

But in spite of all this, they who have some kind of a shelter are fortunate, fortunate in comparison with the utterly homeless. In London fifty thousand human beings get up every morning, not knowing where they are to lay their heads at night. The luckiest of this multitude, those who succeed in keeping a penny or two until evening, enter a lodging-house, such as abound in every great city, where they find a bed. But what a bed! These houses are filled with beds from cellar to garret, four, five, six beds in a room; as many as can be crowded in. Into every bed four, five, or six human beings are piled, as many as can be packed in, sick and well, young and old, drunk and sober, men and women, just as they come, indiscriminately. Then come strife, blows, wounds, or, if these bedfellows agree, so much the worse; thefts are arranged and things done which our language, grown more humane than our deeds, refuses to record. And those who cannot pay for such a refuge? They sleep where they find a place, in passages, arcades, in corners where the police and the owners leave them undisturbed. A few individuals find their way to the refuges which are managed, here and there, by private charity, others sleep on the benches in the parks close under the windows of Queen Victoria. Let us hear the *London Times*:

"It appears from the report of the proceedings at Marlborough Street Police Court in our columns of yesterday, that there is an average number of 50 human beings of all ages, who huddle together in the parks every night, having no other shelter than what is supplied by the trees and a few hollows of the embankment. Of these, the majority are young girls who have been seduced from the country by the soldiers and turned loose on the world in all the destitution of friendless penury, and all the recklessness of early vice.

"This is truly horrible! Poor there must be everywhere. Indigence will find its way and set up its hideous state in the heart of a great and luxurious city. Amid the thousand narrow lanes and by-streets of a populous metropolis there must always, we fear, be much suffering – much that offends the eye – much that lurks unseen.

“But that within the precincts of wealth, gaiety, and fashion, nigh the regal grandeur of St. James. close on the palatial splendour of Bayswater, on the confines of the old and new aristocratic quarters, in a district where the cautious refinement of modern design has refrained from creating one single tenement for poverty; which seems, as it were, dedicated to the exclusive enjoyment of wealth. that there want, and famine, and disease, and vice should stalk in all their kindred horrors, consuming body by body, soul by soul!

“It is indeed a monstrous state of things! Enjoyment the most absolute, that bodily ease, intellectual excitement, or the more innocent pleasures of sense can supply to man's craving, brought in close contact with the most unmitigated misery! Wealth, from its bright saloons, laughing – an insolently heedless laugh – at the unknown wounds of want! Pleasure, cruelly but unconsciously mocking the pain that moans below! All contrary things mocking one another – all contrary, save the vice which tempts and the vice which is tempted!

“But let all men remember this – that within the most courtly precincts of the richest city of God's earth, there may be found, night after night, winter after winter, women – young in years – old in sin and suffering – outcasts from society – ROTTING FROM FAMINE, FILTH,

AND DISEASE. Let them remember this, and learn not to theorise but to act. God knows, there is much room for action nowadays."¹⁸

I have referred to the refuges for the homeless. How greatly overcrowded these are, two examples may show. A newly erected Refuge for the Houseless in Upper Ogle Street, that can shelter three hundred persons every night, has received since its opening, January 27th to March 17th, 1844, 2,740 persons for one or more nights; and, although the season was growing more favourable, the number of applicants in this, as well as in the asylums of Whitecross Street and Wapping, was strongly on the increase, and a crowd of the homeless had to be sent away every night for want of room. In another refuge, the Central Asylum in Playhouse Yard, there were supplied on an average 460 beds nightly, during the first three months of the year 1844, 6,681 persons being sheltered, and 96,141 portions of bread were distributed. Yet the committee of directors declare this institution began to meet the pressure of the needy to a limited extent only when the Eastern Asylum also was opened.

Let us leave London and examine the other great cities of the three kingdoms in their order. Let us take Dublin first, a city the approach to which from the sea is as charming as that of London is imposing. The Bay of Dublin is the most beautiful of the whole British Island Kingdom, and is even compared by the Irish with the Bay of Naples. The city, too, possesses great attractions, and its aristocratic districts are better and more tastefully laid out than those of any other British city. By way of compensation, however the poorer districts of Dublin are among the most hideous and repulsive to be seen in the world. True, the Irish character, which under some circumstances, is comfortable only in the dirt, has some share in this; but as we find thousands of Irish in ever great city in England and Scotland, and as every poor population must gradually sink into the same uncleanliness, the wretchedness of Dublin is nothing specific, nothing peculiar to Dublin, but something common to all great towns. The poor quarters of Dublin are extremely extensive, and the filth, the uninhabitableness of the houses and the neglect of the streets surpass all description. Some idea of the manner in which the poor are here crowded together may be formed from the fact that, in 1817, according to the report of the Inspector of Workhouses,¹⁹ 1,318 persons lived in 52 houses with 390 rooms in Barrack Street, and 1,997 persons in 71 houses with 393 rooms in and near Church Street; that:

"foul lanes, courts, and yards, are interposed between this and the adjoining streets There are many cellars which have no light but from the door In some of these cellars the inhabitants sleep on the floors which are all earthen; but in general, they have bedsteads Nicholson's Court ... contains 151 persons in 28 small apartments ... their state is very miserable, there being only two

bedsteads and two blankets in the whole court."

The poverty is so great in Dublin, that a single benevolent institution, the Mendicity Association, gives relief to 2,500 persons or one per cent of the population daily, receiving and feeding them for the day and dismissing them at night.

Dr. Alison describes a similar state of things in Edinburgh, whose superb situation, which has won it the title of the modern Athens, and whose brilliant aristocratic quarter in the New Town, contrast strongly with the foul wretchedness of the poor in the Old Town. Alison asserts that this extensive quarter is as filthy and horrible as the worst districts of Dublin, while the Mendicity Association would have as great a proportion of needy persons to assist in Edinburgh as in the Irish capital. He asserts, indeed, that the poor in Scotland, especially in Edinburgh and Glasgow, are worse off than in any other region of the three kingdoms, and that the poorest are not Irish, but Scotch. The preacher of the Old Church of Edinburgh, Dr. Lee, testified in 1836, before the Commission of Religious Instruction, that:

"I have never seen such a concentration of misery as in this parish," where the people are without furniture, without everything." "I frequently see the same room occupied by two married couples. I have been in one day in seven houses where there was no bed, in some of them not even straw. I found people of eighty years of age lying on the boards. Many sleep in the same clothes which they wear during the day. I may mention the case of two Scotch families living in a cellar, who had come from the country within a few months.... Since they came they had had two children dead, and another apparently dying. There was a little bundle of dirty straw in one corner, for one family, and in another for the other. In the place they inhabit it is impossible at noonday to distinguish the features of the human face without artificial light. – It would almost make a heart of adamant bleed to see such an

accumulation of misery in a country like
this."

In the *Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal*, Dr. Hennen reports a similar state of things. From a Parliamentary Report,²⁰ it is evident that in the dwellings of the poor of Edinburgh a want of cleanliness reigns, such as must be expected under these conditions. On the bed-posts chickens roost at night, dogs and horses share the dwellings of human beings, and the natural consequence is a shocking stench, with filth and swarms of vermin. The prevailing construction of Edinburgh favours these atrocious conditions as far as possible. The Old Town is built upon both slopes of a hill, along the crest of which runs the High Street. Out of the High Street there open downwards multitudes of narrow, crooked alleys, called wynds from their many turnings, and these wynds form the proletarian district of the city. The houses of the Scotch cities, in general, are five or six-storied buildings, like those of Paris, and in contrast with England where, so far as possible, each family has a separate house. The crowding of human beings upon a limited area is thus intensified.

.....the house," says an English journal in an article upon the sanitary condition of the working-people in cities,"are often so close together, that persons may step from the window of one house to that of the house opposite – so high, piled story after story, that the light can scarcely penetrate to the court beneath. In this part of the town there are neither sewers nor any private conveniences whatever belonging to the dwellings; and hence the excrementitious and other refuse of at least 50,000 persons is, during the night, thrown into the gutters, causing (in spite of the scavengers' daily labours) an amount of solid filth and foetid exhalation disgusting to both sight and smell, as well as exceedingly prejudicial to health. Can it be wondered that, in such localities, health, morals, and common decency should be at once neglected? No; all who know the private condition of the inhabitants will bear testimony to the immense amount of

their disease, misery, and demoralisation. Society in these quarters has sunk to a state indescribably vile and wretched.... The dwellings of the poorer classes are generally very filthy, apparently never subjected to any cleaning process whatever, consisting, in most cases, of a single room, ill-ventilated and yet cold, owing to broken, ill-fitting windows, sometimes damp and partially underground, and always scantily furnished and altogether comfortless, heaps of straw often serving for beds, in which a whole family – male and female, young and old, are huddled together in revolting confusion. The supplies of water are obtained only from the public pumps, and the trouble of procuring it of course favours the accumulation of all kinds of abominations."

In the other great seaport towns the prospect is no better. Liverpool, with all its commerce, wealth, and grandeur yet treats its workers with the same barbarity. A full fifth of the population, more than 45,000 human beings, live in narrow, dark, damp, badly-ventilated cellar dwellings, of which there are 7,862 in the city. Besides these cellar dwellings there are 2,270 courts, small spaces built up on all four sides and having but one entrance, a narrow, covered passage-way, the whole ordinarily very dirty and inhabited exclusively by proletarians. Of such courts we shall have more to say when we come to Manchester. In Bristol, on one occasion, 2,800 families were visited, of whom 46 per cent occupied but one room each.

Precisely the same state of things prevails in the factory towns. In Nottingham there are in all 11,000 houses, of which between 7,000 and 8,000 are built back to back with a rear party-wall so that no through ventilation is possible, while a single privy usually serves for several houses. During an investigation made a short time since, many rows of houses were found to have been built over shallow drains covered only by the boards of the ground-floor. In Leicester, Derby, and Sheffield, it is no better. Of Birmingham, the article above cited from the *Artisan* states:

"In the older parts of the town there are many inferior streets and courts, which are dirty and neglected, filled with

stagnant water and heaps of refuse. The courts of Birmingham are very numerous in every direction, exceeding 2,000, and comprising the residence of a large portion of the working-classes. They are for the most part narrow, filthy, ill-ventilated. and badly drained, containing from eight to twenty houses each, the houses being built against some other tenement and the end of the courts being pretty constantly occupied by ashpits, etc., the filth of which would defy description. It is but just, however, to remark that the courts of more modern date are built in a more rational manner, and kept tolerably respectable; and the cottages, even in old courts, are far less crowded than in Manchester and Liverpool, the result of which is, that the inhabitants, in epidemic seasons, have been much less visited by death than those of Wolverhampton, Dudley, and Bilston, at only a few miles distance. Cellar residences, also, are unknown in Birmingham, though some few are, very improperly, used as workshops. The low lodging-houses are pretty numerous (somewhat exceeding 400), chiefly in courts near the centre of the town; they are almost always loathsomely filthy and close, the resorts of beggars, trampers, thieves and prostitutes, who here, regardless alike of decency or comfort, eat, drink, smoke and sleep in an

atmosphere unendurable by all except
the degraded, besotted inmates."

Glasgow is in many respects similar to Edinburgh, possessing the same wynds, the same tall houses. Of this city the *Artisan* observes:

The working-class forms here some 78 per cent of the whole population (about 300,000), and lives in parts of the city which, in abject wretchedness, exceed the lowest purlieu of St. Giles' or Whitechapel, the liberties of Dublin, or the wynds of Edinburgh. Such localities exist most abundantly in the heart of the city – south of the Irongate and west of the Saltmarket, as well as in the Calton, off the High Street, etc.—endless labyrinths of narrow lanes or wynds, into which almost at every step debouche courts or closes formed by old, ill-ventilated, towering houses crumbling to decay, destitute of water and crowded with inhabitants, comprising three or four families (perhaps twenty persons) on each flat, and sometimes each flat let out in lodgings that confine – we dare not say accommodate – from fifteen to twenty persons in a single room. These districts are occupied by the poorest, most depraved, and most worthless portion of the population, and they may be considered as the fruitful source of those pestilential fevers which thence spread their destructive ravages over the whole of Glasgow."

Let us hear how J. C. Symons, Government Commissioner for the investigation of the condition of the hand-weavers, describes these portions of the city: ²¹

"I have seen human degradation in some of its worst phases, both in England and abroad, but I did not believe until I visited the wynds of Glasgow, that so large an amount of filth, crime, misery, and disease existed in any civilised country. In the lower lodging-houses ten, twelve, and sometimes twenty persons of both sexes and all ages sleep promiscuously on the floor in different degrees of nakedness. These places are, generally, as regards dirt, damp and decay, such as no person would stable his horse in."

And in another place:

"The wynds of Glasgow house a fluctuating population of between 15,000 and 30,000 persons. This district is composed of many narrow streets and square courts and in the middle of each court there is a dung-hill. Although the outward appearance of these places was revolting, I was nevertheless quite unprepared for the filth and misery that were to be found inside. In some of these bedrooms we [i.e. Police Superintendent Captain Miller and Symons] visited at night we found a whole mass of humanity stretched out on the floor. There were often 15 to 20 men and women huddled together, some being clothed and others naked. Their bed was a heap of musty straw mixed with rags.

There was hardly any furniture there and the only thing which gave these holes the appearance of a dwelling was fire burning on the hearth. Thieving and prostitution are the main sources of income of these people. No one seems to have taken the trouble to clean out these Augean stables, this pandemonium, this nucleus of crime, filth and pestilence in the second city of the empire. A detailed investigation of the most wretched slums of other towns has never revealed anything half so bad as this concentration of moral iniquity, physical degradation and gross overcrowding.... In this part of Glasgow most of the houses have been condemned by the Court of Guild as dilapidated and uninhabitable – but it is just these dwellings which are filled to overflowing, because, by law no rent can be charged on them."

The great manufacturing district in the centre of the British Islands, the thickly peopled stretch of West Yorkshire and South Lancashire, with its numerous factory towns, yields nothing to the other great manufacturing centres. The wool district of the West Riding of Yorkshire is a charming region, a beautiful green hill country, whose elevations grow more rugged towards the west until they reach their highest point in the bold ridge of Blackstone Edge, the watershed between the Irish Sea and the German Ocean, The valleys of the Aire, along which stretches Leeds, and of the Calder, through which the Manchester-Leeds railway runs, are among the most attractive in England, and are strewn in all directions with the factories, villages, and towns. The houses of rough grey stone look so neat and clean in comparison with the blackened brick buildings of Lancashire, that it is a pleasure to look at them. But on coming into the towns themselves, one finds little to rejoice over. Leeds lies, as the *Artisan* describes it, and as I found confirmed upon examination:

"on a slope running down towards the river Aire, which meanders about a-mile-and-a-half through the town, and is liable to overflows during thaws or after

heavy rains. The higher or western districts are clean for so large a town, but the lower parts contiguous to the river and its becks or rivulets are dirty, confined, and, in themselves, sufficient to shorten life, especially infant life; add to this the disgusting state of the lower parts of the town about Kirk-gate, March-lane, Cross-street and Richmond-road, principally owing to a general want of paving and draining, irregularity of building, the abundance of courts and blind alleys, as well as the almost total absence of the commonest means for promoting cleanliness, and we have then quite sufficient data to account for the surplus mortality in these unhappy regions of filth and misery.... In consequence of the floods from the Aire" (which, it must be added, like all other rivers in the service of manufacture, flows into the city at one end clear and transparent, and flows out at the other end thick, black, and foul, smelling of all possible refuse),"the dwelling-houses and cellars are not infrequently so inundated that the water has to be pumped out by hand-pumps, on to the surface of the streets; and at such times, even where there are sewers, the water rises through them into the cellars,²² creating miasmatic exhalations, strongly charged with sulphuretted hydrogen, and leaving offensive refuse, exceedingly prejudicial to human health.

Indeed, during a season of inundation in the spring of 1859, so fatal were the effects of such an engorgement of the sewers, that the registrar of the North district made a report, that during that quarter there were, in that neighbourhood, two births to three deaths, whilst in all the other districts there were three to two deaths. Other populous districts are wholly without sewers, or so inadequately provided as to derive no advantage therefrom."In some rows of houses, the cellar dwellings are seldom dry"; in certain districts there are several streets covered with soft mud a foot deep."The inhabitants have from time to time vainly attempted to repair these streets with shovelfuls of ashes; and soil, refuse-water, etc., stand in every hole, there to remain until absorbed by wind or sun.... An ordinary cottage, in Leeds, extends over no more than about five yards square, and consists usually of a cellar, a sitting-room, and a sleeping chamber. This small size of the houses crammed with human beings both day and night, is another point dangerous alike to the morals and the health of the inhabitants."

And how greatly these cottages are crowded, the Report on the Health of the Working-Classes, quoted above, bears testimony:

"In Leeds, brothers and sisters, and lodgers of both sexes, are found occupying the same sleeping-room with the parents, and consequences occur

which humanity shudders to
contemplate."

So, too, Bradford, which, but seven miles from Leeds at the junction of several valleys, lies upon the banks of a small, coal-black, foul-smelling stream. On week-days the town is enveloped in a grey cloud of coal smoke, but on a fine Sunday it offers a superb picture, when viewed from the surrounding heights. Yet within reigns the same filth and discomfort as in Leeds. The older portions of the town are built upon steep hillsides, and are narrow and irregular. In the lanes, alleys, and courts lie filth and *débris* in heaps; the houses are ruinous, dirty, and miserable, and in the immediate vicinity of the river and the valley bottom I found many a one whose ground-floor, half-buried in the hillside, was totally abandoned. In general, the portions of the valley bottom in which working-men's cottages have crowded between the tall factories, are among the worst-built and dirtiest districts of the whole town. In the newer portions of this, as of every other factory town, the cottages are more regular, being built in rows, but they share here, too, all the evils incident to the customary method of providing working-men's dwellings, evils of which we shall have occasions to speak more particularly in discussing Manchester. The same is true of the remaining towns of the West Riding, especially of Barnsley, Halifax, and Huddersfield. The last named, the handsomest by far of all the factory towns of Yorkshire and Lancashire by reason of its charming situation and modern architecture, has yet its bad quarter; for a committee appointed by a meeting of citizens to survey the town reported August 5th, 1844:

"It is notorious that there are whole streets in the town of Huddersfield, and many courts and alleys, which are neither flagged, paved, sewered, nor drained; where garbage and filth of every description are left on the surface to ferment and rot; where pools of stagnant water are almost constant, where the dwellings adjoining are thus necessarily caused to be of an inferior and even filthy description; thus where disease is engendered, and the health of the whole town perilled."

If we cross Blackstone Edge or penetrate it with the railroad, we enter upon that classic soil on which English manufacture has achieved its masterwork and from which all labour movements emanate, namely, South Lancashire with its central city Manchester. Again we have beautiful hill country, sloping gently from the watershed westwards towards the Irish Sea, with the charming green valleys of the Ribble, the Irwell, the Mersey, and their tributaries, a country which, a hundred years ago chiefly swamp land, thinly populated, is now sown with towns and villages, and is the most densely populated strip of country in England. In Lancashire, and especially in Manchester, English manufacture finds at once its starting-point and its centre. The Manchester Exchange is the thermometer for all the fluctuations of trade. The modern art of manufacture has reached its perfection in Manchester. In the cotton industry of South Lancashire, the application

of the forces of Nature, the superseding of hand-labour by machinery (especially by the powerloom and the self-acting mule), and the division of labour, are seen at the highest point; and, if we recognise in these three elements that which is characteristic of modern manufacture, we must confess that the cotton industry has remained in advance of all other branches of industry from the beginning down to the present day. The effects of modern manufacture upon the working-class must necessarily develop here most freely and perfectly, and the manufacturing proletariat present itself in its fullest classic perfection. The degradation to which the application of steam-power, machinery and the division of labour reduce the working-man, and the attempts of the proletariat to rise above this abasement, must likewise be carried to the highest point and with the fullest consciousness. Hence because Manchester is the classic type of a modern manufacturing town, and because I know it as intimately as my own native town, more intimately than most of its residents know it, we shall make a longer stay here.

The towns surrounding Manchester vary little from the central city, so far as the working-people's quarters are concerned, except that the working-class forms, if possible, a larger proportion of their population. These towns are purely industrial and conduct all their business through Manchester upon which they are in every respect dependent, whence they are inhabited only by working-men and petty tradesmen, while Manchester has a very considerable commercial population, especially of commission and "respectable" retail dealers. Hence Bolton, Preston, Wigan, Bury, Rochdale, Middleton, Heywood, Oldham, Ashton, Stalybridge, Stockport, etc., though nearly all towns of thirty, fifty, seventy to ninety thousand inhabitants, are almost wholly working-people's districts, interspersed only with factories, a few thoroughfares lined with shops, and a few lanes along which the gardens and houses of the manufacturers are scattered like villas. The towns themselves are badly and irregularly built with foul courts, lanes, and back alleys, reeking of coal smoke, and especially dingy from the originally bright red brick, turned black with time, which is here the universal building material. Cellar dwellings are general here; wherever it is in any way possible, these subterranean dens are constructed, and a very considerable portion of the population dwells in them.

Among the worst of these towns after Preston and Oldham is Bolton, eleven miles north-west of Manchester. It has, so far as I have been able to observe in my repeated visits, but one main street, a very dirty one, Deansgate, which serves as a market, and is even in the finest weather a dark, unattractive hole in spite of the fact that, except for the factories, its sides are formed by low one and two-storied houses. Here, as everywhere, the older part of the town is especially ruinous and miserable. A dark-coloured body of water, which leaves the beholder in doubt whether it is a brook or a long string of stagnant puddles, flows through the town and contributes its share to the total pollution of the air, by no means pure without it.

There is Stockport, too, which lies on the Cheshire side of the Mersey, but belongs nevertheless to the manufacturing district of Manchester. It lies in a narrow valley along the Mersey, so that the streets slope down a steep hill on one side and up an equally steep one on the other, while the railway from Manchester to Birmingham passes over a high viaduct above the city and the whole valley. Stockport is renowned throughout the entire district as one of the duskiest, smokiest holes, and looks, indeed, especially when viewed from the viaduct, excessively repellent. But far more repulsive are the cottages and cellar dwellings of the working-class, which stretch in long rows through all parts of the town from the valley bottom to the crest of the hill. I do not remember to have seen so many cellars used as dwellings in any other town of this district.

A few miles north-east of Stockport is Ashton-under-Lyne, one of the newest factory towns of this region. It stands on the slope of a hill at the foot of which are the canal and the river Tame, and is, in general, built on the newer, more regular plan. Five or six parallel streets stretch along the hill, intersected at right angles by others leading down into the valley. By this method, the factories would be excluded from the town proper, even if the proximity of the river and the

canal-way did not draw them all into the valley where they stand thickly crowded, belching forth black smoke from their chimneys. To this arrangement Ashton owes a much more attractive appearance than that of most factory towns; the streets are broader and cleaner, the cottages look new, bright red, and comfortable. But the modern system of building cottages for working-men has its own disadvantages; every street has its concealed back lane to which a narrow paved path leads, and which is all the dirtier. And, although I saw no buildings, except a few on entering, which could have been more than fifty years old, there are even in Ashton streets in which the cottages are getting bad, where the bricks in the house-corners are no longer firm but shift about, in which the walls have cracks and will not hold the chalk whitewash inside; streets, whose dirty, smoke-begrimed aspect is nowise different from that of the other towns of the district, except that in Ashton this is the exception, not the rule.

A mile eastward lies Stalybridge, also on the Tame. In coming over the hill from Ashton, the traveller has, at the top, both right and left, fine large gardens with superb villa-like houses in their midst, built usually in the Elizabethan style, which is to the Gothic precisely what the Anglican Church is to the Apostolic Roman Catholic. A hundred paces farther and Stalybridge shows itself in the valley, in sharp contrast with the beautiful country seats, in sharp contrast even with the modest cottages of Ashton! Stalybridge lies in a narrow, crooked ravine, much narrower even than the valley at Stockport, and both sides of this ravine are occupied by an irregular group of cottages, houses, and mills. On entering, the very first cottages are narrow, smoke-begrimed, old and ruinous; and as the first houses, so the whole town. A few streets lie in the narrow valley bottom, most of them run criss-cross, pell-mell, up hill and down, and in nearly all the houses, by reason of this sloping situation, the ground-floor is half-buried in the earth; and what multitudes of courts, back lanes, and remote nooks arise out of this confused way of building may be seen from the hills, whence one has the town, here and there, in a bird's-eye view almost at one's feet. Add to this the shocking filth, and the repulsive effect of Stalybridge, in spite of its pretty surroundings, may be readily imagined.

But enough of these little towns. Each has its own peculiarities, but in general, the working-people live in them just as in Manchester. Hence I have especially sketched only their peculiar construction, and would observe that all more general observations as to the condition of the labouring population in Manchester are fully applicable to these surrounding towns as well.

Manchester lies at the foot of the southern slope of a range of hills, which stretch hither from Oldham, their last peak, Kersallmoor, being at once the race course and the Mons Sacer of Manchester. Manchester proper lies on the left bank of the Irwell, between that stream and the two smaller ones, the Irk and the Medlock, which here empty into the Irwell. On the right bank of the Irwell, bounded by a sharp curve of the river, lies Salford, and farther westward Pendleton; northward from the Irwell lie Upper and Lower Broughton; northward of the Irk, Cheetham Hill; south of the Medlock lies Hulme; farther east Chorlton on Medlock; still farther, pretty well to the east of Manchester, Ardwick. The whole assemblage of buildings is commonly called Manchester, and contains about four hundred thousand inhabitants, rather more than less. The town itself is peculiarly built, so that a person may live in it for years, and go in and out daily without coming into contact with a working-people's quarter or even with workers, that is, so long as he confines himself to his business or to pleasure walks. This arises chiefly from the fact, that by unconscious tacit agreement, as well as with outspoken conscious determination, the working-people's quarters are sharply separated from the sections of the city reserved for the middle-class; or, if this does not succeed, they are concealed with the cloak of charity. Manchester contains, at its heart, a rather extended commercial district, perhaps half a mile long and about as broad, and consisting almost wholly of offices and warehouses. Nearly the whole district is abandoned by dwellers, and is lonely and deserted at night; only watchmen and policemen traverse its narrow lanes with their dark lanterns. This district is cut through by certain main thoroughfares upon

which the vast traffic concentrates, and in which the ground level is lined with brilliant shops. In these streets the upper floors are occupied, here and there, and there is a good deal of life upon them until late at night. With the exception of this commercial district, all Manchester proper, all Salford and Hulme, a great part of Pendleton and Chorlton, two-thirds of Ardwick, and single stretches of Cheetham Hill and Broughton are all unmixed working-people's quarters, stretching like a girdle, averaging a mile and a half in breadth, around the commercial district. Outside, beyond this girdle, lives the upper and middle bourgeoisie, the middle bourgeoisie in regularly laid out streets in the vicinity of the working quarters, especially in Chorlton and the lower lying portions of Cheetham Hill; the upper bourgeoisie in remoter villas with gardens in Chorlton and Ardwick, or on the breezy heights of Cheetham Hill, Broughton, and Pendleton, in free, wholesome country air, in fine, comfortable homes, passed once every half or quarter hour by omnibuses going into the city. And the finest part of the arrangement is this, that the members of this money aristocracy can take the shortest road through the middle of all the labouring districts to their places of business without ever seeing that they are in the midst of the grimy misery that lurks to the right and the left. For the thoroughfares leading from the Exchange in all directions out of the city are lined, on both sides, with an almost unbroken series of shops, and are so kept in the hands of the middle and lower bourgeoisie, which, out of self-interest, cares for a decent and cleanly external appearance and can care for it. True, these shops bear some relation to the districts which lie behind them, and are more elegant in the commercial and residential quarters than when they hide grimy working-men's dwellings; but they suffice to conceal from the eyes of the wealthy men and women of strong stomachs and weak nerves the misery and grime which form the complement of their wealth. So, for instance, Deansgate, which leads from the Old Church directly southward, is lined first with mills and warehouses, then with second-rate shops and alehouses; farther south, when it leaves the commercial district, with less inviting shops, which grow dirtier and more interrupted by beerhouses and gin-palaces the farther one goes, until at the southern end the appearance of the shops leaves no doubt that workers and workers only are their customers. So Market Street running south-east from the Exchange; at first brilliant shops of the best sort, with counting-houses or warehouses above; in the continuation, Piccadilly, immense hotels and warehouses; in the farther continuation, London Road, in the neighbourhood of the Medlock, factories, beerhouses, shops for the humbler bourgeoisie and the working populations; and from this point onward, large gardens and villas of the wealthier merchants and manufacturers. In this way any one who knows Manchester can infer the adjoining districts from the appearance of the thoroughfare, but one is seldom in a position to catch from the street a glimpse of the real labouring districts. I know very well that this hypocritical plan is more or less common to all great cities; I know, too, that the retail dealers are forced by the nature of their business to take possession of the great highways; I know that there are more good buildings than bad ones upon such streets everywhere, and that the value of land is greater near them than in remoter districts; but at the same time I have never seen so systematic a shutting out of the working-class from the thoroughfares, so tender a concealment of everything which might affront the eye and the nerves of the bourgeoisie, as in Manchester. And yet, in other respects, Manchester is less built according to a plan, after official regulations, is more an outgrowth of accident than any other city; and when I consider in this connection the eager assurances of the middle-class, that the working-class is doing famously, I cannot help feeling that the Liberal manufacturers, the "Big Wigs" of Manchester, are not so innocent after all, in the matter of this shameful method of construction.

I may mention just here that the mills almost all adjoin the rivers or the different canals that ramify throughout the city, before I proceed at once to describe the labouring quarters. First of all, there is the Old Town of Manchester, which lies between the northern boundary of the commercial district and the Irk. Here the streets, even the better ones, are narrow and winding, as

Todd Street, Long Millgate, Withy Grove, and Shude Hill, the houses dirty, old, and tumble-down, and the construction of the side streets utterly horrible. Going from the Old Church to Long Millgate, the stroller has at once a row of old-fashioned houses at the right, of which not one has kept its original level; these are remnants of the old pre-manufacturing Manchester, whose former inhabitants have removed with their descendants into better-built districts, and have left the houses, which were not good enough for them, to a population strongly mixed with Irish blood. Here one is in an almost undisguised working-men's quarter, for even the shops and beerhouses hardly take the trouble to exhibit a trifling degree of cleanliness. But all this is nothing in comparison with the courts and lanes which lie behind, to which access can be gained only through covered passages, in which no two human beings can pass at the same time. Of the irregular cramming together of dwellings in ways which defy all rational plan, of the tangle in which they are crowded literally one upon the other, it is impossible to convey an idea. And it is not the buildings surviving from the old times of Manchester which are to blame for this; the confusion has only recently reached its height when every scrap of space left by the old way of building has been filled up and patched over until not a foot of land is left to be further occupied.

To confirm my statement I have drawn here a small section of the plan of Manchester – not the worst spot and not one-tenth of the whole Old Town.

This drawing will suffice to characterise the irrational manner in which the entire district was built, particularly the part near the Irk.

The south bank of the Irk is here very steep and between fifteen and thirty feet high. On this declivitous hillside there are planted three rows of houses, of which the lowest rise directly out of the river, while the front walls of the highest stand on the crest of the hill in Long Millgate. Among them are mills on the river, in short, the method of construction is as crowded and disorderly here as in the lower part of Long Millgate. Right and left a multitude of covered passages lead from the main street into numerous courts, and he who turns in thither gets into a filth and disgusting grime, the equal of which is not to be found – especially in the courts which lead down to the Irk, and which contain unqualifiedly the most horrible dwellings which I have yet beheld. In one of these courts there stands directly at the entrance, at the end of the covered passage, a privy without a door, so dirty that the inhabitants can pass into and out of the court only by passing through foul pools of stagnant urine and excrement. This is the first court on the Irk above Ducie Bridge – in case any one should care to look into it. Below it on the river there are several tanneries which fill the whole neighbourhood with the stench of animal putrefaction. Below Ducie Bridge the only entrance to most of the houses is by means of narrow, dirty stairs and over heaps of refuse and filth. The first court below Ducie Bridge, known as Allen's Court, was in such a state at the time of the cholera that the sanitary police ordered it evacuated, swept, and disinfected with chloride of lime. Dr. Kay gives a terrible description of the state of this court at that time.²³ Since then, it seems to have been partially torn away and rebuilt; at least looking down from Ducie Bridge, the passer-by sees several ruined walls and heaps of debris with some newer houses. The view from this bridge, mercifully concealed from mortals of small stature by a parapet as high as a man, is characteristic for the whole district. At the bottom flows, or rather stagnates, the Irk, a narrow, coal-black, foul-smelling stream, full of debris and refuse, which it deposits on the shallower right bank. In dry weather, a long string of the most disgusting, blackish-green, slime pools are left standing on this bank, from the depths of which bubbles of miasmatic gas constantly arise and give forth a stench unendurable even on the bridge forty or fifty feet above the surface of the stream. But besides this, the stream itself is checked every few paces by high weirs, behind which slime and refuse accumulate and rot in thick masses. Above the bridge are tanneries, bonemills, and gasworks, from which all drains and refuse find their way into the Irk, which receives further the contents of all the neighbouring sewers and privies. It may be easily imagined, therefore, what sort of residue the stream deposits. Below the bridge you look

upon the piles of *débris*, the refuse, filth, and offal from the courts on the steep left bank; here each house is packed close behind its neighbour and a piece of each is visible, all black, smoky, crumbling, ancient, with broken panes and window-frames. The background is furnished by old barrack-like factory buildings. On the lower right bank stands a long row of houses and mills; the second house being a ruin without a roof, piled with *débris*; the third stands so low that the lowest floor is uninhabitable, and therefore without windows or doors. Here the background embraces the pauper burial-ground, the station of the Liverpool and Leeds railway, and, in the rear of this, the Workhouse, the "Poor-Law Bastille" of Manchester, which, like a citadel, looks threateningly down from behind its high walls and parapets on the hilltop, upon the working-people's quarter below.

Above Ducie Bridge, the left bank grows more flat and the right bank steeper, but the condition of the dwellings on both bank grows worse rather than better. He who turns to the left here from the main street, Long Millgate, is lost; he wanders from one court to another, turns countless corners, passes nothing but narrow, filthy nooks and alleys, until after a few minutes he has lost all clue, and knows not whither to turn. Everywhere half or wholly ruined buildings, some of them actually uninhabited, which means a great deal here; rarely a wooden or stone floor to be seen in the houses, almost uniformly broken, ill-fitting windows and doors, and a state of filth! Everywhere heaps of *débris*, refuse, and offal; standing pools for gutters, and a stench which alone would make it impossible for a human being in any degree civilised to live in such a district. The newly built extension of the Leeds railway, which crosses the Irk here, has swept away some of these courts and lanes, laying others completely open to view. Immediately under the railway bridge there stands a court, the filth and horrors of which surpass all the others by far, just because it was hitherto so shut off, so secluded that the way to it could not be found without a good deal of trouble, I should never have discovered it myself, without the breaks made by the railway, though I thought I knew this whole region thoroughly. Passing along a rough bank, among stakes and washing-lines, one penetrates into this chaos of small one-storied, one-roomed huts, in most of which there is no artificial floor; kitchen, living and sleeping-room all in one. In such a hole, scarcely five feet long by six broad, I found two beds – and such bedsteads and beds! – which, with a staircase and chimney-place, exactly filled the room. In several others I found absolutely nothing, while the door stood open, and the inhabitants leaned against it. Everywhere before the doors refuse and offal; that any sort of pavement lay underneath could not be seen but only felt, here and there, with the feet. This whole collection of cattle-sheds for human beings was surrounded on two sides by houses and a factory, and on the third by the river, and besides the narrow stair up the bank, a narrow doorway alone led out into another almost equally ill-built, ill-kept labyrinth of dwellings.

Enough! The whole side of the Irk is built in this way, a planless, knotted chaos of houses, more or less on the verge of uninhabitableness, whose unclean interiors fully correspond with their filthy external surroundings. And how could the people be clean with no proper opportunity for satisfying the most natural and ordinary wants? Privies are so rare here that they are either filled up every day, or are too remote for most of the inhabitants to use. How can people wash when they have only the dirty Irk water at hand, while pumps and water pipes can be found in decent parts of the city alone? In truth, it cannot be charged to the account of these helots of modern society if their dwellings are not more cleanly than the pig-sties which are here and there to be seen among them. The landlords are not ashamed to let dwellings like the six or seven cellars on the quay directly below Scotland Bridge, the floors of which stand at least two feet below the low-water level of the Irk that flows not six feet away from them; or like the upper floor of the corner-house on the opposite shore directly above the bridge, where the ground-floor, utterly uninhabitable, stands deprived of all fittings for doors and windows, a case by no means rare in

this region, when this open ground-floor is used as a privy by the whole neighbourhood for want of other facilities!

If we leave the Irk and penetrate once more on the opposite side from Long Millgate into the midst of the working-men's dwellings, we shall come into a somewhat newer quarter, which stretches from St. Michael's Church to Withy Grove and Shude Hill. Here there is somewhat better order. In place of the chaos of buildings, we find at least long straight lanes and alleys or courts, built according to a plan and usually square. But if, in the former case, every house was built according to caprice, here each lane and court is so built, without reference to the situation of the adjoining ones. The lanes run now in this direction, now in that, while every two minutes the wanderer gets into a blind alley, or, on turning a corner, finds himself back where he started from; certainly no one who has not lived a considerable time in this labyrinth can find his way through it.

If I may use the word at all in speaking of this district, the ventilation of these streets and courts is, in consequence of this confusion, quite as imperfect as in the Irk region; and if this quarter may, nevertheless, be said to have some advantage over that of the Irk, the houses being newer and the streets occasionally having gutters, nearly every house has, on the other hand, a cellar dwelling, which is rarely found in the Irk district, by reason of the greater age and more careless construction of the houses. As for the rest, the filth, *débris*, and offal heaps, and the pools in the streets are common to both quarters, and in the district now under discussion, another feature most injurious to the cleanliness of the inhabitants, is the multitude of pigs walking about in all the alleys, rooting into the offal heaps, or kept imprisoned in small pens. Here, as in most of the working-men's quarters of Manchester, the pork-raisers rent the courts and build pig-pens in them. In almost every court one or even several such pens may be found, into which the inhabitants of the court throw all refuse and offal, whence the swine grow fat; and the atmosphere, confined on all four sides, is utterly corrupted by putrefying animal and vegetable substances. Through this quarter, a broad and measurably decent street has been cut, Millers Street, and the background has been pretty successfully concealed. But if any one should be led by curiosity to pass through one of the numerous passages which lead into the courts, he will find this piggery repeated at every twenty paces.

Such is the Old Town of Manchester, and on re-reading my description, I am forced to admit that instead of being exaggerated, it is far from black enough to convey a true impression of the filth, ruin, and uninhabitableness, the defiance of all considerations of cleanliness, ventilation, and health which characterise the construction of this single district, containing at least twenty to thirty thousand inhabitants. And such a district exists in the heart of the second city of England, the first manufacturing city of the world. If any one wishes to see in how little space a human being can move, how little air – and *suchair!* – he can breathe, how little of civilisation he may share and yet live, it is only necessary to travel hither. True, this is the *Old Town*, and the people of Manchester emphasise the fact whenever any one mentions to them the frightful condition of this Hell upon Earth; but what does that prove? Everything which here arouses horror and indignation is of recent origin, belongs to the *industrial epoch*. The couple of hundred houses, which belong to old Manchester, have been long since abandoned by their original inhabitants; the industrial epoch alone has crammed into them the swarms of workers whom they now shelter; the industrial epoch alone has built up every spot between these old houses to win a covering for the masses whom it has conjured hither from the agricultural districts and from Ireland; the industrial epoch alone enables the owners of these cattlesheds to rent them for high prices to human beings, to plunder the poverty of the workers, to undermine the health of thousands, in order that *they alone*, the owners, may grow rich. In the industrial epoch alone has it become possible that the worker scarcely freed from feudal servitude could be used as mere material, a mere chattel; that he must let himself be crowded into a dwelling too bad for every other, which

he for his hard-earned wages buys the right to let go utterly to ruin. This manufacture has achieved, which, without these workers, this poverty, this slavery could not have lived. True, the original construction of this quarter was bad, little good could have been made out of it; but, have the landowners, has the municipality done anything to improve it when rebuilding? On the contrary, wherever a nook or corner was free, a house has been run up; where a superfluous passage remained, it has been built up; the value of land rose with the blossoming out of manufacture, and the more it rose, the more madly was the work of building up carried on, without reference to the health or comfort of the inhabitants, with sole reference to the highest possible profit on the principle that *no hole is so bad but that some poor creature must take it who can pay for nothing better*. However, it is the Old Town, and with this reflection the bourgeoisie is comforted. Let us see, therefore, how much better it is in the *New Town*.

The *New Town*, known also as Irish Town, stretches up a hill of clay, beyond the Old Town, between the Irk and St. George's Road. Here all the features of a city are lost. Single rows of houses or groups of streets stand, here and there, like little villages on the naked, not even grass-grown clay soil; the houses, or rather cottages, are in bad order, never repaired, filthy, with damp, unclean, cellar dwellings; the lanes are neither paved nor supplied with sewers, but harbour numerous colonies of swine penned in small sties or yards, or wandering unrestrained through the neighbourhood. The mud in the streets is so deep that there is never a chance, except in the driest weather, of walking without sinking into it ankle deep at every step. In the vicinity of St. George's Road, the separate groups of buildings approach each other more closely, ending in a continuation of lanes, blind alleys, back lanes and courts, which grow more and more crowded and irregular the nearer they approach the heart of the town. True, they are here oftener paved or supplied with paved sidewalks and gutters; but the filth, the bad order of the houses, and especially of the cellars, remain the same.

It may not be out of place to make some general observations just here as to the customary construction of working-men's quarters in Manchester. We have seen how in the Old Town pure accident determined the grouping of the houses in general. Every house is built without reference to any other, and the scraps of space between them are called courts for want of another name. In the somewhat newer portions of the same quarter, and in other working-men's quarters, dating from the early days of industrial activity, a somewhat more orderly arrangement may be found. The space between two streets is divided into more regular, usually square courts.

These courts were built in this way from the beginning, and communicate with the streets by means of covered passages. If the totally planless construction is injurious to the health of the workers by preventing ventilation, this method of shutting them up in courts surrounded on all sides by buildings is far more so. The air simply cannot escape; the chimneys of the houses are the sole drains for the imprisoned atmosphere of the courts, and they serve the purpose only so long as fire is kept burning.²⁴ Moreover, the houses surrounding such courts are usually built back to back, having the rear wall in common; and this alone suffices to prevent any sufficient through ventilation. And, as the police charged with care of the streets does not trouble itself about the condition of these courts, as everything quietly lies where it is thrown, there is no cause for wonder at the filth and heaps of ashes and offal to be found here. I have been in courts, in Millers Street, at least half a foot below the level of the thoroughfare, and without the slightest drainage for the water that accumulates in them in rainy weather!

More recently another different method of building was adopted, and has now become general. Working-men's cottages are almost never built singly, but always by the dozen or score; a single contractor building up one or two streets at a time. These are then arranged as follows: One front is formed of cottages of the best class, so fortunate as to possess a back door and small court, and these command the highest rent. In the rear of these cottages runs a narrow alley, the back street, built up at both ends, into which either a narrow roadway or a covered passage leads from one

side. The cottages which face this back street command least rent, and are most neglected. These have their rear walls in common with the third row of cottages, which face a second street and command less rent than the first row and more than the second.

By this method of construction, comparatively good ventilation can be obtained for the first row of cottages, and the third row is no worse off than in the former method. The middle row, on the other hand, is at least as badly ventilated as the houses in the courts, and the back street is always in the same filthy, disgusting condition as they. The contractors prefer this method because it saves them space, and furnishes the means of fleecing better-paid workers through the higher rents of the cottages in the first and third rows.

These three different forms of cottage building are found all over Manchester and throughout Lancashire and Yorkshire, often mixed up together, but usually separate enough to indicate the relative age of parts of towns. The third system, that of the back alleys, prevails largely in the great working-men's district east of St. George's Road and Ancoats Street, and is the one most often found in the other working-men's quarters of Manchester and its suburbs.

In the last-mentioned broad district included under the name Ancoats, stand the largest mills of Manchester lining the canals, colossal six and seven-storied buildings towering with their slender chimneys far above the low cottages of the workers. The population of the district consists, therefore, chiefly of mill-hands, and in the worst streets, of hand-weavers. The streets nearest the heart of the town are the oldest, and consequently the worst; they are, however, paved, and supplied with drains. Among them I include those nearest to and parallel with Oldham Road and Great Ancoats Street. Farther to the north-east lie many newly built-up streets; here the cottages look neat and cleanly, doors and windows are new and freshly painted, the rooms within newly whitewashed; the streets themselves are better aired, the vacant building lots between them larger and more numerous. But this can be said of a minority of the houses only, while cellar dwellings are to be found under almost every cottage; many streets are unpaved and without sewers; and, worse than all, this neat appearance is all pretence, a pretence which vanishes within the first ten years. For the construction of the cottages individually is no less to be condemned than the plan of the streets. All such cottages look neat and substantial at first; their massive brick walls deceive the eye, and, on passing through a newly built working-men's street, without remembering the back alleys and the construction of the houses themselves, one is inclined to agree with the assertion of the Liberal manufacturers that the working population is nowhere so well housed as in England. But on closer examination, it becomes evident that the walls of these cottages are as thin as it is possible to make them. The outer walls, those of the cellar, which bear the weight of the ground-floor and roof, are one whole brick thick at most, the bricks lying with their long sides touching; but I have seen many a cottage of the same height, some in process of building, whose outer walls were but one-half brick thick, the bricks lying not sidewise but lengthwise, their narrow ends touching. The object of this is to spare material, but there is also another reason for it; namely, the fact that the contractors never own the land but lease it, according to the English custom, for twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, or ninety-nine years, at the expiration of which time it falls, with everything upon it, back into the possession of the original holder, who pays nothing in return for improvements upon it. The improvements are therefore so calculated by the lessee as to be worth as little as possible at the expiration of the stipulated term. And as such cottages are often built but twenty or thirty years before the expiration of the term, it may easily be imagined that the contractors make no unnecessary expenditures upon them. Moreover, these contractors, usually carpenters and builders, or manufacturers, spend little or nothing in repairs, partly to avoid diminishing their rent receipts, and partly in view of the approaching surrender of the improvement to the landowner; while in consequence of commercial crises and the loss of work that follows them, whole streets often stand empty, the cottages falling rapidly into ruin and uninhabitableness. It is calculated in general that working-men's cottages

last only forty years on the average. This sounds strangely enough when one sees the beautiful, massive walls of newly built ones, which seem to give promise of lasting a couple of centuries; but the fact remains that the niggardliness of the original expenditure, the neglect of all repairs, the frequent periods of emptiness, the constant change of inhabitants, and the destruction carried on by the dwellers during the final ten years, usually Irish families, who do not hesitate to use the wooden portions for firewood – all this, taken together, accomplishes the complete ruin of the cottages by the end of forty years. Hence it comes that Ancoats, built chiefly since the sudden growth of manufacture, chiefly indeed within the present century, contains a vast number of ruinous houses, most of them being, in fact, in the last stages of inhabiteness. I will not dwell upon the amount of capital thus wasted, the small additional expenditure upon the original improvement and upon repairs which would suffice to keep this whole district clean, decent, and inhabitable for years together. I have to deal here with the state of the houses and their inhabitants, and it must be admitted that no more injurious and demoralising method of housing the workers has yet been discovered than precisely this. The working-man is constrained to occupy such ruinous dwellings because he cannot pay for others, and because there are no others in the vicinity of his mill; perhaps, too, because they belong to the employer, who engages him only on condition of his taking such a cottage. The calculation with reference to the forty years' duration of the cottage is, of course, not always perfectly strict; for, if the dwellings are in a thickly built-up portion of the town, and there is a good prospect of finding steady occupants for them, while the ground-rent is high, the contractors do a little something to keep the cottages inhabitable after the expiration of the forty years. They never do anything more, however, than is absolutely unavoidable, and the dwellings so repaired are the worst of all. Occasionally when an epidemic threatens, the otherwise sleepy conscience of the sanitary police is a little stirred, raids are made into the working-men's districts, whole rows of cellars and cottages are closed, as happened in the case of several lanes near Oldham Road; but this does not last long: the condemned cottages soon find occupants again, the owners are much better off by letting them, and the sanitary police won't come again so soon. These east and north-east sides of Manchester are the only ones on which the bourgeoisie has not built, because ten or eleven months of the year the west and south-west wind drives the smoke of all the factories hither, and that the working-people alone may breathe.

Southward from Great Ancoats Street, lies a great, straggling, working-men's quarter, a hilly, barren stretch of land, occupied by detached, irregularly built rows of houses or squares, between these, empty building lots, uneven, clayey, without grass and scarcely passable in wet weather. The cottages are all filthy and old, and recall the New Town to mind. The stretch cut through by the Birmingham railway is the most thickly built-up and the worst. Here flows the Medlock with countless windings through a valley, which is, in places, on a level with the valley of the Irk. Along both sides of the stream, which is coal-black, stagnant and foul, stretches a broad belt of factories and working-men's dwellings, the latter all in the worst condition. The bank is chiefly declivitous and is built over to the water's edge, just as we saw along the Irk; while the houses are equally bad, whether built on the Manchester side or in Ardwick, Chorlton, or Hulme. But the most horrible spot (if I should describe all the separate spots in detail I should never come to the end) lies on the Manchester side, immediately south-west of Oxford Road, and is known as Little Ireland. In a rather deep hole, in a curve of the Medlock and surrounded on all four sides by tall factories and high embankments, covered with buildings, stand two groups of about two hundred cottages, built chiefly back to back, in which live about four thousand human beings, most of them Irish. The cottages are old, dirty, and of the smallest sort, the streets uneven, fallen into ruts and in part without drains or pavement; masses of refuse, offal and sickening filth lie among standing pools in all directions; the atmosphere is poisoned by the effluvia from these, and laden and darkened by the smoke of a dozen tall factory chimneys. A horde of ragged women and

children swarm about here, as filthy as the swine that thrive upon the garbage heaps and in the puddles. In short, the whole rookery furnishes such a hateful and repulsive spectacle as can hardly be equalled in the worst court on the Irk. The race that lives in these ruinous cottages, behind broken windows, mended with oilskin, sprung doors, and rotten doorposts, or in dark, wet cellars, in measureless filth and stench, in this atmosphere penned in as if with a purpose, this race must really have reached the lowest stage of humanity. This is the impression and the line of thought which the exterior of this district forces upon the beholder. But what must one think when he hears that in each of these pens, containing at most two rooms, a garret and perhaps a cellar, on the average twenty human beings live; that in the whole region, for each one hundred and twenty persons, one usually inaccessible privy is provided; and that in spite of all the preachings of the physicians, in spite of the excitement into which the cholera epidemic plunged the sanitary police by reason of the condition of Little Ireland, in spite of everything, in this year of grace 1844, it is in almost the same state as in 1831! Dr. Kay asserts that not only the cellars but the first floors of all the houses in this district are damp; that a number of cellars once filled up with earth have now been emptied and are occupied once more by Irish people; that in one cellar the water constantly wells up through a hole stopped with clay, the cellar lying below the river level, so that its occupant, a hand-loom weaver, had to bale out the water from his dwelling every morning and pour it into the street!

Farther down, on the left side of the Medlock, lies Hulme, which properly speaking, is one great working-people's district, the condition of which coincides almost exactly with that of Ancoats; the more thickly built-up regions chiefly bad and approaching ruin, the less populous of more modern structure, but generally sunk in filth. On the other side of the Medlock, in Manchester proper, lies a second great working-men's district which stretches on both sides of Deansgate as far as the business quarter, and in certain parts rivals the Old Town. Especially in the immediate vicinity of the business quarter, between Bridge and Quay Streets, Princess and Peter Streets, the crowded construction exceeds in places the narrowest courts of the Old Town. Here are long narrow lanes between which run contracted, crooked courts and passages, the entrances to which are so irregular that the explorer is caught in a blind alley at every few steps, or comes out where he least expects to, unless he knows every court and every alley exactly and separately. According to Dr. Kay, the most demoralised class of all Manchester lived in these ruinous and filthy districts, people whose occupations are thieving and prostitution and, to all appearances, his assertion is still true at the present moment. When the sanitary police made its expedition hither in 1831, it found the uncleanness as great as in Little Ireland or along the Irk (that it is not much better today, I can testify); and among other items, they found in Parliament Street for three hundred and eighty persons, and in Parliament Passage for thirty thickly populated houses, but a single privy.

If we cross the Irwell to Salford, we find on a peninsula formed by the river a town of eighty thousand inhabitants, which, properly speaking, is one large working-men's quarter, penetrated by a single wide avenue. Salford, once more important than Manchester, was then the leading town of the surrounding district to which it still gives its name, Salford Hundred. Hence it is that an old and therefore very unwholesome, dirty, and ruinous locality is to be found here, lying opposite the Old Church of Manchester, and in as bad a condition as the Old Town on the other side of the Irwell. Farther away from the river lies the newer portion, which is, however, already beyond the limit of its forty years of cottage life, and therefore ruinous enough. All Salford is built in courts or narrow lanes, so narrow, that they remind me of the narrowest I have ever seen, the little lanes of Genoa. The average construction of Salford is in this respect much worse than that of Manchester, and so, too, in respect to cleanliness. If, in Manchester, the police, from time to time, every six or ten years, makes a raid upon the working-people's districts, closes the worst dwellings, and causes the filthiest spots in these Augean stables to be cleansed, in Salford it

seems to have done absolutely nothing. The narrow side lanes and courts of Chapel Street, Greengate, and Gravel Lane have certainly never been cleansed since they were built. Of late, the Liverpool railway has been carried through the middle of them, over a high viaduct, and has abolished many of the filthiest nooks; but what does that avail? Whoever passes over this viaduct and looks down, sees filth and wretchedness enough; and, if any one takes the trouble to pass through these lanes and glance through the open doors and windows into the houses and cellars, he can convince himself afresh with every step that the workers of Salford live in dwellings in which cleanliness and comfort are impossible. Exactly the same state of affairs is found in the more distant regions of Salford, in Islington, along Regent Road, and back of the Bolton railway. The working-men's dwellings between Oldfield Road and Cross Lane, where a mass of courts and alleys are to be found in the worst possible state, vie with the dwellings of the Old Town in filth and overcrowding. In this district I found a man, apparently about sixty years old, living in a cow-stable. He had constructed a sort of chimney for his square pen, which had neither windows, floor, nor ceiling, had obtained a bedstead and lived there, though the rain dripped through his rotten roof. This man was too old and weak for regular work, and supported himself by removing manure with a hand-cart; the dung-heaps lay next door to his palace!

Such are the various working-people's quarters of Manchester as I had occasion to observe them personally during twenty months. If we briefly formulate the result of our wanderings, we must admit that 350,000 working-people of Manchester and its environs live, almost all of them, in wretched, damp, filthy cottages, that the streets which surround them are usually in the most miserable and filthy condition, laid out without the slightest reference to ventilation, with reference solely to the profit secured by the contractor. In a word, we must confess that in the working-men's dwellings of Manchester, no cleanliness, no convenience, and consequently no comfortable family life is possible; that in such dwellings only a physically degenerate race, robbed of all humanity, degraded, reduced morally and physically to bestiality, could feel comfortable and at home. And I am not alone in making this assertion. We have seen that Dr. Kay gives precisely the same description; and, though it is superfluous, I quote further the words of a Liberal, recognised and highly valued as an authority by the manufacturers, and a fanatical opponent of all independent movements of the workers: ²⁵

"But when I went through their [i.e., the Manchester operatives'] habitations in Irish Town, and Ancoats, and Little Ireland, my only wonder was that tolerable health could be maintained by the inmates of such houses. These towns, for such they are in extent and population, have been erected by small speculators with an utter disregard to everything except immediate profit. A carpenter and a bricklayer club to buy a patch of ground [i.e., they lease it for a number of years], and cover it with what they call houses. In one place we saw a

whole street following the course of a ditch, in order to have deeper cellars (cellars for people, not for lumber) without the expense of excavations. Not a house in this street escaped cholera. And generally speaking, throughout these suburbs the streets are unpaved, with a dung-hill or a pond in the middle; the houses built back to back, without ventilation or drainage; and whole families occupy a corner of a cellar or of a garret."

I have already referred to the unusual activity which the sanitary police manifested during the cholera visitation. When the epidemic was approaching, a universal terror seized the bourgeoisie of the city. People remembered the unwholesome dwellings of the poor, and trembled before the certainty that each of these slums would become a centre for the plague, whence it would spread desolation in all directions through the houses of the propertied class. A Health Commission was appointed at once to investigate these districts, and report upon their condition to the Town Council. Dr. Kay, himself a member of this Commission, who visited in person every separate police district except one, the eleventh, quotes extracts from their reports: There were inspected, in all, 6,951 houses – naturally in Manchester proper alone, Salford and the other suburbs being excluded. Of these, 2,565 urgently needed whitewashing within; 960 were out of repair, 959 had insufficient drains; 1,455 were damp; 452 were badly ventilated; 2,221 were without privies. Of the 687 streets inspected, 248 were unpaved, 53 but partially paved, 112 ill-ventilated, 352 containing standing pools, heaps of debris, refuse, etc. To cleanse such an Augean stable before the arrival of the cholera was, of course, out of the question. A few of the worst nooks were therefore cleansed, and everything else left as before. In the cleansed spots, as Little Ireland proves, the old filthy condition was naturally restored in a couple of months. As to the internal condition of these houses, the same Commission reports a state of things similar to that which we have already met with in London, Edinburgh, and other cities.

"A whole Irish family is often accommodated on a single bed, and sometimes a heap of filthy straw and a covering of old sacking hide them in one undistinguished heap, debased alike by penury, want of economy and dissolute habits. Frequently the inspectors found two families crowded into one small house, containing only two apartments, one in which they slept, and another in

which they eat; and often more than one family lived in a damp cellar, containing only one room, in whose pestilential atmosphere from twelve to sixteen persons were crowded. To these fertile sources of disease were sometimes added the keeping of the pigs and other animals in the house, with other nuisances of the most revolting character."

We must add that many families, who had but one room for themselves, receive boarders and lodgers in it, that such lodgers of both sexes by no means rarely sleep in the same bed with the married couple; and that the single case of a man and his wife and his adult sister-in-law sleeping in one bed was found, according to the "Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population", six times repeated in Manchester. Common lodging-houses, too, are very numerous; Dr. Kay gives their number in 1831 as 267 in Manchester proper, and they must have increased greatly since then. Each of these receives from twenty to thirty guests, so that they shelter all told, nightly, from five to seven thousand human beings. The character of the houses and their guests is the same as in other cities. Five to seven beds in each room lie on the floor – without bedsteads, and on these sleep, mixed indiscriminately, as many persons as apply. What physical and moral atmosphere reigns in these holes I need not state. Each of these houses is a focus of crime, the scene of deeds against which human nature revolts, which would perhaps never have been executed but for this forced centralisation of vice. Gaskell ²⁶ gives the number of persons living in cellars in Manchester proper as 20,000. The *Weekly Dispatch* gives the number, "according to official reports", as twelve per cent of the working-class, which agrees with Gaskell's number; the workers being estimated at 175,000, 21,000 would form twelve per cent of it. The cellar dwellings in the suburbs are at least as numerous. so that the number of persons living in cellars in Manchester – using its name in the broader sense – is not less than forty to fifty thousand. So much for the dwellings of the workers in the largest cities and towns. The manner in which the need of a shelter is satisfied furnishes a standard for the manner in which all other necessities are supplied. That in these filthy holes a ragged, ill-fed population alone can dwell is a safe conclusion, and such is the fact. The clothing of the working-people, in the majority of cases, is in a very bad condition. The material used for it is not of the best adapted. Wool and linen have almost vanished from the wardrobe of both sexes, and cotton has taken their place. Shirts are made of bleached or coloured cotton goods; the dresses of the women are chiefly of cotton print goods, and woollen petticoats are rarely to be seen on the washline. The men wear chiefly trousers of fustian or other heavy cotton goods, and jackets or coats of the same. Fustian has become the proverbial costume of the working-men, who are called "fustian jackets", and call themselves so in contrast to the gentlemen who wear broadcloth, which latter words are used as characteristic for the middle-class. When Feargus O'Connor, the Chartist leader, came to Manchester during the insurrection of 1842, he appeared, amidst the deafening applause of the working-men, in a fustian suit of clothing. Hats are the universal head-covering in England, even for working-men, hats of the most diverse forms, round, high, broad-brimmed, narrow-brimmed, or without brims – only the younger men in factory towns wearing caps. Any one who does not own a hat folds himself a low, square paper cap.

The whole clothing of the working-class, even assuming it to be in good condition, is little adapted to the climate. The damp air of England, with its sudden changes of temperature, more calculated than any other to give rise to colds, obliges almost the whole middle-class to wear flannel next to the skin, about the body, and flannel scarfs and shirts are in almost universal use. Not only is the working-class deprived of this precaution, it is scarcely ever in a position to use a thread of woollen clothing; and the heavy cotton goods, though thicker, stiffer, and heavier than woollen clothes, afford much less protection against cold and wet, remain damp much longer because of their thickness and the nature of the stuff, and have nothing of the compact density of fulled woollen cloths. And, if a working-man once buys himself a woollen coat for Sunday, he must get it from one of the "cheap shops" where he finds bad, so-called "Devil's-dust" cloth, manufactured for sale and not for use, and liable to tear or grow threadbare in a fortnight, or he must buy of an old clothes'-dealer a half-worn coat which has seen its best days, and lasts but a few weeks. Moreover, the working-man's clothing is, in most cases, in bad condition, and there is the oft-recurring necessity for placing the best pieces in the pawnbroker's shop. But among very large numbers, especially among the Irish, the prevailing clothing consists of perfect rags often beyond all mending, or so patched that the original colour can no longer be detected. Yet the English and Anglo-Irish go on patching, and have carried this art to a remarkable pitch, putting wool or bagging on fustian, or the reverse – it's all the same to them. But the true, transplanted Irish hardly ever patch except in the extremest necessity, when the garment would otherwise fall apart. Ordinarily the rags of the shirt protrude through the rents in the coat or trousers. They wear, as Thomas Carlyle says,²⁷

"a suit of tatters, the getting on or off
which is said to be a difficult operation,
transacted only in festivals and the high
tides of the calendar."

The Irish have introduced, too, the custom, previously unknown in England, of going barefoot. In every manufacturing town there is now to be seen a multitude of people, especially women and children, going about barefoot, and their example is gradually being adopted by the poorer English.

As with clothing, so with food. The workers get what is too bad for the property-holding class. In the great towns of England everything may be had of the best, but it costs money; and the workman, who must keep house on a couple of pence, cannot afford much expense. Moreover, he usually receives his wages on Saturday evening, for, although a beginning has been made in the payment of wages on Friday, this excellent arrangement is by no means universal; and so he comes to market at five or even seven o'clock, while the buyers of the middle-class have had the first choice during the morning, when the market teems with the best of everything. But when the workers reach it, the best has vanished, and, if it was still there, they would probably not be able to buy it. The potatoes which the workers buy are usually poor, the vegetables wilted, the cheese old and of poor quality, the bacon rancid, the meat lean, tough, taken from old, often diseased, cattle, or such as have died a natural death, and not fresh even then, often half decayed. The sellers are usually small hucksters who buy up inferior goods, and can sell them cheaply by reason of their badness. The poorest workers are forced to use still another device to get together the things they need with their few pence. As nothing can be sold on Sunday, and all shops must be closed at twelve o'clock on Saturday night, such things as would not keep until Monday are sold at any price between ten o'clock and midnight. But nine-tenths of what is sold at ten o'clock is past using by Sunday morning, yet these are precisely the provisions which make up the Sunday dinner of the poorest class. The meat which the workers buy is very often past using; but

having bought it, they must eat it. On the 6th of January, 1844 (if I am not greatly mistaken), a court leet was held in Manchester, when eleven meat-sellers were fined for having sold tainted meat. Each of them had a whole ox or pig, or several sheep, or from fifty to sixty pounds of meat, which were all confiscated in a tainted condition. In one case, fifty-four stuffed Christmas geese were seized which had proved unsaleable in Liverpool, and had been forwarded to Manchester, where they were brought to market foul and rotten. All the particulars, with names and fines, were published at the time in the *Manchester Guardian*. In the six weeks, from July 1st to August 14th [1844], the same sheet reported three similar cases. According to the *Guardian* for July 3rd, a pig, weighing 200 pounds, which had been found dead and decayed, was cut up and exposed for sale by a butcher at Heywood, and was then seized. According to the number for July 31st, two butchers at Wigan, of whom one had previously been convicted of the same offence, were fined £2 and £4 respectively, for exposing tainted meat for sale; and, according to the number for August 10th, twenty-six tainted hams seized at a dealer's in Bolton, were publicly burnt, and the dealer fined twenty shillings. But these are by no means all the cases; they do not even form a fair average for a period of six weeks, according to which to form an average for the year. There are often seasons in which every number of the semi-weekly *Guardian* mentions a similar case found in Manchester or its vicinity. And when one reflects upon the many cases which must escape detection in the extensive markets that stretch along the front of every main street, under the slender supervision of the market inspectors – and how else can one explain the boldness with which whole animals are exposed for sale? – when one considers how great the temptation must be, in view of the incomprehensibly small fines mentioned in the foregoing cases; when one reflects what condition a piece of meat must have reached to be seized by the inspectors, it is impossible to believe that the workers obtain good and nourishing meat as a usual thing. But they are victimised in yet another way by the money-greed of the middle-class. Dealers and manufacturers adulterate all kinds of provisions in an atrocious manner, and without the slightest regard to the health of the consumers. We have heard the *Manchester Guardian* upon this subject, let us hear another organ of the middle-class – I delight in the testimony of my opponents – let us hear the *Liverpool Mercury*:

"Salt butter is moulded into the form of pounds of fresh butter, and cased over with fresh. In other instances a pound of fresh is conspicuously placed to be tasted; but that pound is not sold; and in other instances salt butter, washed, is moulded and sold as fresh.... Pounded rice and other cheap materials are mixed in sugar, and sold at full monopoly price. A chemical substance – the refuse of the soap manufactories – is also mixed with other substances and sold as sugar.... Chicory is mixed in good coffee. Chicory, or some similarly cheap substance, is skilfully moulded into the

form of the coffee berry, and is mixed with the bulk very liberally.... Cocoa is extensively adulterated with fine brown earth, wrought up with mutton fat, so as to amalgamate with portions of the real article.... The leaves of tea are mingled with sloe levies and other abominations. Used leaves are also re-dried, and re-coloured on hot copper plates, and sold as tea. Pepper is adulterated with dust from husks etc.; port wine is altogether manufactured (from spirits, dyes, etc.), it being notorious that more port wine is drunk in this country than is made in Portugal. Nasty things of all sorts are mixed with the weed tobacco in all its manufactured forms".

I can add that several of the most respected tobacco dealers in Manchester announced publicly last summer, that, by reason of the universal adulteration of tobacco, no firm could carry on business without adulteration, and that no cigar costing less than three pence is made wholly from tobacco. These frauds are naturally not restricted to articles of food, though I could mention a dozen more, the villainy of mixing gypsum or chalk with flour among them. Fraud is practised in the sale of articles of every sort: flannel, stockings, etc., are stretched, and shrink after the first washing; narrow cloth is sold as being from one and a half to three inches broader than it actually is; stoneware is so thinly glazed that the glazing is good for nothing and cracks at once, and a hundred other rascalities, *tout comme chez nous*. But the lion's share of the evil results of these frauds falls to the workers. The rich are less deceived, because they can pay the high prices of the large shops which have a reputation to lose, and would injure themselves more than their customers if they kept poor or adulterated wares; the rich are spoiled, too, by habitual good eating, and detect adulteration more easily with their sensitive palates. But the poor, the working-people, to whom a couple of farthings are important, who must buy many things with little money, who cannot afford to inquire too closely into the quality of their purchases, and cannot do so in any case because they have had no opportunity of cultivating their taste – to their share fall all the adulterated, poisoned provisions. They must deal with the small retailers, must buy perhaps on credit, and these small retail dealers who cannot sell even the same quality of goods so cheaply as the largest retailers, because of their small capital and the large proportional expenses of their business, must knowingly or unknowingly buy adulterated goods in order to sell at the lower prices required, and to meet the competition of the others. Further, a large retail dealer who has extensive capital invested in his business is ruined with his ruined credit if detected in a fraudulent practice; but what harm does it do a small grocer, who has customers in a single street only, if frauds are proved against him? If no one trusts him in Ancoats, he moves to Chorlton or Hulme, where no one knows him, and where he continues to defraud as before; while

legal penalties attach to very few adulterations unless they involve revenue frauds. Not in the quality alone, but in the quantity of his goods as well, is the English working-man defrauded. The small dealers usually have false weights and measures, and an incredible number of convictions for such offences may be read in the police reports. How universal this form of fraud is in the manufacturing districts, a couple of extracts from the Manchester Guardian may serve to show. They cover only a short period, and, even here, I have not all the numbers at hand:

Guardian, June 15, 1844, Rochdale Sessions.— Four dealers fined five to ten shillings for using light weights. Stockport Sessions.— Two dealers fined one shilling, one of them having seven light weights and a false scale, and both having been warned.

Guardian, June 19, Rochdale Sessions.— One dealer fined five, and two farmers ten shillings.

Guardian, June 22, Manchester Justices of the Peace.— Nineteen dealers fined two shillings and sixpence to two pounds.

Guardian, June 26, Ashton Sessions.— Fourteen dealers and farmers fined two shillings and sixpence to one pound. Hyde Petty Sessions.— Nine farmers and dealers condemned to pay costs and five shillings fines.

Guardian, July 6, Manchester.— Sixteen dealers condemned to pay costs and fines not exceeding ten shillings.

Guardian, July 13, Manchester.— Nine dealers fined from two shillings and sixpence to twenty shillings.

Guardian, July 24, Rochdale.— Four dealers fined ten to twenty shillings.

Guardian, July 27, Bolton.— Twelve dealers and innkeepers condemned to

pay costs.

Guardian, August 3, Bolton.— Three dealers fined two shillings and sixpence, and five shillings.

Guardian, August 10, Bolton.— One dealer fined five shillings.

And the same causes which make the working-class the chief sufferers from frauds in the quality of goods make them the usual victims of frauds in the question of quantity too.

The habitual food of the individual working-man naturally varies according to his wages. The better-paid workers, especially those in whose families every member is able to earn something, have good food as long as this state of things lasts; meat daily and bacon and cheese for supper. Where wages are less, meat is used only two or three times a week, and the proportion of bread and potatoes increases. Descending gradually, we find the animal food reduced to a small piece of bacon cut up with the potatoes; lower still, even this disappears, and there remain only bread, cheese, porridge, and potatoes, until on the lowest round of the ladder, among the Irish, potatoes form the sole food, As an accompaniment, weak tea, with perhaps a little sugar, milk, or spirits, is universally drunk. Tea is regarded in England, and even in Ireland, as quite as indispensable as coffee in Germany, and where no tea is used, the bitterest poverty reigns. But all this presupposes that the workman has work. When he has none, he is wholly at the mercy of accident, and eats what is given him, what he can beg or steal. And, if he gets nothing, he simply starves, as we have seen. The quantity of food varies, of course, like its quality, according to the rate of wages, so that among ill-paid workers, even if they have no large families, hunger prevails in spite of full and regular work; and the number of the ill-paid is very large. Especially in London, where the competition of the workers rises with the increase of population, this class is very numerous, but it is to be found in other towns as well. In these cases all sorts of devices are used; potato parings, vegetable refuse, and rotten vegetables²⁸ are eaten for want of other food, and everything greedily gathered up which may possibly contain an atom of nourishment. And, if the week's wages are used up before the end of the week, it often enough happens that in the closing days the family gets only as much food, if any, as is barely sufficient to keep off starvation. Of course such a way of living unavoidably engenders a multitude of diseases, and when these appear, when the father from whose work the family is chiefly supported, whose physical exertion most demands nourishment, and who therefore first succumbs – when the father is utterly disabled, then misery reaches its height, and then the brutality with which society abandons its members, just when their need is greatest, comes out fully into the light of day.

To sum up briefly the facts thus far cited. The great towns are chiefly inhabited by working-people, since in the best case there is one bourgeois for two workers, often for three, here and there for four; these workers have no property whatsoever of their own, and live wholly upon wages, which usually go from hand to mouth. Society, composed wholly of atoms, does not trouble itself about them; leaves them to care for themselves and their families, yet supplies them no means of doing this in an efficient and permanent manner. Every working-man, even the best, is therefore constantly exposed to loss of work and food, that is to death by starvation, and many perish in this way. The dwellings of the workers are everywhere badly planned, badly built, and kept in the worst condition, badly ventilated, damp, and unwholesome. The inhabitants are confined to the smallest possible space, and at least one family usually sleeps in each room. The interior arrangement of the dwellings is poverty-stricken in various degrees, down to the utter absence of even the most necessary furniture. The clothing of the workers, too, is generally

assimilates a great part of the Irish characteristics. On the contrary, it is easy to understand how the degrading position of the English workers, engendered by our modern history, and its immediate consequences, has been still more degraded by the presence of Irish competition.

number of spinners diminished more than 60 per cent. And Leach adds that since 1841, so many improvements have been introduced by double-decking and other means, that in some of the factories named, half the operatives have been discharged. In one factory alone, where eighty spinners were employed a short time ago, there are now but twenty left; the others having been discharged or set at children's work for children's wages. Of Stockport Leach tells a similar story, that in 1835, 800 spinners were employed, and in 1843 but 140, though the manufacture of Stockport has greatly increased during the last eight or nine years. Similar improvements have now been made in carding-frames, by which one-half the operatives have been thrown out of employment. In one factory improved frames have been set up, which have thrown four hands out of eight out of work, besides which the employer reduced the wages of the four retained from eight shillings to seven. The same process has gone on in the weaving industry; the power-loom has taken possession of one branch of hand-weaving after another, and since it produces much more than the hand-loom, while one weaver can work two looms, it has superseded a multitude of working-people. And in all sorts of manufacture, in flax and wool-spinning, in silk-twisting, the case is the same. The power-loom, too, is beginning to appropriate one branch after another of wool and linen-weaving; in Rochdale alone, there are more power than hand-looms in flannel and other wool-weaving branches. The bourgeoisie usually replies to this, that improvements in machinery, by decreasing the cost of production, supply finished goods at lower prices, and that these reduced prices cause such an increase in consumption that the unemployed operatives soon find full employment in newly founded factories.⁷⁰ The bourgeoisie is so far correct that under certain conditions favourable for the general development of manufacture, every reduction in price of goods in *which the raw material is cheap*, greatly increases consumption, and gives rise to the building of new factories; but every further word of the assertion is a lie. The bourgeoisie ignores the fact that it takes years for these results of the decrease in price to follow and for new factories to be built; it is silent upon the point that every improvement in machinery throws the real work, the expenditure of force, more and more upon the machine, and so transforms the work of full-grown men into mere supervision, which a feeble woman or even a child can do quite as well, and does for half or two-thirds wages; that, therefore, grown men are constantly more and more supplanted and *not re-employed* by the increase in manufacture; it conceals the fact that whole branches of industry fall away, or are so changed that they must be learned afresh; and it takes good care not to confess what it usually harps upon, whenever the question of forbidding the work of children is broached, that factory-work must be learned in earliest youth in order to be learned properly. It does not mention the fact that the process of improvement goes steadily on, and that as soon as the operative has succeeded in making himself at home in a new branch, if he actually does succeed in so doing, this, too, is taken from him, and with it the last remnant of security which remained to him for winning his bread. But the bourgeoisie gets the benefit of the improvements in machinery; it has a capital opportunity for piling up money during the first years while many old machines are still in use, and the improvement not yet universally introduced; and it would be too much to ask that it should have an open eye for the disadvantages inseparable from these improvements.

The fact that improved machinery reduces wages has also been as violently disputed by the bourgeoisie, as it is constantly reiterated by the working-men. The bourgeoisie insists that although the price of piece-work has been reduced, yet the total of wages for the week's work has rather risen than fallen, and the condition of the operatives rather improved than deteriorated. It is hard to get to the bottom of the matter, for the operatives usually dwell upon the price of piece-work. But it is certain that the weekly wage, also, has, in many branches of work, been reduced by the improvement of machinery. The so-called fine spinners (who spin fine mule yarn), for instance, do receive high wages, thirty to forty shillings a week, because they have a powerful association for keeping wages up, and their craft requires long training; but the coarse spinners

who have to compete against self-actors (which are not as yet adapted for fine spinning), and whose association was broken down by the introduction of these machines, receive very low wages. A mule spinner told me that he does not earn more than fourteen shillings a week, and his statement agrees with that of Leach, that in various factories the coarse spinners earn less than sixteen shillings and sixpence a week, and that a spinner, who years ago earned thirty shillings, can now hardly scrape up twelve and a half, and had not earned more on an average in the past year. The wages of women and children may perhaps have fallen less, but only because they were not high from the beginning. I know several women, widows with children, who have trouble enough to earn eight to nine shillings a week; and that they and their families cannot live decently upon that sum, every one must admit who knows the price of the barest necessities of life in England. That wages in general have been reduced by the improvement of machinery is the unanimous testimony of the operatives. The bourgeois assertion that the condition of the working-class has been improved by machinery is most vigorously proclaimed a falsehood in every meeting of working-men in the factory districts. And even if it were true that the relative wage, the price of piece-work only, has fallen, while the absolute wage, the sum to be earned in the week, remained unchanged, what would follow? That the operatives have had quietly to look on while the manufacturers filled their purses from every improvement without giving the hands the smallest share in the gain. The bourgeois forgets, in fighting the working-man, the most ordinary principles of his own Political Economy. He who at other times swears by Malthus, cries out in his anxiety before the workers: "Where could the millions by which the population of England has increased find work, without the improvements in machinery?"⁷¹ As though the bourgeois did not know well enough that without machinery and the expansion of industry which it produced, these "millions" would never have been brought into the world and grown up! The service which machinery has rendered the workers is simply this: that it has brought home to their minds the necessity of a social reform by means of which machinery shall no longer work against but for them. Let the wise bourgeois ask the people who sweep the streets in Manchester and elsewhere (though even this is past now, since machines for the purpose have been invented and introduced), or sell salt, matches, oranges, and shoe-strings on the streets, or even beg, what they were formerly, and he will see how many will answer: Mill-hands thrown out of work by machinery. The consequences of improvement in machinery under our present social conditions are, for the working-man, solely injurious, and often in the highest degree oppressive. Every new advance brings with it loss of employment, want, and suffering, and in a country like England where, without that, there is usually a "surplus population", to be discharged from work is the worst that can befall the operative. And what a dispiriting, unnerving influence this uncertainty of his position in life, consequent upon the unceasing progress of machinery, must exercise upon the worker, whose lot is precarious enough without it! To escape despair, there are but two ways open to him; either inward and outward revolt against the bourgeoisie or drunkenness and general demoralisation. And the English operatives are accustomed to take refuge in both. The history of the English proletariat relates hundreds of uprisings against machinery and the bourgeoisie; we have already spoken of the moral dissolution which, in itself, is only another form of despair.

The worst situation is that of those workers who have to compete against a machine that is making its way. The price of the goods which they produce adapts itself to the price of the kindred product of the machine, and as the latter works more cheaply, its human competitor has but the lowest wages. The same thing happens to every operative employed upon an old machine in competition with later improvements. And who else is there to bear the hardship? The manufacturer will not throw out his old apparatus, nor will he sustain the loss upon it; out of the dead mechanism he can make nothing, so he fastens upon the living worker, the universal scapegoat of society. Of all the workers in competition with machinery, the most ill-used are the hand-loom cotton weavers. They receive the most trifling wages, and, with full work, are not in a

position to earn more than ten shillings a week. One class of woven goods after another is annexed by the power-loom, and hand-weaving is the last refuge of workers thrown out of employment in other branches, so that the trade is always overcrowded. Hence it comes that, in average seasons, the hand-weaver counts himself fortunate if he can earn six or seven shillings a week, while to reach this sum he must sit at his loom fourteen to eighteen hours a day. Most woven goods require moreover a damp weaving-room, to keep the weft from snapping, and in part for this reason, in part because of their poverty, which prevents them from paying for better dwellings, the work-rooms of these weavers are usually without wooden or paved floors. I have been in many dwellings of such weavers, in remote, vile courts and alleys, usually in cellars. Often half-a-dozen of these hand-loom weavers, several of them married, live together in a cottage with one or two work-rooms, and one large sleeping-room. Their food consists almost exclusively of potatoes, with perhaps oatmeal porridge, rarely milk, and scarcely ever meat. Great numbers of them are Irish or of Irish descent. And these poor hand-loom weavers, first to suffer from every crisis, and last to be relieved from it, must serve the bourgeoisie as a handle in meeting attacks upon the factory system. See, cries the bourgeois, triumphantly, see how these poor creatures must famish, while the mill operatives are thriving, and *then* judge the factory system! As though it were not precisely the factory system and the machinery belonging to it which had so shamefully crushed the hand-loom weavers, and as though the bourgeoisie did not know this quite as well as ourselves! But the bourgeoisie has interests at stake, and so a falsehood or two and a bit of hypocrisy won't matter much.

Let us examine somewhat more closely the fact that machinery more and more supersedes the work of men. The human labour, involved in both spinning and weaving, consists chiefly in piecing broken threads, as the machine does all the rest. This work requires no muscular strength, but only flexibility of finger. Men are, therefore, not only not needed for it, but actually, by reason of the greater muscular development of the hand, less fit for it than women and children, and are, therefore, naturally almost superseded by them. Hence, the more the use of the arms, the expenditure of strength, can be transferred to steam or waterpower, the fewer men need be employed; and as women and children work more cheaply, and in these branches better than men, they take their places. In the spinning-mills women and girls are to be found in almost exclusive possession of the throstles; among the mules one man, an adult spinner (with self-actors, he, too, becomes superfluous), and several piecers for tying the threads, usually children or women, sometimes young men of from eighteen to twenty years, here and there an old spinner ⁷² thrown out of other employment. At the power-looms women, from fifteen to twenty years, are chiefly employed, and a few men; these, however, rarely remain at this trade after their twenty-first year. Among the preparatory machinery, too, women alone are to be found, with here and there a man to clean and sharpen the carding-frames. Besides all these, the factories employ numbers of children – doffers – for mounting and taking down bobbins, and a few men as overlookers, a mechanic and an engineer for the steam- engines, carpenters, porters, etc.; but the actual work of the mills is done by women and children. This the manufacturers deny.

They published last year elaborate tables to prove that machinery does not supersede adult male operatives. According to these tables, rather more than half of all the factory-workers employed, viz., 52 per cent, were females and 48 per cent males, and of these operatives more than half were over eighteen years old. So far, so good. But the manufacturers are very careful not to tell us, how many of the adults were men and how many women. And this is just the point. Besides this, they have evidently counted the mechanics, engineers, carpenters, all the men employed in any way in the factories, perhaps even the clerks, and still they have not the courage to tell the whole truth. These publications teem generally with falsehoods, perversions, crooked statements, with calculations of averages, that prove a great deal for the uninitiated reader and nothing for the initiated, and with suppressions of facts bearing on the most important points; and they prove

only the selfish blindness and want of uprightness of the manufacturers concerned. Let us take some of the statements of a speech with which Lord Ashley introduced the Ten Hours' Bill, March 15th, 1844, into the House of Commons. Here he gives some data as to the relations of sex and age of the operatives, not yet refuted by the manufacturers, whose statements, as quoted above, cover moreover only a part of the manufacturing industry of England. Of 419,590 factory operatives of the British Empire in 1839, 192,887, or nearly half, were under eighteen years of age, and 242,296 of the female sex, of whom 112,192 were less than eighteen years old. There remain, therefore, 80,695 male operatives under eighteen years, and 96,599 adult male operatives, *or not one full quarter of the whole number*. In the cotton factories, 56¼ per cent; in the woolen mills, 69½ per cent; in the silk mills, 70½ per cent; in the flax-spinning mills, 70½ per cent of all operatives are of the female sex. These numbers suffice to prove the crowding out of adult males. But you have only to go into the nearest mill to see the fact confirmed. Hence follows of necessity that inversion of the existing social order which, being forced upon them, has the most ruinous consequences for the workers. The employment of women at once breaks up the family; for when the wife spends twelve or thirteen hours every day in the mill, and the husband works the same length of time there or elsewhere, what becomes of the children? They grow up like wild weeds; they are put out to nurse for a shilling or eighteenpence a week, and how they are treated may be imagined. Hence the accidents to which little children fall victims multiply in the factory districts to a terrible extent. The lists of the Coroner of Manchester ⁷³ showed for nine months: 69 deaths from burning, 56 from drowning, 23 from falling, 67 from other causes, or a total of 215 deaths from accidents,⁷⁴ while in non-manufacturing Liverpool during twelve months there were but 146 fatal accidents. The mining accidents are excluded in both cases; and since the Coroner of Manchester has no authority in Salford, the population of both places mentioned in the comparison is about the same. The *Manchester Guardian* reports one or more deaths by burning in almost every number. That the general mortality among young children must be increased by the employment of the mothers is self-evident, and is placed beyond all doubt by notorious facts. Women often return to the mill three or four days after confinement, leaving the baby, of course; in the dinner-hour they must hurry home to feed the child and eat something, and what sort of suckling that can be is also evident. Lord Ashley repeats the testimony of several workwomen:

"M. H., twenty years old, has two children, the youngest a baby that is tended by the other, a little older. The mother goes to the mill shortly after five o'clock in the morning, and comes home at eight at night; all day the milk pours from her breasts, so that her clothing drips with it." "H. W. has three children, goes away Monday morning at five o'clock, and comes back Saturday evening; has so much to do for the children then that she cannot get to bed before three o'clock in the morning;

often wet through to the skin, and obliged to work in that state." She said: "My breasts have given me the most frightful pain, and I have been dripping wet with milk."

The use of narcotics to keep the children still is fostered by this infamous system, and has reached a great extent in the factory districts. Dr. Johns, Registrar in Chief for Manchester, is of opinion that this custom is the chief source of the many deaths from convulsions. The employment of the wife dissolves the family utterly and of necessity, and this dissolution, in our present society, which is based upon the family, brings the most demoralising consequences for parents as well as children. A mother who has no time to trouble herself about her child, to perform the most ordinary loving services for it during its first year, who scarcely indeed sees it, can be no real mother to the child, must inevitably grow indifferent to it, treat it unlovingly like a stranger. The children who grow up under such conditions are utterly ruined for later family life, can never feel at home in the family which they themselves found, because they have always been accustomed to isolation, and they contribute therefore to the already general undermining of the family in the working-class. A similar dissolution of the family is brought about by the employment of the children. When they get on far enough to earn more than they cost their parents from week to week, they begin to pay the parents a fixed sum for board and lodging, and keep the rest for themselves. This often happens from the fourteenth or fifteenth year. In a word, the children emancipate themselves, and regard the paternal dwelling as a lodging-house, which they often exchange for another, as suits them.

In many cases the family is not wholly dissolved by the employment of the wife, but turned upside down. The wife supports the family, the husband sits at home, tends the children, sweeps the room and cooks. This case happens very frequently; in Manchester alone, many hundred such men could be cited, condemned to domestic occupations. It is easy to imagine the wrath aroused among the working-men by this reversal of all relations within the family, while the other social conditions remain unchanged. There lies before me a letter from an English working-man, Robert Pounder, Baron's Buildings, Woodhouse, Moorside, in Leeds (the bourgeoisie may hunt him up there; I give the exact address for the purpose), written by him to Oastler.

He relates how another working-man, being on tramp, came to St. Helens, in Lancashire, and there looked up an old friend. He found him in a miserable, damp cellar, scarcely furnished.

"And when my poor friend went in, there sat poor Jack near the fire, and what did he, think you? Why he sat and mended his wife's stockings with the bodkin; and as soon as he saw his old friend at the door-post, he tried to hide them. But Joe, that is my friend's name, had seen it, and said: 'Jack, what the devil art thou doing? Where is the missus? Why, is that thy work?' and

poor Jack was ashamed, and said: 'No, I know this is not my work, but my poor missus is i' th' factory; she has to leave at half-past five and works till eight at night, and then she is so knocked up that she cannot do aught when she gets home, so I have to do everything for her what I can, for I have no work, nor had any for more nor three years, and I shall never have any more work while I live,'" and then he wept a big tear. Jack again said: 'There is work enough for women folks and childer hereabouts, but none for men: thou mayest sooner find a hundred pound on the road than work for men – but I should never have believed that either thou or any one else would have seen me mending my wife's stockings, for it is bad work. But she can hardly stand on her feet; I am afraid she will be laid up, and then I don't know what is to become of us, for it's a good bit that she has been the man in the haul and I the woman; it is bad work, Joe,'" and he cried bitterly, and said, 'It has not been always so.' 'No,' said Joe; 'but when thou hadn't no work, how hast thou not shifted 'I'll tell thee, Joe, as well as I can, but it was bad enough; thou knowest when I got married I had work plenty, and thou knows I was not lazy.' 'No, that thou wert not.' 'And we had a good furnished house, and Mary need not go to work. I could work for the two of us; but now the world is upside

down. Mary has to work and I have to stop at home, mind the childer, sweep and wash, bake and mend; and, when the poor woman comes home at night, she is knocked up. Thou knows, Joe, it's hard for one that was used different.' 'Yes, boy, it is hard.' And then Jack began to cry again, and he wished he had never married, and that he had never been born; but he had never thought, when he wed Mary, that it would come to this. 'I have often cried over it,' said Jack. Now when Joe heard this, he told me that he had cursed and damned the factories, and the masters, and the Government, with all the curses that he had learned while he was in the factory from a child."

Can any one imagine a more insane state of things than that described in this letter! And yet this condition, which unsexes the man and takes from the woman all womanliness without being able to bestow upon the man true womanliness, or the woman true manliness – this condition which degrades, in the most shameful way, both sexes, and, through them, Humanity, is the last result of our much-praised civilisation, the final achievement of all the efforts and struggles of hundreds of generations to improve their own situation and that of their posterity. We must either despair of mankind, and its aims and efforts, when we see all our labour and toil result in such a mockery, or we must admit that human society has hitherto sought salvation in a false direction; we must admit that so total a reversal of the position of the sexes can have come to pass only because the sexes have been placed in a false position from the beginning. If the reign of the wife over the husband, as inevitably brought about by the factory system, is inhuman, the pristine rule of the husband over the wife must have been inhuman too. If the wife can now base her supremacy upon the fact that she supplies the greater part, nay, the whole of the common possession, the necessary inference is that this community of possession is no true and rational one, since one member of the family boasts offensively of contributing the greater share. If the family of our present society is being thus dissolved, this dissolution merely shows that, at bottom, the binding tie of this family was not family affection, but private interest lurking under the cloak of a pretended community of possessions.⁷⁵ The same relation exists on the part of those children who support unemployed parents when they do not directly pay board as already referred to. Dr. Hawkins testified in the Factories' Inquiry Commission's Report that this relation is common enough, and in Manchester it is notorious. In this case the children are the masters in the house, as the wife was in the former case, and Lord Ashley gives an example of this in his speech: A man berated his two daughters for going to the public-house, and they answered that they were tired of being

ordered about, saying, "Damn you, we have to keep you." Determined to keep the proceeds of their work for themselves, they left the family dwelling, and abandoned their parents to their fate.

The unmarried women, who have grown up in mills, are no better off than the married ones. It is self-evident that a girl who has worked in a mill from her ninth year is in no position to understand domestic work, whence it follows that female operatives prove wholly inexperienced and unfit as housekeepers. They cannot knit or sew, cook or wash, are unacquainted with the most ordinary duties of a housekeeper, and when they have young children to take care of, have not the vaguest idea how to set about it. The Factories' Inquiry Commission's Report gives dozens of examples of this, and Dr. Hawkins, Commissioner for Lancashire expresses his opinion as follows:

"A girl marries early and recklessly; she has had no time, no means, no opportunities of learning the common duties of domestic life; and even if she had acquired the knowledge she has still no time to practise them... There is the young mother absent from her child above twelve hours daily. Who has the charge of the infant in her absence? Usually some little girl or aged woman, who is hired for a trifle and whose services are equivalent to the reward. Too often the dwelling of the factory family is no home; it sometimes is a cellar, which includes no cooking, no washing, no making, no mending, no decencies of life, no invitations to the fireside. I cannot help on these and on other grounds, especially for the better preservation of infant life, expressing my hope that a period may arrive when married women shall be rarely employed in a factory."

But that is the least of the evil. The moral consequences of the employment of women in factories are even worse. The collecting of persons of both sexes and all ages in a single work-room, the inevitable contact, the crowding into a small space of people, to whom neither mental nor moral education has been given, is not calculated for the favourable development of the female character. The manufacturer, if he pays any attention to the matter, can interfere only when something scandalous actually happens; the permanent, less conspicuous influence of persons of

dissolute character upon the more moral, and especially upon the younger ones, he cannot ascertain, and consequently cannot prevent. But precisely this influence is the injurious. The language used in the mills is characterised by many witnesses in the report of 1833, as "indecent", "bad", "filthy", etc. It is the same process upon a small scale which we have already witnessed upon a large one in the great cities. The centralisation of population has the same influence upon the same persons, whether it affects them in a great city or a small factory. The smaller the mill the closer the packing, and the more unavoidable the contact; and the consequences are not wanting. A witness in Leicester said that he would rather let his daughter beg than go into a factory; that they are perfect gates of hell; that most of the prostitutes of the town had their employment in the mills to thank for their present situation. Another, in Manchester, "did not hesitate to assert that three-fourths of the young factory employees, from fourteen to twenty years of age, were unchaste". Commissioner Cowell expresses it as his opinion, that the morality of the factory operatives is somewhat below the average of that of the working-class in general. And Dr. Hawkins says:

"An estimate of sexual morality is scarcely possible to be reduce into figures; but if I may trust my own observations, and the general opinion of those with whom I have conversed, and the spirit of our evidence, then a most discouraging view of the influence of the factory life upon the morality of female youth obtrudes itself."

It is, besides, a matter of course that factory servitude, like any other, and to an even higher degree, confers the *jus primae noctis* upon the master. In this respect also the employer is sovereign over the persons and charms of his employees. The threat of discharge suffices to overcome all resistance in nine cases out of ten, if not in ninety-nine out of a hundred, in girls who, in any case, have no strong inducements to chastity. If the master is mean enough, and the official report mentions several such cases, his mill is also his harem; and the fact that not all manufacturers use their power, does not in the least change the position of the girls. In the beginning of manufacturing industry, when most of the employers were upstarts without education or consideration for the hypocrisy of society, they let nothing interfere with the exercise of their vested rights.

To form a correct judgment of the influence of factory-work upon the health of the female sex, it is necessary first to consider the work of children, and then the nature of the work itself. From the beginning of manufacturing industry, children have been employed in mills, at first almost exclusively by reason of the smallness of the machines, which were later enlarged. Even children from the workhouses were employed in multitudes, being rented out for a number of years to the manufacturers as apprentices. They were lodged, fed, and clothed in common, and were, of course, completely the slaves of their masters, by whom they were treated with the utmost recklessness and barbarity. As early as 1796, the public objection to this revolting system found such vigorous expression through Dr. Percival and Sir Robert Peel (father of the Cabinet Minister, and himself a cotton manufacturer), that in 1802 Parliament passed an Apprentices' Bill, by which the most crying evils were removed. Gradually the increasing competition of free workpeople crowded out the whole apprentice system; factories were built in cities, machinery

was constructed on a larger scale, and work-rooms were made more airy and wholesome; gradually, too, more work was found for adults and young persons. The number of children in the mills diminished somewhat, and the age at which they began to work rose a little; few children under eight or nine years were now employed. Later, as we shall see, the power of the state intervened several times to protect them from the money-greed of the bourgeoisie.

The great mortality among children of the working-class, and especially among those of the factory operatives, is proof enough of the unwholesome conditions under which they pass their first years. These influences are at work, of course, among the children who survive, but not quite so powerfully as upon those who succumb. The result in the most favourable case is a tendency to disease, or some check in development, and consequent less than normal vigour of the constitution. A nine years old child of a factory operative that has grown up in want, privation, and changing conditions, in cold and damp, with insufficient clothing and unwholesome dwellings, is far from having the working force of a child brought up under healthier conditions. At nine years of age it is sent into the mill to work 6½ hours (formerly 8, earlier still, 12 to 14, even 16 hours) daily, until the thirteenth year; then twelve hours until the eighteenth year. The old enfeebling influences continue, while the work is added to them. It is not to be denied that a child of nine years, even an operative's child, can hold out through 6½ hours' daily work, without any one being able to trace visible bad results in its development directly to this cause; but in no case can its presence in the damp, heavy air of the factory, often at once warm and wet, contribute to good health; and, in any case, it is unpardonable to sacrifice to the greed of an unfeeling bourgeoisie the time of children which should be devoted solely to their physical and mental development, withdraw them from school and the fresh air, in order to wear them for the benefit of the manufacturers. The bourgeoisie says: If we do not employ the children in the mills, they only remain under conditions unfavourable to their development; and this is true on the whole. But what does this mean if it is not a confession that the bourgeoisie first places the children of the working-class under unfavourable conditions, and then exploits these bad conditions for its own benefit, appeals to that which is as much its own fault as the factory system, excuses the sin of today with the sin of yesterday? And if the Factory Act did not in some measure fetter their hands, how this "humane", this "benevolent" bourgeoisie, which has built its factories solely for the good of the working-class, would take care of the interests of these workers! Let us hear how they acted before the factory inspector was at their heels. Their own admitted testimony shall convict them in the Report of the Factories' Inquiry Commission of 1833.

The report of the Central Commission relates that the manufacturers began to employ children rarely of five years, often of six, very often of seven, usually of eight to nine years; that the working-day often lasted fourteen to sixteen hours, exclusive of meals and intervals; that the manufacturers permitted overlookers to flog and maltreat children, and often took an active part in so doing themselves. One case is related of a Scotch manufacturer, who rode after a sixteen years old runaway, forced him to return, running after the employer as fast as the master's horse trotted, and beat him the whole way with a long whip. In the large towns where the operatives resisted more vigorously, such things naturally happened less often. But even this long working-day failed to satisfy the greed of the capitalists. Their aim was to make the capital invested in the building and machinery produce the highest return, by every available means, to make it work as actively as possible. Hence the manufacturers introduced the shameful system of night-work. Some of them employed two sets of operatives, each numerous enough to fill the whole mill, and let one set work the twelve hours of the day, and the other the twelve hours of the night. It is needless to picture the effect upon the frames of young children, and even upon the health of young persons and adults, produced by permanent loss of sleep at night, which cannot be made good by any amount of sleep during the day. Irritation of the whole nervous system, with general lassitude and enfeeblement of the entire frame, were the inevitable results, with the fostering of

temptation to drunkenness and unbridled sexual indulgence. One manufacturer testifies that during the two years in which night-work was carried on in his factory, the number of illegitimate children born was doubled, and such general demoralisation prevailed that he was obliged to give up night-work. Other manufacturers were yet more barbarous, requiring many hands to work thirty to forty hours at a stretch, several times a week, letting them get a couple of hours sleep only, because the night-shift was not complete, but calculated to replace a part of the operatives only.

The reports of the Commission touching this barbarism surpass everything that is known to me in this line. Such infamies, as are here related, are nowhere else to be found – yet we shall see that the bourgeoisie constantly appeals to the testimony of the Commission as being in its own favour. The consequences of these cruelties became evident quickly enough. The Commissioners mention a crowd of cripples who appeared before them, who clearly owed their distortion to the long working-hours. This distortion usually consists of a curving of the spinal column and legs, and is described as follows by Francis Sharp, M.R.C.S., of Leeds:

"Before I came to Leeds, I had never seen the peculiar twisting of the ends of the lower part of the thigh bone. At first I considered it might be rickets, but from the numbers which presented themselves, particularly at an age beyond the time when rickets attack children (between 8 and 14), and finding that they had commenced since they began work at the factory I soon began to change my opinion. I now may have seen of such cases nearly 100, and I can most decidedly state they were the result of too much labour. So far as I know they all belong to factories, and have attributed their disease to this cause themselves." "Of distortions of the spine, which were evidently owing to the long standing at their labour, perhaps the number of cases might not be less than 300."

Precisely similar is the testimony of Dr. Hey, for eighteen years physician in the hospital in Leeds:

"Diseases of the spine amongst people employed in factories presented

themselves very frequently. Some were the result of pure labour; others were the result of labour on a constitution perhaps congenitally weak, or rendered feeble by bad food. The deformities of the limbs appear to be more frequent than the spinal diseases... the bending in of the knees, relaxation of the ligaments of the ankles was very frequent, and the bending of the large bones. The heads of the large bones have especially been increased and twisted to a considerable extent; and these cases I have found to have come from those mills and factories where long hours have been said to be common."

Surgeons Beaumont and Sharp, of Bradford, bear the same testimony. The reports of Drinkwater, Power, and Dr. Loudon contain a multitude of examples of such distortions, and those of Tufnell and Sir David Barry, which are less directed to this point, give single examples. The Commissioners for Lancashire, Cowell, Tufnell, and Hawkins, have almost wholly neglected this aspect of the physiological results of the factory system, though this district rivals Yorkshire in the number of cripples. I have seldom traversed Manchester without meeting three or four of them, suffering from precisely the same distortions of the spinal columns and legs as that described, and I have often been able to observe them closely. I know one personally who corresponds exactly with the foregoing description of Dr. Hey, and who got into this condition in Mr. Douglas' factory in Pendleton, an establishment which enjoys an unenviable notoriety among the operatives by reason of the former long working periods continued night after night. It is evident, at a glance, whence the distortions of these cripples come; they all look exactly alike. The knees are bent inward and backwards, the ankles deformed and thick, and the spinal column often bent forwards or to one side. But the crown belongs to the philanthropic manufacturers of the Macclesfield silk district. They employed the youngest children of all, even from five to six years of age. In the supplementary testimony of Commissioner Tufnell, I find the statement of a certain factory manager Wright, both of whose sisters were most shamefully crippled, and who had once counted the cripples in several streets, some of them the cleanest and neatest streets of Macclesfield. He found in Townley Street ten, George Street five, Charlotte Street four, Watercots fifteen, Bank Top three, Lord Street seven, Mill Lane twelve, Great George Street two, in the workhouse two, Park Green one, Peckford Street two, whose families all unanimously declared that the cripples had become such in consequence of overwork in the silk-twisting mills. One boy is mentioned so crippled as not to be able to go upstairs, and girls deformed in back and hips.

Other deformities also have proceeded from this overwork, especially flattening of the foot, which Sir D. Barry frequently observed, as did the physicians and surgeons in Leeds. In cases, in

which a stronger constitution, better food, and other more favourable circumstances enabled the young operative to resist this effect of a barbarous exploitation, we find, at least, pain in the back, hips, and legs, swollen joints, varicose veins, and large, persistent ulcers in the thighs and calves. These affections are almost universal among the operatives. The reports of Stuart, Mackintosh, and Sir D. Barry contain hundreds of examples; indeed, they know almost no operative who did not suffer from some of these affections; and in the remaining reports, the occurrence of the same phenomena is attested by many physicians.

The reports covering Scotland place it beyond all doubt, that a working-day of thirteen hours, even for men and women from eighteen to twenty-two years of age, produces at least these consequences, both in the flax-spinning mills of Dundee and Dunfermline, and in the cotton mills of Glasgow and Lanark.

All these affections are easily explained by the nature of factory-work, which is, as the manufacturers say, very "light", and precisely by reason of its lightness, more enervating than any other. The operatives have little to do, but must stand the whole time. Any one who sits down, say upon a window-ledge or a basket, is fined, and this perpetual upright position, this constant mechanical pressure of the upper portions of the body upon spinal column, hips, and legs, inevitably produces the results mentioned. This standing is not required by the work itself, and at Nottingham chairs have been introduced, with the result that these affections disappeared, and the operatives ceased to object to the length of the working-day. But in a factory where the operative works solely for the bourgeois, and has small interest in doing his work well, he would probably use the seats more than would be agreeable and profitable to the manufacturer; and in order that somewhat less raw material may be spoiled for the bourgeois, the operative must sacrifice health and strength. This long protracted upright position, with the bad atmosphere prevalent in the mills, entails, besides the deformities mentioned, a marked relaxation of all vital energies, and, in consequence, all sorts of other affections general rather than local. The atmosphere of the factories is, as a rule, at once damp and warm, usually warmer than is necessary, and, when the ventilation is not *very* good, impure, heavy, deficient in oxygen, filled with dust and the smell of the machine oil, which almost everywhere smears the floor, sinks into it, and becomes rancid. The operatives are lightly clad by reason of the warmth, and would readily take cold in case of irregularity of the temperature; a draught is distasteful to them, the general enervation which gradually takes possession of all the physical functions diminishes the animal warmth: this must be replaced from without, and nothing is therefore more agreeable to the operative than to have all the doors and windows closed, and to stay in his warm factory air. Then comes the sudden change of temperature on going out into the cold and wet or frosty atmosphere, without the means of protection from the rain, or of changing wet clothing for dry, a circumstance which perpetually produces colds. And when one reflects that, with all this, not one single muscle of the body is really exercised, really called into activity, except perhaps those of the legs; that nothing whatsoever counteracts the enervating, relaxing tendency of all these conditions; that every influence is wanting which might give the muscles strength, the fibres elasticity and consistency; that from youth up, the operative is deprived of all fresh-air recreation, it is impossible to wonder at the almost unanimous testimony of the physicians in the Factories' Report, that they find a great lack of ability to resist disease, a general depression in vital activity, a constant relaxation of the mental and physical powers. Let us hear Sir D. Barry first:

The unfavourable influences of mill-work upon the hands are the following:”(1) The indispensable necessity of forcing both their mental

and bodily exertions to keep exact pace with the motions of machinery propelled by an unvarying, unceasing power. (2) The continuance of an erect posture for periods unnaturally prolonged and too quickly repeated. (3) The privation of sleep" (in consequence of too long working-hours, pain in the legs, and general physical derangement).”To these causes are often added low, crowded, dusty, or damp rooms; impure air, heated atmospheres, constant perspiration. Hence it is that male children particularly, after they have worked some time in mills lose – with very few exceptions indeed – the rosy chubbiness of boyhood, and become paler and thinner than boys not so employed generally are. Even the draw-boy who stands with his bare feet on the earthen floor of his master’s shop preserves his appearance much better than the mill-boys,” because he occasionally goes into the fresh air for a time.”But the mill-worker never has a moment’s respite except at meals, and never gets into the open air except when he is going to look for them. All the adult male spinners are pale and thin; they are subject to capricious appetite and dyspepsia; all the spinners have been brought up in the mills from their very childhood, it is fair to conclude that their mode of life is not favourable to the development of the manly forms, seeing

that few, or none of them are tall athletic men. Females are much less deteriorated in their appearance by mill-work than males." (Very naturally. But we shall see that they have their own diseases.)

So, too, Power:

"I can have no hesitation in stating my belief that a large mass of deformity has been produced at Bradford by the factory system.... The effect of long and continuous work upon the frame and limbs is not indicated by actual deformity alone; a more common indication of it is found in a stunted growth, relaxed muscles, and slender conformation."

So, too, F. Sharp, in Leeds, the surgeon ⁷⁶ already quoted:

When I moved from Scarborough to Leeds,"the general appearance of the children in Leeds immediately struck me as much more pallid, and also the firmness of the fibre as much inferior as what I had seen in Scarborough and the adjacent country. Observed also many to be more diminutive for their age.... Innumerable cases of scrofula, affections of the lungs, mesenteric diseases, and dyspepsia, have also occurred, which I have no doubt, as a professional man, were owing to the same cause", the mill-work."The nervous energy of the body I consider to be weakened by the very long hours, and a foundation laid for many diseases. Were it not for the individuals who join the mills from the

country, the factory people would soon be deteriorated."

So, too, Beaumont, surgeon in Bradford:

"I also consider the system of working in the factories in and around here induces for the most part a peculiar laxity of the whole system, rendering the children highly susceptible of either prevailing epidemics or casual medical disorders.... I certainly consider the want of wholesome regulations in the most of the factories, whether as to ventilation or cleanliness, to be productive in a great measure of that peculiar tendency or susceptibility of morbid affections of which my own practice affords ample experience."

Similar testimony is borne by Dr. Hey[Not Hey, but William Sharp Jr (per "Factories Inquiry Commission", Second Report, 1833, C. 3, p. 23)]:

(1)"I have had an opportunity of observing the effect of the factory system in the health of children under the most advantageous circumstances" (in Wood's mill, in Bradford, the best arranged of the district, in which he was factory surgeon). (2)"This effect is decidedly. and, to a great extent, injurious, even under those favourable circumstances. (3) During the year 1832, three-fifths of all the children employed in Wood's mill had medical assistance from me; (4) The most injurious effect is not in the prevalency of deformed bodies, but debilitated and diseased constitutions," (3) All this is greatly

improved since the working-hours of children have been reduced at Wood's to ten.

The Commissioner, Dr. Loudon himself, who cites these witnesses, says:

"I think it has been clearly proved that children have been worked a most unreasonable and cruel length of time daily, and that even adults have been expected to do a certain quantity of labour which scarcely any human being is able to endure. The result of this has been, that many have met with a premature death; many have been affected constitutionally for life; and the idea of a posterity being injured from the shattered frames of the survivors is, physiologically speaking, but too well founded."

And, finally, Dr. Hawkins, in speaking of Manchester:

"I believe that most travellers are struck by the lowness of stature, the leanness, and the paleness which present themselves so commonly to the eye at Manchester, and above all, among the factory classes. I have never been in any town in Great Britain nor in Europe in which degeneracy of form and colour from the national standard has been so obvious. The married women fall remarkably short of the usual characteristics of the English wife.... I cannot help remarking, that the boys and girls whom I examined from the Manchester factories very generally exhibited a depressed look, and a pallid

complexion; none of the alacrity, activity, and hilarity of early life shone on their countenances and gestures. A large number of both, in reply to my questions, declared that they had no wish to play about on the Saturday afternoon and on the Sunday, but that they preferred remaining quiet."

I add, at once, another passage of Hawkins' report, which only half belongs here, but may be quoted here as well as anywhere else:

"Intemperance, debauchery and improvidence are the chief blemishes on the character of the factory workpeople, and those evils may easily be traced to habits formed under the present system, and springing from it almost inevitably. On all sides it is admitted that indigestion, hypochondriasis and languor affect this class of the population very widely. After twelve hours of monotonous labour, it is but too natural to seek for stimulants of one kind or another; but when we superadd the morbid states above alluded to, the transition to spirits is rapid and perpetual."

For all this testimony of the physicians and commissioners, the report itself offers hundreds of cases of proof. That the growth of young operatives is stunted, by their work, hundreds of statements testify; among others, Cowell gives the weight of 46 youths of 17 years of age, from one Sunday school, of whom 26 employed in mills, averaged 104.5 pounds, and 20 not employed in mills, 117.7 pounds. One of the largest manufacturers of Manchester, leader of the opposition against the working-men, I think Robert Hyde Greg himself, said, on one occasion, that if things went on as at present, the operatives of Lancashire would soon be a race of pygmies. A recruiting officer testified that operatives are little adapted for military service, looked thin and nervous, and were frequently rejected by the surgeons as unfit. In Manchester he could hardly get men of five feet eight inches; they were usually only five feet six to seven, whereas in the agricultural districts, most of the recruits were five feet eight.

The men wear out very early in consequence of the conditions under which they live and work. Most of them are unfit for work at forty years, a few hold out to forty-five, almost none to fifty years of age. This is caused not only by the general enfeeblement of the frame, but also very often by a failure of the sight, which is a result of mule-spinning, in which the operative is obliged to fix his gaze upon a long row of fine, parallel threads, and so greatly to, strain the sight.

Of 1,600 operatives employed in several factories in Harpur and Lanark, but 10 were over 45 years of age; of 22,094 operatives in diverse factories in Stockport and Manchester, but 145 were over 45 years old. Of these 143, 16 were retained as a special favour, and one was doing the work of a child. A list of 131 spinners contained but seven over 45 years, and yet the whole 131 were rejected by the manufacturers, to whom they applied for work, as "too old," and were without means of support by reason of old age! Mr. Ashworth, a large manufacturer, admits in a letter to Lord Ashley, that, towards the fortieth year, the spinners can no longer prepare the required quantity of yarn, and are therefore 'sometimes' discharged; he calls operatives forty years of age "old people"! Commissioner Mackintosh expresses himself in the same way in the report of 1833:

"Although prepared by seeing childhood occupied in such a manner, it is very difficult to believe the age of the men advanced in years as given by themselves, so complete is their premature old age."

Surgeon Smellie of Glasgow, who treated operatives chiefly, says that forty years is old age for them. And similar evidence may be found elsewhere. In Manchester, this premature old age among the operatives is so universal that almost every man of forty would be taken for ten to fifteen years older, while the prosperous classes, men as well as women, preserve their appearance exceedingly well if they do not drink too heavily.

The influence of factory-work upon the female physique also is marked and peculiar. The deformities entailed by long hours of work are much more serious among women. Protracted work frequently causes deformities of the pelvis, partly in the shape of abnormal position and development of the hip bones, partly of malformation of the lower portion of the spinal column,

"Although," says Dr. Loudon in his report, "no cases presented themselves of deformed pelvis, and some others of the diseases which have been described, yet their ailments are such as every medical man must expect to be the probable consequences" of such working-hours for young people," and they are recorded by men of the highest professional and moral character".

That factory operatives undergo more difficult confinement than other women is testified to by several midwives and accoucheurs, and also that they are more liable to miscarriage. Moreover, they suffer from the general enfeeblement common to all operatives, and, when pregnant, continue to work in the factory up to the hour of delivery, because otherwise they lose their wages and are made to fear that they may be replaced if they stop away too soon. It frequently happens that women are at work one evening and delivered the next morning, and the case is none too rare of their being delivered in the factory among the machinery. And if the gentlemen of the bourgeoisie find nothing particularly shocking in this, their wives will perhaps admit that it is a piece of cruelty, an infamous act of barbarism, indirectly to force a pregnant woman to work twelve or thirteen hours daily (formerly still longer), up to the day of her delivery; in a standing position, with frequent stoopings. But this is not all. If these women are not obliged to resume work within two weeks, they are thankful, and count themselves fortunate. Many come back to the factory after eight, and even after three to four days, to resume full work. I once heard a manufacturer ask an overlooker; "Is so and so not back yet?" "No." "How long since she was confined?" "A week." "She might surely have been back long ago. That one over there only stays three days." Naturally, fear of being discharged, dread of starvation drives her to the factory in spite of her weakness, in defiance of her pain. The interest of the manufacturer will not brook that his employees stay at home by reason of illness; they must not be ill, they must not venture to lie still through a long confinement, or he must stop his machinery or trouble his supreme head with a temporary change of arrangements; and rather than do this, he discharges his people when they begin to be ill. Listen:

A girl feels very ill, can scarcely do her work." "Why don't you ask for leave to stay away?" "Well, sir, the master is queer at letting us off; if we are off a quarter of a day we stand a chance of being turned away."

Or Sir D. Barry:

Thomas McDurt, workman, has slight fever." "Cannot venture to be off work more than four days, for fear of losing his work."

And so it goes on in almost all the factories. The employment of young girls produces all sorts of irregularities during the period of development. In some, especially those who are better fed, the heat of the factories hastens this process, so that in single cases, girls of thirteen and fourteen are wholly mature. Roberton, whom I have already cited (mentioned in the Factories' Inquiry Commission's Report as the "eminent" gynaecologist of Manchester), relates in the *North of England Medical and Surgical Journal*, that he had seen a girl of eleven years who was not only a wholly developed woman, but pregnant, and that it was by no means rare in Manchester for women to be confined at fifteen years of age). In such cases, the influence of the warmth of the factories is the same as that of a tropical climate, and, as in such climates, the abnormally early development revenges itself by correspondingly premature age and debility. On the other hand, retarded development of the female constitution occurs, the breasts mature late or not at all. Menstruation first appears in the seventeenth or eighteenth, sometimes in the twentieth year, and

is often wholly wanting. Irregular menstruation, coupled with great pain and numerous affections, especially with anaemia, is very frequent, as the medical reports unanimously state.

Children of such mothers, particularly of those who are obliged to work during pregnancy, cannot be vigorous. They are, on the contrary, described in the report, especially in Manchester, as very feeble; and Barry alone asserts that they are healthy, but says further, that in Scotland, where his inspection lay, almost no married women worked in factories. Moreover, most of the factories there are in the country (with the exception of Glasgow), a circumstance which contributes greatly to the invigoration of the children. The operatives' children in the neighbourhood of Manchester are nearly all thriving and rosy, while those within the city look pale and scrofulous; but with the ninth year the colour vanishes suddenly, because all are then sent into the factories, when it soon becomes impossible to distinguish the country from the city children.

But besides all this, there are some branches of factory-work which have an especially injurious effect. In many rooms of the cotton and flax-spinning mills, the air is filled with fibrous dust, which produces chest affections, especially among workers in the carding and combing-rooms. Some constitutions can bear it, some cannot; but the operative has no choice. He must take the room in which he finds work, whether his chest is sound or not. The most common effects of this breathing of dust are blood-spitting, hard, noisy breathing, pains in the chest, coughs, sleeplessness – in short, all the symptoms of asthma ending in the worst cases in consumption. Especially unwholesome is the wet spinning of linen-yarn which is carried on by young girls and boys. The water spurts over them from the spindle, so that the front of their clothing is constantly wet through to the skin; and there is always water standing on the floor. This is the case to a less degree in the doubling-rooms of the cotton mills, and the result is a constant succession of colds and affections of the chest. A hoarse, rough voice is common to all operatives, but especially to wet spinners and doublers. Stuart, Mackintosh, and Sir D. Barry express themselves in the most vigorous terms as to the unwholesomeness of this work, and the small consideration shown by most of the manufacturers for the health of the girls who do it. Another effect of flax-spinning is a peculiar deformity of the shoulder, especially a projection of the right shoulder-blade, consequent upon the nature of the work. This sort of spinning and the throstle-spinning of cotton frequently produce diseases of the knee-pan, which is used to check the spindle during the joining of broken threads. The frequent stooping and the bending to the low machines common to both these branches of work have, in general, a stunting effect upon the growth of the operative. In the throstle-room of the cotton mill at Manchester, in which I was employed, I do not remember to have seen one single tall, well-built girl; they were all short, dumpy, and badly-formed, decidedly ugly in the whole development of the figure. But apart from all these diseases and malformations, the limbs of the operatives suffer in still another way. The work between the machinery gives rise to multitudes of accidents of more or less serious nature, which have for the operative the secondary effect of unfitting him for his work more or less completely. The most common accident is the squeezing off of a single joint of a finger, somewhat less common the loss of the whole finger, half or a whole hand, an arm, etc., in the machinery. Lockjaw very often follows, even upon the lesser among these injuries, and brings death with it. Besides the deformed persons, a great number of maimed ones may be seen going about in Manchester; this one has lost an arm or a part of one, that one a foot, the third half a leg; it is like living in the midst of an army just returned from a campaign. But the most dangerous portion of the machinery is the strapping which conveys motive power from the shaft to the separate machines, especially if it contains buckles, which, however, are rarely used now. Whoever is seized by the strap is carried up with lightning speed, thrown against the ceiling above and floor below with such force that there is rarely a whole bone left in the body, and death follows instantly. Between June 12th and August 3rd, 1844, the *Manchester Guardian* reported the following serious accidents (the trifling ones it does not notice): June 12th, a boy died in Manchester of lockjaw, caused by his hand

being crushed between wheels. June 15th, a youth in Saddleworth seized by a wheel and carried away with it; died, utterly mangled. June 29th, a young man at Green Acres Moor, near Manchester, at work in a machine shop, fell under the grindstone, which broke two of his ribs and lacerated him terribly. July 24th, a girl in Oldham died, carried around fifty times by a strap; no bone unbroken. July 27th, a girl in Manchester seized by the blower (the first machine that receives the raw cotton), and died of injuries received. August 3rd, a bobbins turner died in Dukenfield, caught in a strap, every rib broken. In the year 1842, the Manchester Infirmary treated 962 cases of wounds and mutilations caused by machinery, while the number of all other accidents within the district of the hospital was 2,426, so that for five accidents from all other causes, two were caused by machinery. The accidents which happened in Salford are not included here, nor those treated by surgeons in private practice. In such cases, whether or not the accident unfits the victim for further work, the employer, at best, pays the doctor, or, in very exceptional cases, he may pay wages during treatment; what becomes of the operative afterwards, in case he cannot work, is no concern of the employer.

The Factory Report says on this subject, that employers must be made responsible for all cases, since children cannot take care, and adults will take care in their own interest. But the gentlemen who write the report are bourgeois, and so they must contradict themselves and bring up later all sorts of bosh on the subject of the culpable temerity of the operatives.

The state of the case is this: If children cannot take care, the employment of children must be forbidden. If adults are reckless, they must be mere overgrown children on a plane of intelligence which does not enable them to appreciate the danger in its full scope; and who is to blame for this but the bourgeoisie which keeps them in a condition in which their intelligence cannot develop? Or the machinery is ill-arranged, and must be surrounded with fencing, to supply which falls to the share of the bourgeoisie. Or the operative is under inducements which outweigh the threatened danger; he must work rapidly to earn his wages, has no time to take care, and for this, too, the bourgeoisie is to blame. Many accidents happen, for instance, while the operatives are cleaning machinery in motion. Why? Because the bourgeois would otherwise oblige the worker to clean the machinery during the free hours while it is not going, and the worker naturally is not disposed to sacrifice any part of his free time. Every free hour is so precious to the worker that he often risks his life twice a week rather than sacrifice one of them to the bourgeois. Let the employer take from working-hours the time required for cleaning the machinery, and it will never again occur to an operative to clean machinery in motion. In short, from whatever point of view, the blame falls ultimately on the manufacturer, and of him should be required, at the very least, life-long support of the incapacitated operative, and support of the victim's family in case death follows the accident. In the earliest period of manufacture, the accidents were much more numerous in proportion than now, for the machinery was inferior, smaller, more crowded, and almost never fenced. But the number is still large enough, as the foregoing cases prove, to arouse the grave question as to a state of things which permits so many deformities and mutilations for the benefit of a single class, and plunges so many industrious working-people into want and starvation by reason of injuries undergone in the service and through the fault of the bourgeoisie.

A pretty list of diseases engendered purely by the hateful money-greed of the manufacturers! Women made unfit for child-bearing, children deformed, men enfeebled, limbs crushed, whole generations wrecked, afflicted with disease and infirmity, purely to fill the purses of the bourgeoisie. And when one reads of the barbarism of single cases, how children are seized naked in bed by the overlookers, and driven with blows and kicks to the factory, their clothing over their arms, how their sleepiness is driven off with blows, how they fall asleep over their work nevertheless, how one poor child sprang up, still asleep, at the call of the overlooker, and mechanically went through the operations of its work after its machine was stopped; when one reads how children, too tired to go home, hide away in the wool in the drying-room to sleep there,

and could only be driven out of the factory with straps; how many hundreds came home so tired every night, that they could eat no supper for sleepiness and want of appetite, that their parents found them kneeling by the bedside, where they had fallen asleep during their prayers; when one reads all this and a hundred other villainies and infamies in this one report, all testified to on oath, confirmed by several witnesses, deposed by men whom the commissioners themselves declare trustworthy; when one reflects that this is a Liberal report, a bourgeois report, made for the purpose of reversing the previous Tory report, and rehabilitating the pureness of heart of the manufacturers, that the commissioners themselves are on the side of the bourgeoisie, and report all these things against their own will, how can one be otherwise than filled with wrath and resentment against a class which boasts of philanthropy and self-sacrifice, while its one object is to fill its purse *a tout prix*? Meanwhile, let us listen to the bourgeoisie speaking through the mouth of its chosen apostle, Dr. Ure, who relates in his *Philosophy of Manufactures* that the workers have been told that their wages bore no proportion to their sacrifices, the good understanding between masters and men being thus disturbed. Instead of this, the working-men should have striven to recommend themselves by attention and industry, and should have rejoiced in the prosperity of their masters. They would then become overseers, superintendents, and finally partners, and would thus – (Oh! Wisdom, thou speakest as the dove!) –”have increased at the same time the demand for their companions’ labour in the market!”

"Had it not been for the violent collisions and interruptions resulting from erroneous views among the operatives, the factory system would have been developed still more rapidly and beneficially."

Hereupon follows a long Jeremiad upon the spirit of resistance of the operatives, and on the occasion of a strike of the best-paid workers, the fine spinners, the following naive observation:

"In fact, it was their high wages which enabled them to maintain a stipendiary committee in affluence, and to pamper themselves into nervous ailments, by a diet too rich and exciting for their indoor employments."

Let us hear how the bourgeois describes the work of children:

"I have visited many factories, both in Manchester and in the surrounding districts, during a period of several months, entering the spinning-rooms unexpectedly, and often alone, at different times of the day, and I never saw a single instance of corporal

chastisement inflicted on a child; nor, indeed, did I ever see children in ill-humour. They seemed to be always cheerful and alert; taking pleasure in the light play of their muscles, enjoying the mobility natural to their age. The scene of industry, so far from exciting sad emotions, in my mind, was always exhilarating. It was delightful to observe the nimbleness with which they pieced broken ends, as the mule carriage began to recede from the fixed roller beam, and to see them at leisure, after a few seconds' exercise of their tiny fingers, to amuse themselves in any attitude they chose, till the stretch and winding on were once more completed. The work of these lively elves seemed to resemble a sport, in which habit gave them a pleasing dexterity. Conscious of their skill, they were delighted to show it off to any stranger. As to exhaustion by the day's work, they evinced no trace of it on emerging from the mill in the evening; for they immediately began to skip about any neighbouring playground, and to commence their little games with the same alacrity as boys issuing from a school."

Naturally! As though the immediate movement of every muscle were not an urgent necessity for frames grown at once stiff and relaxed! But Ure should have waited to see whether this momentary excitement had not subsided after a couple of minutes. And besides, Ure could see this whole performance only in the afternoon after five or six hours' work, but not in the evening! As to the health of the operatives, the bourgeois has the boundless impudence to cite the report of 1833 just quoted in a thousand places, as testimony for the excellent health of these people; to try to prove by detached and garbled quotations that no trace of scrofula can be found among them, and, what is quite true, that the factory system frees them from all acute diseases (that they have

every variety of chronic affection instead he naturally conceals). To explain the impudence with which our friend Ure palms off the grossest falsehoods upon the English public, it must be known that the report consists of three large folio volumes, which it never occurs to a well-fed English bourgeois to study through. Let us hear further how he expresses himself as to the Factory Act of 1833, passed by the Liberal bourgeoisie, and imposing only the most meagre limitations upon the manufacturers, as we shall see. This law, especially its compulsory education clause, he calls an absurd and despotic measure directed against the manufacturers, through which all children under twelve years of age have been thrown out of employment; and with what results? The children thus discharged from their light and useful occupation receive no education whatsoever; cast out from the warm spinning-room into a cold world, they subsist only by begging and stealing, a life in sad contrast with their steadily improving condition in the factory and in Sunday school. Under the mask of philanthropy, this law intensifies the sufferings of the poor, and will greatly restrict the conscientious manufacturer in his useful work, if, indeed, it does not wholly stop him.

The ruinous influence of the factory system began at an early day to attract general attention. We have already alluded to the Apprentices' Act of 1802. Later, towards 1817, Robert Owen, then a manufacturer in New Lanark, in Scotland, afterwards founder of English Socialism, began to call the attention of the Government, by memorials and petitions, to the necessity of legislative guarantees for the health of the operatives, and especially of children. The late Sir Robert Peel and other philanthropists united with him, and gradually secured the Factory Acts of 1819, 1825, and 1831, of which the first two were never enforced, and the last only here and there. This law of 1831, based upon the motion of Sir J. C. Hobhouse, provided that in cotton mills no one under twenty-one should be employed between half-past seven at night and half-past five in the morning; and that in all factories young persons under eighteen should work no longer than twelve hours daily, and nine hours on Saturday. But since operatives could not testify against their masters without being discharged, this law helped matters very little. In the great cities, where the operatives were more restive, the larger manufacturers came to an agreement among themselves to obey the law; but even there, there were many who, like the employers in the country, did not trouble themselves about it. Meanwhile, the demand for a ten hours' law had become lively among the operatives; that is, for a law which should forbid all operatives under eighteen years of age to work longer than ten hours daily; the Trades Unions, by their agitation, made this demand general throughout the manufacturing population; the philanthropic section of the Tory party, then led by Michael Sadler, seized upon the plan, and brought it before Parliament. Sadler obtained a parliamentary committee for the investigation of the factory system, and this committee reported in 1832. Its report was emphatically partisan, composed by strong enemies of the factory system, for party ends. Sadler permitted himself to be betrayed by his noble enthusiasm into the most distorted and erroneous statements, drew from his witnesses by the very form of his questions, answers which contained the truth, but truth in a perverted form. The manufacturers themselves, incensed at a report which represented them as monsters, now demanded an official investigation; they knew that an exact report must, in this case, be advantageous to them; they knew that Whigs, genuine bourgeois, were at the helm, with whom they were upon good terms, whose principles were opposed to any restriction upon manufacture. They obtained a commission, in due order, composed of Liberal bourgeois, whose report I have so often cited. This comes somewhat nearer the truth than Sadler's, but its deviations therefrom are in the opposite direction. On every page it betrays sympathy with the manufacturers, distrust of the Sadler report, repugnance to the working-men agitating independently and the supporters of the Ten Hours' Bill. It nowhere recognises the right of the working-man to a life worthy of a human being, to independent activity, and opinions of his own. It reproaches the operatives that in sustaining the Ten Hours' Bill they thought, not of the children only, but of themselves as well; it calls the working-men engaged in the agitation demagogues, ill-intentioned, malicious, etc., is

written, in short, on the side of the bourgeoisie; and still it cannot whitewash the manufacturers, and still it leaves such a mass of infamies upon the shoulders of the employers, that even after this report, the agitation for the Ten Hours' Bill, the hatred against the manufacturers, and the committee's severest epithets applied to them are all fully justified. But there was the one difference, that whereas the Sadler report accuses the manufacturers of open, undisguised brutality, it now became evident that this brutality was chiefly carried on under the mask of civilisation and humanity. Yet Dr. Hawkins, the medical commissioner for Lancashire, expresses himself decidedly in favour of the Ten Hours' Bill in the opening lines of his report, and Commissioner Mackintosh explains that his own report does not contain the whole truth, because it is very difficult to induce the operatives to testify against their employers, and because the manufacturers, besides being forced into greater concessions towards their operatives by the excitement among the latter, are often prepared for the inspection of the factories, have them swept, the speed of the machinery reduced, etc. In Lancashire especially they resorted to the device of bringing the overlookers of work-rooms before the commissioners, and letting them testify as working-men to the humanity of the employers, the wholesome effects of the work, and the indifference, if not the hostility of the operatives, towards the Ten Hours' Bill. But these are not genuine working-men; they are deserters from their class, who have entered the service of the bourgeoisie for better pay, and fight in the interests of the capitalists against the workers. Their interest is that of the capitalists, and they are, therefore, almost more hated by the workers than the manufacturers themselves.

And yet this report suffices wholly to exhibit the most shameful recklessness of the manufacturing bourgeoisie towards its employees, the whole infamy of the industrial exploiting system in its full inhumanity. Nothing is more revolting than to compare the long register of diseases and deformities engendered by overwork, in this report, with the cold, calculating political economy of the manufacturers, by which they try to prove that they, and with them all England, must go to ruin, if they should be forbidden to cripple so and so many children every year. The language of Dr. Ure alone, which I have quoted, would be yet more revolting if it were not so preposterous.

The result of this report was the Factory Act of 1833, which forbade the employment of children under nine years of age (except in silk mills), limited the working-hours of children between 9-13 years to 48 per week, or 9 hours in any one day at the utmost; that of young persons from 14-18 years of age to 69 per week, or 12 on any one day as the maximum, provided for an hour and a half as the minimum interval for meals, and repeated the total prohibition of night-work for persons under eighteen years of age. Compulsory school attendance two hours daily was prescribed for all children under fourteen years, and the manufacturer declared punishable in case of employing children without a certificate of age from the factory surgeon, and a certificate of school attendance from the teacher. As recompense, the employer was permitted to withdraw one penny from the child's weekly earnings to pay the teacher. Further, surgeons and inspectors were appointed to visit the factories at all times, take testimony of operatives on oath, and enforce the law by prosecution before a Justice of the Peace. This is the law against which Dr. Ure inveighs in such unmeasured terms!

The consequence of this law, and especially of the appointment of inspectors, was the reduction of working-hours to an average of twelve to thirteen, and the superseding of children as far as possible. Hereupon some of the most crying evils disappeared almost wholly. Deformities arose now only in cases of weak constitution, and the effects of overwork became much less conspicuous. Nevertheless, enough testimony remains to be found in the Factory Report, that the lesser evils, swelling of the ankles, weakness and pain in the legs, hips, and back, varicose veins, ulcers on the lower extremities, general weakness, especially of the pelvic region, nausea, want of appetite alternating with unnatural hunger, indigestion, hypochondria, affections of the chest in

consequence of the dust and foul atmosphere of the factories, etc., etc., all occur among employees subject to the provisions of Sir J. C. Hobhouse's Law (of 1831), which prescribes twelve to thirteen hours as the maximum. The reports from Glasgow and Manchester are especially worthy of attention in this respect. These evils remained too, after the law of 1833, and continue to undermine the health of the working-class to this day. Care has been taken to give the brutal profit-greed of the bourgeoisie a hypocritical, civilised form, to restrain the manufacturers through the arm of the law from too conspicuous villainies, and thus to give them a pretext for self-complacently parading their sham philanthropy. That is all. If a new commission were appointed today, it would find things pretty much as before. As to the extemporised compulsory attendance at school, it remained wholly a dead letter, since the Government failed to provide good schools. The manufacturers employed as teachers worn-out operatives, to whom they sent the children two hours daily, thus complying with the letter of the law; but the children learned nothing. And even the reports of the factory inspectors, which are limited to the scope of the inspector's duties, i.e., the enforcement of the Factory Act, give data enough to justify the conclusion that the old evils inevitably remain. Inspectors Horner and Saunders, in their reports for October and December, 1843, state that, in a number of branches in which the employment of children can be dispensed with or superseded by that of adults, the working-day is still fourteen to sixteen hours, or even longer. Among the operatives in these branches they found numbers of young people who had just outgrown the provisions of the law. Many employers disregard the law, shorten the meal times, work children longer than is permitted, and risk prosecution, knowing that the possible fines are trifling in comparison with the certain profits derivable from the offence. Just at present especially, while business is exceptionally brisk, they are under great temptation in this respect.

Meanwhile the agitation for the Ten Hours' Bill by no means died out among the operatives; in 1839 it was under full headway once more, and Sadler's place, he having died, was filled in the House of Commons by Lord Ashley and Richard Oastler, both Tories. Oastler especially, who carried on a constant agitation in the factory districts, and had been active in the same way during Sadler's life, was the particular favourite of the working-men. They called him their "good old king", "the king of the factory children", and there is not a child in the factory districts that does not know and revere him, that does not join the procession which moves to welcome him when he enters a town. Oastler vigorously opposed the New Poor Law also, and was therefore imprisoned for debt by a Mr. Thornhill, on whose estate he was employed as agent, and to whom he owed money. The Whigs offered repeatedly to pay his debt and confer other favours upon him if he would only give up his agitation against the Poor Law. But in vain; he remained in prison, whence he published his Fleet Papers against the factory system and the Poor Law.

The Tory Government of 1841 turned its attention once more to the Factory Acts. The Home Secretary, Sir James Graham, proposed, in 1845, a bill restricting the working-hours of children to six and one-half, and making the enactments for compulsory school attendance more effective, the principal point in this connection being a provision for better schools. This bill was, however, wrecked by the jealousy of the dissenters; for, although compulsory religious instruction was not extended to the children of dissenters, the schools provided for were to be placed under the general supervision of the Established Church, and the Bible made the general reading-book, religion being thus made the foundation of all instruction, whence the dissenters felt themselves threatened. The manufacturers and the Liberals generally united with them, the working-men were divided by the Church question, and therefore inactive. The opponents of the bill, though outweighed in the great manufacturing towns, such as Salford and Stockport, and able in others, such as Manchester, to attack certain of its points only, for fear of the working-men, collected nevertheless nearly two million signatures for a petition against it, and Graham allowed himself to be so far intimidated as to withdraw the whole bill. The next year he omitted the school

clauses, and proposed that, instead of the previous provisions, children between eight and thirteen years should be restricted to six and one-half hours, and so employed as to have either the whole morning or the whole afternoon free; that young people between thirteen and eighteen years, and all females, should be limited to twelve hours; and that the hitherto frequent evasions of the law should be prevented. Hardly had he proposed this bill, when the ten hours' agitation was begun again more vigorously than ever. Oastler had just then regained his liberty; a number of his friends and a collection among the workers had paid his debt, and he threw himself into the movement with all his might. The defenders of the Ten Hours' Bill in the House of Commons had increased in numbers, the masses of petitions supporting it which poured in from all sides brought them allies, and on March 19th, 1844, Lord Ashley carried, with a majority of 179 to 170, a resolution that the word "Night" in the Factory Act should express the time from six at night to six in the morning, whereby the prohibition of night-work came to mean the limitation of working-hours to twelve, including free hours, or ten hours of actual work a day. But the Ministry did not agree to this. Sir James Graham began to threaten resignation from the Cabinet, and at the next vote on the bill the House rejected by a small majority both ten and twelve hours. Graham and Peel now announced that they should introduce a new bill, and that if this failed to pass they should resign. The new bill was exactly the old Twelve Hours' Bill with some changes of form, and the same House of Commons which had rejected the principal points of this bill in March, now swallowed it whole. The reason of this was that most of the supporters of the Ten Hours' Bill were Tories who let fall the bill rather than the Ministry; but be the motives what they may, the House of Commons by its votes upon this subject, each vote reversing the last, has brought itself into the greatest contempt among all the workers, and proved most brilliantly the Chartists' assertion of the necessity of its reform. Three members, who had formerly voted against the Ministry, afterwards voted for it and rescued it. In all the divisions, the bulk of the opposition voted *for* and the bulk of its own party *against* the Ministry. The foregoing propositions of Graham touching the employment of children six and one-half and of all other operatives twelve hours' are now legislative provisions, and by them and by the limitation of overwork for making up time lost through breakdown of machinery or insufficient water-power by reason of frost or drought, a working-day of more than twelve hours has been made well-nigh impossible. There remains, however, no doubt that, in a very short time, the Ten Hours' Bill will really be adopted. The manufacturers are naturally all against it; there are perhaps not ten who are for it; they have used every honourable and dishonourable means against this dreaded measure, but with no other result than that of drawing down upon them the ever-deepening hatred of the working-men. The bill will pass. What the working-men will do they can do, and that they will have this bill they proved last spring. The economic arguments of the manufacturers that a Ten Hours' Bill would increase the cost of production and incapacitate the English producers for competition in foreign markets, and that wages must fall, are all *half* true; but they prove nothing except this, that the industrial greatness of England can be maintained only through the barbarous treatment of the operatives, the destruction of their health, the social, physical, and mental decay of whole generations. Naturally, if the Ten Hours' Bill were a final measure, it must ruin England; but since it must inevitably bring with it other measures which must draw England into a path wholly different from that hitherto followed, it can only prove an advance.

Let us turn to another side of the factory system which cannot be remedied by legislative provisions so easily as the diseases now engendered by it. We have already alluded in a general way to the nature of the employment, and enough in detail to be able to draw certain inferences from the facts given. The supervision of machinery, the joining of broken threads, is no activity which claims the operative's thinking powers, yet it is of a sort which prevents him from occupying his mind with other things. We have seen, too, that this work affords the muscles no opportunity for physical activity. Thus it is, properly speaking, not work, but tedium, the most

deadening, wearing process conceivable. The operative is condemned to let his physical and mental powers decay in this utter monotony, it is his mission to be bored every day and all day long from his eighth year. Moreover, he must not take a moment's rest; the engine moves unceasingly; the wheels, the straps, the spindles hum and rattle in his ears without a pause, and if he tries to snatch one instant, there is the overlooker at his back with the book of fines. This condemnation to be buried alive in the mill, to give constant attention to the tireless machine is felt as the keenest torture by the operatives, and its action upon mind and body is in the long run stunting in the highest degree. There is no better means of inducing stupefaction than a period of factory-work, and if the operatives have, nevertheless, not only rescued their intelligence, but cultivated and sharpened it more than other working-men, they have found this possible only in rebellion against their fate and against the bourgeoisie, the sole subject on which under all circumstances they can think and feel while at work. Or, if this indignation against the bourgeoisie does not become the supreme passion of the working-man, the inevitable consequence is drunkenness and all that is generally called demoralisation. The physical enervation and the sickness, universal in consequence of the factory system, were enough to induce Commissioner Hawkins to attribute this demoralisation thereto as inevitable; how much more when mental lassitude is added to them, and when the influences already mentioned which tempt every working-man to demoralisation, make themselves felt here too! There is no cause for surprise, therefore, that in the manufacturing towns especially, drunkenness and sexual excesses have reached the pitch which I have already described.⁷⁷

Further, the slavery in which the bourgeoisie holds the proletariat chained, is nowhere more conspicuous than in the factory system. Here ends all freedom in law and in fact. The operative must be in the mill at half-past five in the morning; if he comes a couple of minutes too late, he is fined; if he comes ten minutes too late, he is not let in until breakfast is over, and a quarter of the day's wages is withheld, though he loses only two and one-half hours' work out of twelve. He must eat, drink, and sleep at command. For satisfying the most imperative needs, he is vouchsafed the least possible time absolutely required by them. Whether his dwelling is a half-hour or a whole one removed from the factory does not concern his employer. The despotic bell calls him from his bed, his breakfast, his dinner.

What a time he has of it, too, inside the factory! Here the employer is absolute law-giver; he makes regulations at will, changes and adds to his codex at pleasure, and even, if he inserts the craziest stuff, the courts say to the working-man:

"You were your own master, no one forced you to agree to such a contract if you did not wish to; but now, when you have freely entered into it, you must be bound by it."

And so the working-man only gets into the bargain the mockery of the Justice of the Peace who is a bourgeois himself, and of the law which is made by the bourgeoisie. Such decisions have been given often enough. In October, 1844, the operatives of Kennedy's mill, in Manchester, struck. Kennedy prosecuted them on the strength of a regulation placarded in the mill, that at no time more than two operatives in one room may quit work at once. And the court decided in his favour, giving the working-men the explanation cited above. And such rules as these usually are! For instance: 1. The doors are closed ten minutes after work begins, and thereafter no one is admitted until the breakfast hour; whoever is absent during this time forfeits 3d. per loom. 2. Every power-loom weaver detected absenting himself at another time, while the machinery is in

motion, forfeits for each hour and each loom, 3d. Every person who leaves the room during working- hours, without obtaining permission from the overlooker, forfeits 3d. 3. Weavers who fail to supply themselves with scissors forfeit, per day, 1d. 4. All broken shuttles, brushes, oil-cans, wheels, window-panes, etc., must be paid for by the weaver. 5. No weaver to stop work without giving a week's notice. The manufacturer may dismiss any employee without notice for bad work or improper behaviour. 6. Every operative detected speaking to another, singing or whistling, will be fined 6d.; for leaving his place during working-hours, 6d. Another copy of factory regulations lies before me, according to which every operative who comes three minutes too late, forfeits the wages for a quarter of an hour, and every one who comes twenty minutes too late, for a quarter of a day. Every one who remains absent until breakfast forfeits a shilling on Monday, and sixpence every other day of the week, etc., etc. This last is the regulation of the Phoenix Works in Jersey Street, Manchester. It may be said that such rules are necessary in a great, complicated factory, in order to insure the harmonious working of the different parts; it may be asserted that such a severe discipline is as necessary here as in an army. This may be so, but what sort of a social order is it which cannot be maintained without such shameful tyranny? Either the end sanctifies the means, or the inference of the badness of the end from the badness of the means is justified. Every one who has served as a soldier knows what it is to be subjected even for a short time to military discipline. But these operatives are condemned from their ninth year to their death to live under the sword, physically and mentally. They are worse slaves than the Negroes in America, for they are more sharply watched, and yet it is demanded of them that they shall live like human beings, shall think and feel like men! Verily, this they can do only under glowing hatred towards their oppressors, and towards that order of things which places them in such a position, which degrades them to machines. But it is far more shameful yet, that according to the universal testimony of the operatives, numbers of manufacturers collect the fines imposed upon the operatives with the most heartless severity, and for the purpose of piling up extra profits out of the farthings thus extorted from the impoverished proletarians. Leach asserts, too, that the operatives often find the factory clock moved forward a quarter of an hour and the doors shut, while the clerk moves about with the fines-book inside, noting the many names of the absentees. Leach claims to have counted ninety-five operatives thus shut out, standing before a factory, whose clock was a quarter of an hour slower than the town clocks at night, and a quarter of an hour faster in the morning. The Factory Report relates similar facts. In one factory the clock was set back during working-hours, so that the operatives worked overtime without extra pay; in another, a whole quarter of an hour overtime was worked; in a third, there were two clocks, an ordinary one and a machine clock, which registered the revolutions of the main shaft; if the machinery went slowly, working-hours were measured by the machine clock until the number of revolutions due in twelve hours was reached; if work went well, so that the number was reached before the usual working-hours were ended, the operatives were forced to toil on to the end of the twelfth hour. The witness adds that he had known girls who had good work, and who had worked overtime, who, nevertheless, betook themselves to a life of prostitution rather than submit to this tyranny. To return to the fines, Leach relates having repeatedly seen women in the last period of pregnancy fined 6d. for the offence of sitting down a moment to rest. Fines for bad work are wholly arbitrary; the goods are examined in the wareroom, and the supervisor charges the fines upon a list without even summoning the operative, who only learns that he has been fined when the overlooker pays his wages, and the goods have perhaps been sold, or certainly been placed beyond his reach. Leach has in his possession such a fines list, ten feet long, and amounting to £35 17s. 10d. He relates that in the factory where this list was made, a new supervisor was dismissed for fining too little, and so bringing in five pounds too little weekly. And I repeat that I know Leach to be a thoroughly trustworthy man incapable of a falsehood.

But the operative is his employer's slave in still other respects. If his wife or daughter finds favour in the eyes of the master, a command, a hint suffices, and she must place herself at his disposal. When the employer wishes to supply with signatures a petition in favour of bourgeois interests, he need only send it to his mill. If he wishes to decide a Parliamentary election, he sends his enfranchised operatives in rank and file to the polls, and they vote for the bourgeois candidate whether they will or no. If he desires a majority in a public meeting, he dismisses them half-an-hour earlier than usual, and secures them places close to the platform, where he can watch them to his satisfaction.

Two further arrangements contribute especially to force the operative under the dominion of the manufacturer; the Truck system and the Cottage system. The truck system, the payment of the operatives in goods, was formerly universal in England. The manufacturer opens a shop, "for the convenience of the operatives, and to protect them from the high prices of the petty dealers". Here goods of all sorts are sold to them on credit, and to keep the operatives from going to the shops where they could get their goods more cheaply – the "Tommy shops" usually charging twenty-five to thirty per cent more than others – wages are paid in requisitions on the shop instead of money. The general indignation against this infamous system led to the passage of the Truck Act in 1831, by which, for most employees, payment in truck orders was declared void and illegal, and was made punishable by fine; but, like most other English laws, this has been enforced only here and there. In the towns it is carried out comparatively efficiently; but in the country, the truck system, disguised or undisguised, flourishes. In the town of Leicester, too, it is very common. There lie before me nearly a dozen convictions for this offence, dating from the period between November, 1843, and June, 1844, and reported, in part, in the *Manchester Guardian* and, in part, in the *Northern Star*. The system is, of course, less openly carried on at present; wages are usually paid in cash, but the employer still has means enough at command to force him to purchase his wares in the truck shop and nowhere else. Hence it is difficult to combat the truck system, because it can now be carried on under cover of the law, provided only that the operative receives his wages in money. *The Northern Star* of April 27th, 1844, publishes a letter from an operative of Holmfirth, near Huddersfield, in Yorkshire, which refers to a manufacturer of the name of Bowers, as follows:

"It is almost strange to see that the accursed truck sistim should exist to the enormoust extent that it dose in Holmfirth, and no one to be found to have the moral courage to attempt to put a stop to it. Thaire are a greate many honest handloome weavers that is suffering by that accursed sistim. This is one specimen. Out of the many of that precious freetraid crew, thaire is one manufacturer that as the curse of the whole neighbourhood upon im, for is baseness towards is weavers. When they finnish a warp, which comes to £1 14s,

or £1 16s, he gives them £1, and the rest in goods, wearing apparel, at 40 or 50 per cent dearer than at the regular shopkeepers, and many a time the goods are rotten. But as the Free-Trade Mercury says by the factory labour, 'they are not bound to take it; its quite optional'. O, yes; but they must either take it or starve. If they want any more than the £1 0s 0d, they must wait of a week or a fortnight; but if they take the £1, 0s 0d and the goods, there is always a week for them. This is free trade. Lord Brougham says 'we should lay something by in our young days, that we may be independent in our old age of parochial relief.' Must we lay by these rotten goods? If this did not come from a lord, they would think it as rotten as the goods we got for our labour. When the unstamped newspapers were in circulation there were no lack of informers in Holmfirth. There were the Blyths, the Estwoods, &c, but where are they now? O, but this is quite different. Our truckster is one of the free trading pious crew. He goes to the church twice every Sunday, and repeats after the parson very fervently: 'we have left undone those things which we thought to have done; we have done those things which we thought not to have done; and there is no help in us; but spare us, good Lord.' -Yes, spare us will

morning, and we will pay our weavers
wages in rotten goods again.”

The Cottage system looks much more innocent and arose in a much more harmless way, though it has the same enslaving influence upon the employee. In the neighbourhood of the mills in the country, there is often a lack of dwelling accommodation for the operatives. The manufacturer is frequently obliged to build such dwellings and does so gladly, as they yield great advantages, besides the interest upon the capital invested. If any owner of working-men's dwellings averages about six per cent on his invested capital, it is safe to calculate that the manufacturer's cottages yield twice this rate; for so long as his factory does not stand perfectly idle he is sure of occupants, and of occupants who pay punctually. He is therefore spared the two chief disadvantages under which other house-owners labour; his cottages never stand empty, and he runs no risk. But the rent of the cottages is as high as though these disadvantages were in full force, and by obtaining the same rent as the ordinary house-owner, the manufacturer, at cost of the operatives, makes a brilliant investment at twelve to fourteen per cent. For it is clearly unjust that he should make twice as much profit as other competing house-owners, who at the same time are excluded from competing with him. But it implies a double wrong, when he draws his fixed profit from the pockets of the non-possessing class, which must consider the expenditure of every penny. He is used to that, however, he whose whole wealth is gained at the cost of his employees. But this injustice becomes an infamy when the manufacturer, as often happens, forces his operatives, who must occupy his houses on pain of dismissal, to pay a higher rent than the ordinary one, or even to pay rent for houses in which they do not live! *The Halifax Guardian*, quoted by the *Liberal Sun*, asserts that hundreds of operatives in Ashton-under-Lyne, Oldham, and Rochdale, etc., are forced by their employers to pay house-rent whether they occupy the house or not. The cottage system is universal in the country districts; it has created whole villages, and the manufacturer usually has little or no competition against his houses, so that he can fix his price regardless of any market rate, indeed at his pleasure. And what power does the cottage system give the employer over his operatives in disagreements between master and men? If the latter strike, he need only give them notice to quit his premises, and the notice need only be a week; after that time the operative is not only without bread but without a shelter, a vagabond at the mercy of the law which sends him, without fail, to the treadmill.

Such is the factory system sketched as fully as my space permits, and with as little partisan spirit as the heroic deeds of the bourgeoisie against the defenceless workers permit – deeds towards which it is impossible to remain indifferent, towards which indifference were a crime. Let us compare the condition of the free Englishman of 1845 with the Saxon serf under the lash of the Norman barons of 1145. The serf was *glebae adscriptus*, bound to the soil, so is the free working-man through the cottage system. The serf owed his master the *jus primae noctis*, the right of the first night – the free working-man must, on demand, surrender to his master not only that, but the right of *every* night. The serf could acquire no property; everything that he gained, his master could take from him; the free working-man has no property, can gain none by reason of the pressure of competition, and what even the Norman baron did not do, the modern manufacturer does. Through the truck system, he assumes every day the administration in detail of the things which the worker requires for his immediate necessities. The relation of the lord of the soil to the serf was regulated by the prevailing customs and by laws which were obeyed, because they corresponded to them. The free working-man's relation to his master is regulated by laws which are not obeyed, because they correspond neither with the interests of the employer nor with the prevailing customs. The lord of the soil could not separate the serf from the land, nor sell him apart from it, and since almost all the land was fief and there was no capital, practically could not sell him at all. The modern bourgeois forces the working-man to sell himself. The serf was the

slave of the piece of land on which he was born, the working-man is the slave of his own necessities of life and of the money with which he has to buy them – both are *slaves of a thing*. The serf had a guarantee for the means of subsistence in the feudal order of society in which every member had his own place. The free working-man has no guarantee whatsoever, because he has a place in society only when the bourgeoisie can make use of him; in all other cases he is ignored, treated as non-existent. The serf sacrificed himself for his master in war, the factory operative in peace. The lord of the serf was a barbarian who regarded his villain as a head of cattle; the employer of operatives is civilised and regards his "hand" as a machine. In short, the position of the two is not far from equal, and if either is at a disadvantage, it is the free working-man. Slaves they both are, with the single difference that the slavery of the one is undissembled, open, honest; that of the other cunning, sly, disguised, deceitfully concealed from himself and every one else, a hypocritical servitude worse than the old. The philanthropic Tories were right when they gave the operatives the name white slaves. But the hypocritical disguised slavery recognises the right to freedom, at least in outward form; bows before a freedom-loving public opinion, and herein lies the historic progress as compared with the old servitude, that the *principle* of freedom is affirmed, and the oppressed will one day see to it that this principle is carried out.

At the close a few stanzas of a poem which voices the sentiments of the workers themselves about the factory system. Written by Edward P. Mead of Birmingham, it is a correct expression of the views prevailing among them.

There is a King, and a ruthless King; Not
a King of the poet's dream;

But a tyrant fell, white slaves know well,
And that ruthless King is Steam.

He hath an arm, an iron arm, And tho'
he hath but one,

In that mighty arm there is a charm, That
millions hath undone.

Like the ancient Moloch grim, his sire In
Himmon's vale that stood,

His bowels are of living fire, And
children are his food.

His priesthood are a hungry band,
Blood-thirsty, proud, and bold;

'Tis they direct his giant hand, In turning
blood to gold.

For filthy gain in their servile chain All
nature's rights they bind;

They mock at lovely woman's pain, And
to manly tears are blind.

The sighs and groans of Labour's sons
Are music in their ear,

And the skeleton shades, of lads and
maids, In the Steam King's hell appear.

Those hells upon earth, since the Steam
King's birth,

Have scatter'd around despair; For the
human mind for Heav'n design'd,

With the body, is murdered there.

Then down with the King, the Moloch
King, Ye working millions all;

O chain his hand, or our native land Is
destin'd by him to fall.

And his Satraps abhor'd, each proud
Mill Lord, Now gorg'd with gold and
blood, Must be put down by the nation's
frown, As well as their monster God.

I have neither time nor room to deal in detail with the replies of the manufacturers to the charges made against them for twelve years past. These men will not learn because their supposed interest blinds them. As, moreover, many of their objections have been met in the foregoing, the following is all that it is necessary for me to add:

You come to Manchester, you wish to make yourself acquainted with the state of affairs in England. You naturally have good introductions to respectable people. You drop a remark or two as to the condition of the workers. You are made acquainted with a couple of the first Liberal manufacturers, Robert Hyde Greg, perhaps, Edmund Ashworth, Thomas Ashton, or others. They are told of your wishes. The manufacturer understands you, knows what he has to do. He accompanies you to his factory in the country; Mr. Greg to Quarrybank in Cheshire, Mr. Ashworth to Turton near Bolton, Mr. Ashton to Hyde. He leads you through a superb, admirably arranged building, perhaps supplied with ventilators, he calls your attention to the lofty, airy rooms, the fine machinery, here and there a healthy-looking operative. He gives you an excellent lunch, and proposes to you to visit the operatives' homes; he conducts you to the cottages, which look new, clean and neat, and goes with you into this one and that one, naturally only to overlookers, mechanics, etc., so that you may see -"families who live wholly from the factory". Among other families you might find that only wife and children work, and the husband darns stockings. The presence of the employer keeps you from asking indiscreet questions; you find every one well-paid, comfortable, comparatively healthy by reason of the country air; you begin to be converted from your exaggerated ideas of misery and starvation. But, that the cottage

system makes slaves of the operatives, that there may be a truck shop in the neighbourhood, that the people hate the manufacturer, this they do not point out to you, because he is present. He has built a school, church, reading-room, etc. That he uses the school to train children to subordination, that he tolerates in the reading-room such prints only as represent the interests of the bourgeoisie, that he dismisses his employees if they read Chartist or Socialist papers or books, this is all concealed from you. You see an easy, patriarchal relation, you see the life of the overlookers, you see what the bourgeoisie promises the workers if they become its slaves, mentally and morally. This "country manufacture" has always been what the employers like to show, because in it the disadvantages of the factory system, especially from the point of view of health, are, in part, done away with by the free air and surroundings, and because the patriarchal servitude of the workers can here be longest maintained. Dr. Ure sings a dithyramb upon the theme. But woe to the operatives to whom it occurs to think for themselves and become Chartists! For them the paternal affection of the manufacturer comes to a sudden end. Further, if you should wish to be accompanied through the working-people's quarters of Manchester, if you should desire to see the development of the factory system in a factory town, you may wait long before these rich bourgeoisie will help you! These gentlemen do not know in what condition their employees are nor what they want, and they dare not know things which would make them uneasy or even oblige them to act in opposition to their own interests. But, fortunately, that is of no consequence: what the working-men have to carry out, they carry out for themselves.

The Remaining Branches of Industry

We were compelled to deal with the factory system somewhat at length, as it is an entirely novel creation of the industrial period; we shall be able to treat the other workers the more briefly, because what has been said either of the industrial proletariat in general, or of the factory system in particular, will wholly, or in part, apply to them. We shall, therefore, merely have to record how far the factory system has succeeded in forcing its way into each branch of industry, and what other peculiarities these may reveal.

The four branches comprised under the Factory Act are engaged in the production of clothing stuffs. We shall do best if we deal next with those workers who receive their materials from these factories; and, first of all, with the stocking weavers of Nottingham, Derby, and Leicester. Touching these workers, the Children's Employment Commission reports that the long working-hours, imposed by low wages, with a sedentary life and the strain upon the eyes involved in the nature of the employment, usually enfeeble the whole frame, and especially the eyes. Work at night is impossible without a very powerful light produced by concentrating the rays of the lamp, making them pass through glass globes, which is most injurious to the sight. At forty years of age, nearly all wear spectacles. The children employed at spooling and hemming usually suffer grave injuries to the health and constitution. They work from the sixth, seventh, or eighth year ten to twelve hours daily in small, close rooms. It is not uncommon for them to faint at their work, to become too feeble for the most ordinary household occupation, and so near-sighted as to be obliged to wear glasses during childhood. Many were found by the commissioners to exhibit all the symptoms of a scrofulous constitution, and the manufacturers usually refuse to employ girls who have worked in this way as being too weak. The condition of these children is characterised as "a disgrace to a Christian country", and the wish expressed for legislative interference. The Factory Report adds that the stocking weavers are the worst paid workers in Leicester, earning six, or with great effort, seven shillings a week, for sixteen to eighteen hours' daily work. Formerly they earned twenty to twenty-one shillings, but the introduction of enlarged frames has ruined their business; the great majority still work with old, small, single frames, and compete with difficulty with the progress of machinery. Here, too, every progress is a disadvantage for the workers. Nevertheless, Commissioner Power speaks of the pride of the stocking weavers that they are free, and have no factory bell to measure out the time for their eating, sleeping, and working. Their position today is no better than in 1833, when the Factory Commission made the foregoing statements; the competition of the Saxon stocking weavers, who have scarcely anything to eat, takes care of that. This competition is too strong for the English in nearly all foreign markets, and for the lower qualities of goods even in the English market. It must be a source of rejoicing for the patriotic German stocking weaver that his starvation wages force his English brother to starve too! And, verily, will he not starve on, proud and happy, for the greater glory of German industry, since the honour of the Fatherland demands that his table should be bare, his dish half-empty? Ah! it is a noble thing this competition, this "race of the nations". In the *Morning Chronicle*, another Liberal sheet, the organ of the bourgeoisie par excellence, there were published some letters from a stocking weaver in Hinckley, describing the condition of his fellow-workers. Among other things, he reports 50 families, 321 persons, who were supported by 109 frames; each frame yielded on an average 5 1/2, shillings; each family earned an average of 11s. 4d. weekly. Out of this there was required for house rent, frame rent, fuel, light, soap, and needles, together 5s. 10d., so that there remained for food, per head daily, 1 1/2d., and for clothing nothing.

"Eye hath not seen," says the stocking weaver, "ear hath not heard, the heart cannot conceive the half of the suffering endured by this poverty-stricken people."

Beds were wanting either wholly or in part, the children ran about ragged and barefoot; the men said, with tears in their eyes: "We never tasted meat this many a day" — "We have almost forgotten its taste"; and, finally, some of them worked on Sunday, though public opinion pardons anything else more readily than this, and the rattling noise of the frame is audible throughout the neighbourhood.

"Look at my children," said one of them, "and ask no more. It is because my poverty compels me; I cannot and will not hear my children cry for bread without taking the only means honestly to get it. Last Monday morning I rose at two o'clock and worked till near midnight. I rose at six o'clock each succeeding morning and worked until between eleven and twelve each night. I cannot do it longer. I shall go to an untimely grave if I do; I will therefore end my labours at ten o'clock each night and make up the time lost by labouring on the Sunday."

Neither in Leicester, Nottingham, nor Derby have wages risen since 1833; and the worst of it is that in Leicester the truck system prevails to a great extent, as I have mentioned. It is, therefore, not to be wondered at that the weavers of this region take a very active part in all working-men's movements, the more active and effective because the frames are worked chiefly by men.

In this stocking weavers' district the lace industry also has its headquarters. In the three counties mentioned there are in all 2,760 lace frames in use, while in all the rest of England there are but 787. The manufacture of lace is greatly complicated by a rigid division of labour, and embraces a multitude of branches. The yarn is first spooled by girls fourteen years of age and upwards, winders; then the spools are set up on the frames by boys, eight years old and upwards, threaders, who pass the thread through fine openings, of which each machine has an average of 1,800, and bring it towards its destination; then the weaver weaves the lace which comes out of the machine like a broad piece of cloth and is taken apart by very little children who draw out the connecting threads. This is called running or drawing lace, and the children themselves lace-runners. The lace is then made ready for sale. The winders, like the threaders, have no specified working-time, being called upon whenever the spools on a frame are empty, and are liable, since the weavers work at night, to be required at any time in the factory or work-room. This irregularity, the frequent night-work, the disorderly way of living consequent upon it, engender a multitude of physical and moral ills, especially early and unbridled sexual licence, upon which point all witnesses are unanimous. The work is very bad for the eyes, and although a permanent injury in the case of the threaders is not universally observable, inflammations of the eye, pain, tears, and momentary uncertainty of vision during the act of threading are engendered. For the winders, however, it is certain that their work seriously affects the eye, and produces, besides the frequent inflammations of the cornea, many cases of amaurosis and cataract. The work of the weavers themselves is very difficult, as the frames have constantly been made wider, until those now in use are almost all worked by three men in turn, each working eight hours, and the frame being kept in use the whole twenty-four. Hence it is that the winders and threaders are so often called upon during the night, and must work to prevent the frame from standing idle. The filling in of 1,800 openings with thread occupies three children at least two hours. Many frames are moved by steam-power, and the work of men thus superseded; and, as the Children's Employment Commission's Report mentions only lace factories to which the children are summoned, it seems

to follow either that the work of the weavers has been removed to great factory rooms of late, or that steam-weaving has become pretty general; a forward movement of the factory system in either case. Most unwholesome of all is the work of the runners, who are usually children of seven, and even of five and four, years old. Commissioner Grainger actually found one child of two years old employed at this work. Following a thread which is to be withdrawn by a needle from an intricate texture, is very bad for the eyes, especially when, as is usually the case, the work is continued fourteen to sixteen hours. In the least unfavourable case, aggravated near-sightedness follows; in the worst case, which is frequent enough, incurable blindness from amaurosis. But, apart from that, the children, in consequence of sitting perpetually bent up, become feeble, narrow-chested, and scrofulous from bad digestion. Disordered functions of the uterus are almost universal among the girls, and curvature of the spine also, so that "all the runners may be recognised from their gait". The same consequences for the eyes and the whole constitution are produced by the embroidery of lace. Medical witnesses are unanimously of the opinion that the health of all children employed in the production of lace suffers seriously, that they are pale, weak, delicate, undersized, and much less able than other children to resist disease. The affections from which they usually suffer are general debility, frequent fainting, pains in the head, sides, back, and hips, palpitation of the heart, nausea, vomiting and want of appetite, curvature of the spine, scrofula, and consumption. The health of the female lace-makers especially, is constantly and deeply undermined; complaints are universal of anaemia, difficult child-birth, and miscarriage. The same subordinate official of the Children's Employment Commission reports further that the children are very often ill-clothed and ragged, and receive insufficient food, usually only bread and tea, often no meat for months together. As to their moral condition, he reports:

"In the town of Nottingham all parties, police, clergy, manufacturers, work-people, and parents of the children agree that the present system of labour is a most fertile source of immorality. The threaders, who are usually boys, and the winders, who are generally girls, are called out of their parents' houses at all hours of the night, and as it is quite uncertain how long they may be required, a ready and unanswerable excuse for staying out is furnished and they have every facility for forming improper connections. This must have contributed, in no slight degree, to the immorality which, according to the opinion universally expressed, prevails to a most awful extent in Nottingham. In

addition to the immediate evils to the children themselves, the domestic peace and comfort of the families to which they are members are sacrificed to this most unnatural state of things."

Another branch of lace-making, bobbin-lacework, is carried on in the agricultural shires of Northampton, Oxford, and Bedford, chiefly by children and young persons, who complain universally of bad food, and rarely taste meat. The employment itself is most unwholesome. The children work in small, ill-ventilated, damp rooms, sitting always bent over the lace cushion. To support the body in this wearying position, the girls wear stays with a wooden busk, which, at the tender age of most of them, when the bones are still very soft, wholly displace the ribs, and make narrow chests universal. They usually die of consumption after suffering the severest forms of digestive disorders, brought on by sedentary work in a bad atmosphere. They are almost wholly without education, least of all do they receive moral training. They love finery, and in consequence of these two influences their moral condition is most deplorable, and prostitution almost epidemic among them.

This is the price at which society purchases for the fine ladies of the bourgeoisie the pleasure of wearing lace; a reasonable price truly! Only a few thousand blind working-men, some consumptive labourers' daughters, a sickly generation of the vile multitude bequeathing its debility to its equally "vile" children and children's children. But what does that come to? Nothing, nothing whatsoever! Our English bourgeoisie will lay the report of the Government Commission aside indifferently, and wives and daughters will deck themselves with lace as before. It is a beautiful thing, the composure of an English bourgeois.

A great number of operatives are employed in the cotton-printing establishments of Lancashire, Derbyshire, and the West of Scotland. In no branch of English industry has mechanical ingenuity produced such brilliant results as here, but in no other has it so crushed the workers. The application of engraved cylinders driven by steam-power, and the discovery of a method of printing four to six colours at once with such cylinders, has as completely superseded hand-work as did the application of machinery to the spinning and weaving of cotton, and these new arrangements in the printing-works have superseded the hand-workers much more than was the case in the production of the fabrics. One man, with the assistance of one child, now does with a machine the work done formerly by 200 block printers; a single machine yields 28 yards of printed cloth per minute. The calico printers are in a very bad way in consequence; the shires of Lancaster, Derby, and Chester produced (according to a petition of the printers to the House of Commons), in the year 1842, 11,000,000 pieces of printed cotton goods: of these, 100,000 were printed by hand exclusively, 900,000 in part with machinery and in part by hand, and 10,000,000 by machinery alone, with four to six colours. As the machinery is chiefly new and undergoes constant improvement, the number of hand-printers is far too great for the available quantity of work, and many of them are therefore starving; the petition puts the number at one-quarter of the whole, while the rest are employed but one or two, in the best case three days in the week, and are ill-paid. Leach asserts of one print-works (Deeply Dale, near Bury, in Lancashire), that the hand-printers did not earn on an average more than five shillings, though he knows that the machine-printers were pretty well paid. The print-works are thus wholly affiliated with the factory system, but without being subject to the legislative restrictions placed upon it. They produce an article subject to fashion, and have therefore no regular work. If they have small orders, they work half-time; if they make a hit with a pattern, and business is brisk, they work twelve hours, perhaps all night. In the neighbourhood of my home, near Manchester, there was a print-works that was often

lighted when I returned late at night; and I have heard that the children were obliged at times to work so long there, that they would try to catch a moment's rest and sleep on the stone steps and in the corners of the lobby. I have no legal proof of the truth of the statement, or I should name the firm. The Report of the Children's Employment Commission is very cursory upon this subject, stating merely that in England, at least, the children are mostly pretty well clothed and fed (relatively, according to the wages of the parents), that they receive no education whatsoever, and are morally on a low plane. It is only necessary to remember that these children are subject to the factory system, and then, referring the reader to what has already been said of that, we can pass on.

Of the remaining workers employed in the manufacture of clothing stuffs little remains to be said; the bleachers' work is very unwholesome, obliging them to breathe chlorine, a gas injurious to the lungs. The work of the dyers is in many cases very healthful, since it requires the exertion of the whole body; how these workers are paid is little known, and this is ground enough for the inference that they do not receive less than the average wages, otherwise they would make complaint. The fustian cutters, who, in consequence of the large consumption of cotton velvet, are comparatively numerous, being estimated at from 3,000 to 4,000, have suffered very severely, indirectly, from the influence of the factory system. The goods formerly woven with hand-loom, were not perfectly uniform, and required a practised hand in cutting the single rows of threads. Since power-loom have been used, the rows run regularly; each thread of the weft is exactly parallel with the preceding one, and cutting is no longer an art. The workers thrown out of employment by the introduction of machinery turn to fustian cutting, and force down wages by their competition; the manufacturers discovered that they could employ women and children, and the wages sank to the rate paid them, while hundreds of men were thrown out of employment. The manufacturers found that they could get the work done in the factory itself more cheaply than in the cutters' work-room, for which they indirectly paid the rent. Since this discovery, the low upper-storey cutters' rooms stand empty in many a cottage, or are let for dwellings, while the cutter has lost his freedom of choice of his working-hours, and is brought under the dominion of the factory bell. A cutter of perhaps forty-five years of age told me that he could remember a time when he had received 8d. a yard for work, for which he now received 1d.; true, he can cut the more regular texture more quickly than the old, but he can by no means do twice as much in an hour as formerly, so that his wages have sunk to less than a quarter of what they were. Leachy gives a list of wages paid in 1827 and in 1843 for various goods, from which it appears that articles paid in 1827 at the rate of 4d., 2½d., 2¾d., and 1d. per yard, were paid in 1843 at the rate of 1½d., 1d., ¾d., and 3/8d. per yard, cutters' wages. The average weekly wage, according to Leachy, was as follows: 1827, £1 6s. 6d.; £1 2s. 6d.; £1; £1 6s. 6d.; and for the same goods in 1843, 10s.; 7s.; 6s. 8d.; 10s.; while there are hundreds of workers who cannot find employment even at these last-named rates. Of the hand-weavers of the cotton industry we have already spoken; the other woven fabrics are almost exclusively produced on hand-loom. Here most of the workers have suffered as the weavers have done from the crowding in of competitors displaced by machinery, and are, moreover, subject like the factory operatives to a severe fine system for bad work. Take, for instance, the silk weavers. Mr. Brocklehurst, one of the largest silk manufacturers in all England, laid before a committee of Members of Parliament lists taken from his books, from which it appears that for goods for which he paid wages in 1821 at the rate of 30s., 14s.; 3½s., ¾s., 1 1/10s, 10s.; he paid in 1831 but 9s., 7½s., 2 ¼s., 1/3s., ½s., 6¼s., while in this case no improvement in the machinery has taken place. But what Mr. Brocklehurst does may very well be taken as a standard for all. From the same lists it appears that the average weekly wage of his weavers, after all deductions, was, in 1821, 16½s., and, in 1831, but 6s. Since that time wages have fallen still further. Goods which brought in 4d. weavers' wages in 1831, bring in but 2½d. in 1845 (single sarsnets), and a great number of weavers in the country can get work only when they

undertake these goods at 1½ d.-2d. Moreover, they are subject to arbitrary deductions from their wages. Every weaver who receives materials is given a card, on which is usually to be read that the work is to be returned at a specified hour of the day; that a weaver who cannot work by reason of illness must make the fact known at the office within three days, or sickness will not be regarded as an excuse; that it will not be regarded as a sufficient excuse if the weaver claims to have been obliged to wait for yarn; that for certain faults in the work (if, for example, more weft-threads are found within a given space than are prescribed), not less than half the wages will be deducted; and that if the goods should not be ready at the time specified, one penny will be deducted for every yard returned. The deductions in accordance with these cards are so considerable that, for instance, a man who comes twice a week to Leigh, in Lancashire, to gather up woven goods, brings his employer at least £15 fines every time. He asserts this himself, and he is regarded as one of the most lenient. Such things were formerly settled by arbitration; but as the workers were usually dismissed if they insisted upon that, the custom has been almost wholly abandoned, and the manufacturer acts arbitrarily as prosecutor, witness, judge, law-giver, and executive in one person. And if the workman goes to a Justice of the Peace, the answer is: "When you accepted your card you entered upon a contract, and you must abide by it." The case is the same as that of the factory operatives. Besides, the employer obliges the workman to sign a document in which he declares that he agrees to the deductions made. And if a workman rebels, all the manufacturers in the town know at once that he is a man who, as Leach says,

"is an enemy to all ticket-made law and social order and has the impudence to dispute the wisdom of those whom he ought to know are his superiors in society."

Naturally, the workers are perfectly free; the manufacturer does not force them to take his materials and his cards, but he says to them what Leach translates into plain English with the words:

"If you don't like to be frizzled in my frying-pan, you can take a walk into the fire."

The silk weavers of London, and especially of Spitalfields, have lived in periodic distress for a long time, and that they still have no cause to be satisfied with their lot is proved by their taking a most active part in English labour movements in general, and in London ones in particular. The distress prevailing among them gave rise to the fever which broke out in East London, and called forth the Commission for Investigating the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Class. But the last report of the London Fever Hospital shows that this disease is still raging.

After the textile fabrics, by far the most important products of English industry are the metal-wares. This trade has its headquarters at Birmingham, where the finer metal goods of all sorts are produced, at Sheffield for cutlery, and in Staffordshire, especially at Wolverhampton, where the coarser articles, locks, nails, etc., are manufactured. In describing the position of the workers employed in these trades, let us begin with Birmingham. The disposition of the work has retained in Birmingham, as in most places where metals are wrought, something of the old handicraft character; the small employers are still to be found, who work with their apprentices in the shop at home, or when they need steam-power, in great factory buildings which are divided into little shops, each rented to a small employer, and supplied with a shaft moved by the engine, and

furnishing motive power for the machinery. Leon Faucher, author of a series of articles in the *Revue des deux Mondes*, which at least betray study, and are better than what has hitherto been written upon the subject by Englishmen or Germans, characterises this relation in contrast with the manufacture of Lancashire as *Democratie industrielle*, and observes that it produces no very favourable results for master or men. This observation is perfectly correct, for the many small employers cannot well subsist on the profit divided amongst them, determined by competition, a profit under other circumstances absorbed by a single manufacturer. The centralising tendency of capital holds them down. For one who grows rich ten are ruined, and a hundred placed at greater disadvantage than ever, by the pressure of the one upstart who can afford to sell more cheaply than they. And in the cases where they have to compete from the beginning against great capitalists, it is self-evident that they can only toil along with the greatest difficulty. The apprentices are, as we shall see, quite as badly off under the small employers as under the manufacturers, with the single difference that they, in turn, may become small employers, and so attain a certain independence – that is to say, they are at best less directly exploited by the bourgeoisie than under the factory system. Thus these small employers are neither genuine proletarians, since they live in part upon the work of their apprentices, nor genuine bourgeois, since their principal means of support is their own work. This peculiar midway position of the Birmingham iron-workers is to blame for their having so rarely joined wholly and unreservedly in the English labour movements. Birmingham is a politically radical, but not a Chartist, town. There are, however, numerous larger factories belonging to capitalists; and in these the factory system reigns supreme. The division of labour, which is here carried out to the last detail (in the needle industry, for example), and the use of steam-power, admit of the employment of a great multitude of women and children, and we find here ⁷⁸ precisely the same features reappearing which the Factories' Report presented, – the work of women up to the hour of confinement, incapacity as housekeepers, neglect of home and children, indifference, actual dislike to family life, and demoralisation; further, the crowding out of men from employment, the constant improvement of machinery, early emancipation of children, husbands supported by their wives and children, etc., etc. The children are described as half-starved and ragged, the half of them are said not to know what it is to have enough to eat, many of them get nothing to eat before the midday meal, or even live the whole day upon a pennyworth' of bread for a noonday meal – there were actually cases in which children received no food from eight in the morning until seven at night. Their clothing is very often scarcely sufficient to cover their nakedness, many are barefoot even in winter. Hence they are all small and weak for their age, and rarely develop with any degree of vigour. And when we reflect that with these insufficient means of reproducing the physical forces, hard and protracted work in close rooms is required of them, we cannot wonder that there are few adults in Birmingham fit for military service.

The working-men, says a recruiting surgeon,"are shorter, more puny, and altogether inferior in their physical powers. Many of the men presented for examinations, are distorted in the spine and chest."

According to the assertion of a recruiting sergeant, the people of Birmingham are smaller than those anywhere else, being

usually 5 feet 4 to 5 inches tall; out of 613 recruits, but 238 were found fit for service. As to education, a series of depositions and specimens taken from the metal districts have already been given, to which the reader is referred. It appears further, from the Children's Employment Commission's Report, that in Birmingham more than half the children, between five and fifteen years attend no school whatsoever, that those who do are constantly changing, so that it is impossible to give them any training of an enduring kind, and that they are all withdrawn from school very early and set to work. The report makes it clear what sort of teachers are employed. One teacher, in answer to the question whether she gave moral instruction, said, No, for threepence a week school fees that was too much to require, but that she took a great deal of trouble to instill good principles into the children. (And she made a decided slip in her English in saying it.) In the schools the commissioner found constant noise and disorder. The moral state of the children is in the highest degree deplorable. Half of all the criminals are children under fifteen, and in a single year ninety ten-years'-old offenders, among them forty-four serious criminal cases, were sentenced. Unbridled sexual intercourse seems, according to the opinion of the

commissioner, almost universal, and that at a very early age.

In the iron district of Staffordshire the state of things is still worse. For the coarse wares made here neither much division of labour (with certain exceptions) nor steam-power or machinery can be applied. In Wolverhampton, Willenhall, Bilston, Sedgeley, Wednesfield, Darlaston, Dudley, Walsall, Wednesbury, etc., there are, therefore, fewer factories. But chiefly single forges, where the small masters work alone, or with one or more apprentices, who serve them until reaching the twenty-first year. The small employers are in about the same situation as those of Birmingham; but the apprentices, as a rule, are much worse off. They get almost exclusively meat from diseased animals or such as have died a natural death, or tainted meat, or fish to eat, with veal from calves killed too young, and pork from swine smothered during transportation, and such food is furnished not by small employers only, but by large manufacturers, who employ from thirty to forty apprentices. The custom seems to be universal in Wolverhampton, and its natural consequence is frequent bowel complaints and other diseases. Moreover, the children usually do not get enough to eat, and have rarely other

clothing than their working rags, for which reason, if for no other, they cannot go to Sunday school. The dwellings are bad and filthy, often so much so that they give rise to disease; and in spite of the not materially unhealthy work, the children are puny, weak, and, in many cases, severely crippled. In Willenhall, for instance, there are countless persons who have, from perpetually filing at the lathe, crooked backs and one leg crooked, "hind-leg" as they call it, so that the two legs have the form of a K; while it is said that more than one-third of the working-men there are ruptured. Here, as well as in Wolverhampton, numberless cases were found of retarded puberty among girls (for girls, too, work at the forges), as well as among boys, extending even to the nineteenth year. In Sedgeley and its surrounding district, where nails form almost the sole product, the nailers live and work in the most wretched stable-like huts, which for filth can scarcely be equalled. Girls and boys work from the tenth or twelfth year, and are accounted fully skilled only when they make a thousand nails a day. For twelve hundred nails the pay is $5\frac{3}{4}$ d. Every nail receives twelve blows, and since the hammer weighs $1\frac{1}{4}$ pounds, the nailer must lift 18,000 pounds to earn this miserable pay. With this hard work and insufficient food, the

children inevitably develop ill-formed, undersized frames, and the commissioners' depositions confirm this. As to the state of education in this district, data have already been furnished in the foregoing chapters. It is upon an incredibly low plane; half the children do not even go to Sunday school, and the other half go irregularly; very few, in comparison with the other districts, can read, and in the matter of writing the case is much worse. Naturally, for between the seventh and tenth years, just when they are beginning to get some good out of going to school, they are set to work, and the Sunday school teachers, smiths or miners, frequently cannot read, and write their names with difficulty. The prevailing morals correspond with these means of education. In Willenhall, Commissioner Horne asserts, and supplies ample proofs of his assertion, that there exists absolutely no moral sense among the workers. In general, he found that the children neither recognised duties to their parents nor felt any affection for them. They were so little capable of thinking of what they said, so stolid, so hopelessly stupid, that they often asserted that they were well treated, were coming on famously, when they were forced to work twelve to fourteen hours, were clad in rags, did not get enough to eat, and were beaten so that they felt it several days afterwards.

They knew nothing of a different kind of life than that in which they toil from morning until they are allowed to stop at night, and did not even understand the question never heard before, whether they were tired.

In Sheffield wages are better, and the external state of the workers also. On the other hand, certain branches of work are to be noticed here, because of their extraordinarily injurious influence upon health. Certain operations require the constant pressure of tools against the chest, and engender consumption in many cases; others, file-cutting among them, retard the general development of the body and produce digestive disorders; bone-cutting for knife handles brings with it headache, biliousness, and among girls, of whom many are employed, anaemia. By far the most unwholesome work is the grinding of knife-blades and forks, which, especially when done with a dry stone, entails certain early death. The unwholesomeness of this work lies in part in the bent posture, in which chest and stomach are cramped; but especially in the quantity of sharp-edged metal dust particles freed in the cutting, which fill the atmosphere, and are necessarily inhaled. The dry grinders' average life is hardly thirty-five years, 'the wet

grinders' rarely exceeds forty-five. Dr. Knight, in Sheffield, says:

I can convey some idea of the injuriousness of this occupation only by asserting that "the greatest drinkers among the grinders are sometimes the longest lived, owing to their more frequent absence from their work". Altogether the grinders in Sheffield "amount to about two thousand five hundred, of this number about one hundred and fifty, viz. eighty men and seventy boys, are fork grinders – these die from twenty-eight to thirty-two years of age. The razor grinders, grind both wet, and dry, and they die from forty to forty-five years of age. The table-knife grinders work on wet stones, and they live to betwixt forty and fifty years of age."

The same physician gives the following description of the course of the disease called grinders' asthma:

"Those who are to be brought up grinders, usually begin to work when they are about fourteen years old. Grinders, who have good constitutions seldom experience much inconvenience from their trade until they arrive at about twenty years of age: about that time the symptoms of their peculiar complaint begin to steal upon them, their breathing becomes more than usually embarrassed on slight exertions, particularly on going upstairs or ascending a hill; their shoulders are elevated in order to relieve

their constant and increasing dyspnoea; they stoop forward, and appear to breathe the most comfortably in that posture in which they are accustomed to sit at their work. Their complexions assume a muddy, dirty appearance; their countenance indicates anxiety; they complain of a sense of tightness across the chest; their voice is rough, and hoarse; their cough loud, and as if the air were drawn through wooden tubes; they occasionally expectorate considerable quantities of dust, sometimes mixed up with mucus, at other times in globular or cylindrical masses enveloped in a thin film of mucus. Haemoptysis, inability to lie down, night sweats, colignative diarrhoea, extreme emaciation, together with all the usual symptoms of pulmonary consumption at length carry them off; but not until they have lingered through months, and even years of suffering, incapable of working so as to support either themselves or their families." I must add that "all the attempts which have hitherto been made, to prevent or to cure the grinders' asthma, have utterly failed."

All this Knight wrote ten years ago; since then the number of grinders and the violence of the disease have increased, though attempts have been made to prevent it by covered grindstones and carrying off the dust by artificial draught. These methods have been at least partially successful, but the grinders do not desire their adoption, and have even destroyed the contrivance here and there, in the belief that more workers may be attracted to the business and wages thus reduced; they are for a short life and a merry one. Dr. Knight has often told grinders who came to him with the first symptoms of asthma that a return to grinding means certain death, but with no avail. He who is once a grinder falls into despair, as though he had sold himself to the devil. Education in Sheffield is upon a very low plane; a clergyman, who had occupied himself largely with the

statistics of education, was of the opinion that of 16,500 children of the working-class who are in a position to attend school, scarcely 6,500 can read. This comes of the fact that the children are taken from school in the seventh, and, at the very latest, in the twelfth year, and that the teachers are good for nothing; one was a convicted thief who found no other way of supporting himself after being released from jail than teaching school! Immorality among young people seems to be more prevalent in Sheffield than anywhere else. It is hard to tell which town ought to have the prize, and in reading the report one believes of each one that this certainly deserves it! The younger generation spend the whole of Sunday lying in the street tossing coins or fighting dogs, go regularly to the gin palace, where they sit with their sweethearts until late at night, when they take walks in solitary couples. In an ale-house which the commissioner visited, there sat forty to fifty young people of both sexes, nearly all under seventeen years of age, and each lad beside his lass. Here and there cards were played, at other places dancing was going on, and everywhere drinking. Among the company were openly avowed professional prostitutes. No wonder, then, that, as all the witnesses testify, early, unbridled sexual intercourse, youthful prostitution, beginning with persons of fourteen to fifteen years, is extraordinarily frequent in Sheffield. Crimes of a savage and desperate sort are of common occurrence; one year before the commissioner's visit, a band, consisting chiefly of young persons, was arrested when about to set fire to the town, being fully equipped with lances and inflammable substances. We shall see later that the labour movement in Sheffield has this same savage character.

Besides these two main centres of the metal industry, there are needle factories in Warrington, Lancashire, where great want, immorality, and ignorance prevail among the workers, and especially among the children; and a number of nail forges in the neighbourhood of Wigan, in Lancashire, and in the east of Scotland. The reports from these latter districts tell almost precisely the same story as those of Staffordshire. There is one more branch of this industry carried on in the factory districts, especially in Lancashire, the essential peculiarity of which is the production of machinery by machinery, whereby the workers, crowded out elsewhere, are deprived of their last refuge, the creation of the very enemy which supersedes them. Machinery for planing and boring, cutting screws, wheels, nuts, etc., with power lathes, has thrown out of employment a multitude of men who formerly found regular work at good wages; and whoever wishes to do so may see crowds of them in Manchester.

North of the iron district of Staffordshire lies an industrial region to which we shall now turn our attention, the Potteries, whose headquarters are in the borough of Stoke, embracing Henley, Burslem, Lane End, Lane Delph, Etruria, Coleridge, Langport, Tunstall, and Golden Hill, containing together 70,000 inhabitants. The Children's Employment Commission reports upon this subject that in some branches of this industry, in the production of stoneware, the children have light employment in warm, airy rooms; in others, on the contrary, hard, wearing labour is required, while they receive neither sufficient food nor good clothing. Many children complain: "Don't get enough to eat, get mostly potatoes with salt, never meat, never bread, don't go to school, haven't got no clothes." "Haven't got nothin' to eat today for dinner, don't never have dinner at home, get mostly potatoes and salt, sometimes bread." "This is all the clothes I have, no Sunday suit at home." Among the children whose work is especially injurious are the mould-runners, who have to carry the moulded article with the form to the drying-room, and afterwards bring back the empty form, when the article is properly dried. Thus they must go to and fro the whole day, carrying burdens heavy in proportion to their age, while the high temperature in which they have to do this increases very considerably the exhaustiveness of the work. These children, with scarcely a single exception, are lean, pale, feeble, stunted; nearly all suffer from stomach troubles, nausea, want of appetite, and many of them die of consumption. Almost as delicate are the boys called "jiggers", from the "jigger" wheel which they turn. But by far the most injurious is the work of those who dip the finished article into a fluid containing great quantities of lead, and

often of arsenic, or have to take the freshly dipped article up with the hand. The hands and clothing of these workers, adults and children, are always wet with this fluid, the skin softens and falls off under the constant contact with rough objects, so that the fingers often bleed, and are constantly in a state most favourable for the absorption of this dangerous substance. The consequence is violent pain, and serious disease of the stomach and intestines, obstinate constipation, colic, sometimes consumption, and, most common of all, epilepsy among children. Among men, partial paralysis of the hand muscles, colica pictorum, and paralysis of whole limbs are ordinary phenomena. One witness relates that two children who worked with him died of convulsions at their work; another who had helped with the dipping two years while a boy, relates that he had violent pains in the bowels at first, then convulsions, in consequence of which he was confined to his bed two months, since when the attacks of convulsions have increased in frequency, are now daily, accompanied often by ten to twenty epileptic fits, his right arm is paralysed, and the physicians tell him that he can never regain the use of his limbs. In one factory were found in the dipping-house four men, all epileptic and afflicted with severe colic, and eleven boys, several of whom were already epileptic. In short, this frightful disease follows this occupation universally: and that, too, to the greater pecuniary profit of the bourgeoisie! In the rooms in which the stoneware is scoured, the atmosphere is filled with pulverised flint, the breathing of which is as injurious as that of the steel dust among the Sheffield grinders. The workers lose breath, cannot lie down, suffer from sore throat and violent coughing, and come to have so feeble a voice that they can scarcely be heard. They, too, all die of consumption. In the Potteries district, the schools are said to be comparatively numerous, and to offer the children opportunities for instruction; but as the latter are so early set to work for twelve hours and often more per day, they are not in a position to avail themselves of the schools, so that three-fourths of the children examined by the commissioner could neither read nor write, while the whole district is plunged in the deepest ignorance. Children who have attended Sunday school for years could not tell one letter from another, and the moral and religious education, as well as the intellectual, is on a very low plane.

In the manufacture of glass, too, work occurs which seems little injurious to men, but cannot be endured by children. The hard labour, the irregularity of the hours, the frequent night-work, and especially the great heat of the working place (100 to 130 Fahrenheit), engender in children general debility and disease, stunted growth, and especially affections of the eye, bowel complaint, and rheumatic and bronchial affections. Many of the children are pale, have red eyes, often blind for weeks at a time, suffer from violent nausea, vomiting, coughs, colds, and rheumatism. When the glass is withdrawn from the fire, the children must often go into such heat that the boards on which they stand catch fire under their feet. The glass-blowers usually die young of debility and chest affections.

As a whole, this report testifies to the gradual but sure introduction of the factory system into all branches of industry, recognisable especially by the employment of women and children. I have not thought it necessary to trace in every case the progress of machinery and the superseding of men as workers. Every one who is in any degree acquainted with the nature of manufacture can fill this out for himself, while space fails me to describe in detail an aspect of our present system of production, the result of which I have already sketched in dealing with the factory system. In all directions machinery is being introduced, and the last trace of the working-man's independence thus destroyed. In all directions the family is being dissolved by the labour of wife and children, or inverted by the husband's being thrown out of employment and made dependent upon them for bread; everywhere inevitable machinery bestows upon the great capitalist command of trade and of the workers with it. The centralisation of capital strides forward without interruption, the division of society into great capitalists and non-possessing workers is sharper

every day, the industrial development of the nation advances with giant strides towards the inevitable crisis.

I have already stated that in the handicrafts the power of capital, and in some cases the division of labour too, has produced the same results, crushed the small tradesmen, and put great capitalists and non-possessing workers in their place. As to these handicraftsmen there is little to be said, since all that relates to them has already found its place where the proletariat in general was under discussion. There has been but little change here in the nature of the work and its influence upon health since the beginning of the industrial movement. But the constant contact with the factory operatives, the pressure of the great capitalists, which is much more felt than that of the small employer to whom the apprentice still stood in a more or less personal relation, the influences of life in towns, and the fall of wages, have made nearly all the handicraftsmen active participators in labour movements. We shall soon have more to say on this point, and turn meanwhile to one section of workers in London who deserve our attention by reason of the extraordinary barbarity with which they are exploited by the money-greed of the bourgeoisie. I mean the dress-makers and sewing-women.

It is a curious fact that the production of precisely those articles which serve the personal adornment of the ladies of the bourgeoisie involves the saddest consequences for the health of the workers. We have already seen this in the case of the lace-makers, and come now to the dress-making establishments of London for further proof. They employ a mass of young girls – there are said to be 15,000 of them in all – who sleep and eat on the premises, come usually from the country, and are therefore absolutely the slaves of their employers. During the fashionable season, which lasts some four months, working-hours, even in the best establishments, are fifteen, and, in very pressing cases, eighteen a day; but in most shops work goes on at these times without any set regulation, so that the girls never have more than six, often not more than three or four, sometimes, indeed, not more than two hours in the twenty-four, for rest and sleep, working nineteen to twenty-two hours, if not the whole night through, as frequently happens! The only limit set to their work is the absolute physical inability to hold the needle another minute. Cases have occurred in which these helpless creatures did not undress during nine consecutive days and nights, and could only rest a moment or two here and there upon a mattress, where food was served them ready cut up in order to require the least possible time for swallowing. In short, these unfortunate girls are kept by means of the moral whip of the modern slave-driver, the threat of discharge, to such long and unbroken toil as no strong man, much less a delicate girl of fourteen to twenty years, can endure. In addition to this, the foul air of the work-room and sleeping-places, the bent posture, the often bad and indigestible food, all these causes, combined with almost total exclusion from fresh air, entail the saddest consequences for the health of the girls. Enervation, exhaustion, debility, loss of appetite, pains in the shoulders, back, and hips, but especially headache, begin very soon; then follow curvatures of the spine, high, deformed shoulders, leanness, swelled, weeping, and smarting eyes, which soon become short-sighted; coughs, narrow chests, and shortness of breath, and all manner of disorders in the development of the female organism. In many cases the eyes suffer so severely that incurable blindness follows; but if the sight remains strong enough to make continued work possible, consumption usually soon ends the sad life of these milliners and dress-makers. Even those who leave this work at an early age retain permanently injured health, a broken constitution; and, when married, bring feeble and sickly children into the world. All the medical men interrogated by the commissioners agreed that no method of life could be invented better calculated to destroy health and induce early death.

With the same cruelty, though somewhat more indirectly, the rest of the needle-women of London are exploited. The girls employed in stay-making have a hard, wearing occupation, trying to the eyes. And what wages do they get? I do not know; but this I know, that the middleman who has to give security for the material delivered, and who distributes the work among the needle-

women, receives 1½d. per piece. From this he deducts his own pay, at least ½d., so that 1d. at most reaches the pocket of the girl. The girls who sew neckties must bind themselves to work sixteen hours a day, and receive 4½s. a week. But the shirt-makers' lot is the worst. They receive for an ordinary shirt 1½d., formerly 2d.-3d.; but since the workhouse of St. Pancras, which is administered by a Radical board of guardians, began to undertake work at 1½d., the poor women outside have been compelled to do the same. For fine, fancy shirts, which can be made in one day of eighteen hours, 6d. is paid. The weekly wage of these sewing-women according to this and according to testimony from many sides, including both needle-women and employers, is 2s. 6d. to 3s. for most strained work continued far into the night. And what crowns this shameful barbarism is the fact that the women must give a money deposit for a part of the materials entrusted to them, which they naturally cannot do unless they pawn a part of them (as the employers very well know), redeeming them at a loss; or if they cannot redeem the materials, they must appear before a Justice of the Peace, as happened to a sewing-woman in November, 1843. A poor girl who got into this strait and did not know what to do next, drowned herself in a canal in 1844. These women usually live in little garret rooms in the utmost distress, where as many crowd together as the space can possibly admit, and where, in winter, the animal warmth of the workers is the only heat obtainable. Here they sit bent over their work, sewing from four or five in the morning until midnight, destroying their health in a year or two and ending in an early grave; without being able to obtain the poorest necessities of life meanwhile.⁷⁹ And below them roll the brilliant equipages of the upper bourgeoisie, and perhaps ten steps away some pitiable dandy loses more money in one evening at faro than they can earn in a year.

Such is the condition of the English manufacturing proletariat. In all directions, whithersoever we may turn, we find want and disease permanent or temporary, and demoralisation arising from the condition of the workers; in all directions slow but sure undermining, and final destruction of the human being physically as well as mentally. Is this a state of things which can last? It cannot and will not last. The workers, the great majority of the nation, will not endure it. Let us see what they say of it.