The Factory System

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8. *The Evils of the Factory System.* By Charles Wing, Member of the Royal College of Surgeons, and one of the Surgeons to the Royal Metropolitan Hospital for Children. London, 8vo. 1836.
9. *A Voice from the Factories.* 8vo. 1836.

ALTHOUGH several years have elapsed since we last urged attention to the manufacturing system, we have not been indifferent to the progress of it. We have seen, with dismay, the opening fulfilment of our predictions; we have anxiously observed the efforts of a zealous few to mitigate the evil; an evil which, if not speedily checked, threatens to corrupt the whole social system of those vast counties, and bring into jeopardy, certainly the honour, and perhaps the safety, of the empire.

These great mischiefs have long prevailed in many of the northern provinces; but it is only of late years that their nature has been made manifest to the kingdom at large. In this publicity we perceive both danger and safety; danger, in revealing to a mighty mass the multitude of their fellow sufferers, and the extent of their wrongs; but safety, if they who have the power are quickened to their redress. This ghastly picture is not the work of artists, skilful but unauthorized; the tale is not invented by lying demagogues or effervescing philanthropists; all bears the seal and sanction of parliamentary veracity; committees of the house drew the outline, and commissioners of the crown filled it up.

Far be it from us to denounce, in one sweeping accusation, all the mill owners of this kingdom. Not a few of them have been honestly striving for the attainment of a legislative remedy, and many who oppose it, act, doubtless, from sincere convictions and motives they might fearlessly avow. But we must not, on this account, desist from the exposure,—we will spare the agents; —but as to the system—delicacy would be misplaced, and delay irreparable.

Committees and commissioners,—disinterested masters, casual observers, and impartial philosophers, speak one language,—and how can they differ? Who can fail, upon a survey of the manufacturing districts, to be struck by the appearance of misery and filth; by the total neglect of the person and the household; by stunted forms, sallow complexions, sickly and mis-shapen children, and youth bowed down by the infirmities of age? Press the inquiry further,—examine their minds; there you will find still worse diseases, the 'mala mentis gaudia;' there

'Luctus, et ultrices posuere cubilia curæ.'

Suspicion, discontent, extravagance, recklessness, ignorance of personal and domestic economy, too often a complete insensibility to the moral distinctions, and a total defect of religion!—hence arise all those evils that, by an awful permission of Providence, ensue upon the degradation of man; we have sunk him to an animal, and that an animal of the lowest order; what wonder, then, that

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most frivolous and groundless. He was restored to liberty a few days after he had been *definitively deposed*.'—pp. 45, 46.

The true version is,—

'Arrested on the most frivolous pretences, but released within a few days, hewas nevertheless, definitely dismissed from the service.'

'We went alternately from an outrageous *defiance* (*défiance—suspicion*) to an unlimited confidence.'—p. 161.

'I again spoke on the *reduction* (*redaction—wording*) of the first article.'—p. 207.

'Moreau retired in good order by the *river* (*rivière—sea-side provinces*) of Genoa.' —p. 215.

'They demanded the *report* (*rapport—repeal*) of the law of censorship.'—p. 230. We need not enlarge the list.

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he looks no higher, but limits the operations of an immortal soul to unceasing labour and disgusting sensuality! These are the words of truth and soberness; let those who can do so, convince us of error; we had rather be exposed to the charge of exaggeration than be found true in all the horrors of these statements.

But this is not the whole. Why, in the best season of youthfulness and health, are the children dejected and suffering? why, instead of beauty and strength, do we see weakness and deformity? why do we hear complaint instead of joy?—It is, that thousands and tens of thousands of these unhappy beings endure a daily torture; many deprived of their parents, or, if not of their parents, at least of parental affection and tutelage, by this corrupting system. Should they ever themselves become parents, they wish not, or know not, how to train up their offspring; again the factory, again degradation,—the years of learning and recreation are consumed in bodily toil and mental indolence; thousands perish in early childhood; others survive uneducated and diseased; but few, very few, after the ordinary prime of life, retain any capacity for labour in their several callings. Poverty, disease, and decrepitude, are their universal portion; Death, then, elsewhere the king of terrors, is here the king of mercies,—husbands, wives, parents, children, all prematurely struck, press, as it were, with alacrity to the grave,—

> 'Matres atque viri, pueri, innuptæque puellæ,
> Impositique rogis juvenes ante ora parentum.'

Once it was possible, and for a while safe, to disregard the operation of this appalling evil; but it has now extended from hundreds to thousands, and from thousands to millions, until it has at last comprized within its grasp a large portion of our people; —in the name of humanity and of God, the remedy to this evil must no longer be delayed. Past times, which would not be persuaded to mercy, have bequeathed to us now to be terrified into justice.

Yet, during the space of full fifty years, there have not been wanting able and honest men who, in appeals to all the sentiments of humanity and wisdom, have besought the nation to correct these evils. The language of remonstrance was heard in 1784. In 1795, Dr. Aiken,—in 1796, Dr. Percival, the great and wise Dr. Hunter, and a legion of others, hardly less eminent, denounced the plague-spot. At a later period it was proclaimed by statesmen within the walls of parliament; proved in committees; pressed again and again upon the feelings of the nation by our own and some other journals; and last of all, it almost engrossed the zealous efforts of Mr. Sadler. He first showed all the horrid and damnatory truth, and of course was hated for it; but his diligence it was that collected

collected the materials, and his eloquence that displayed them; and though difficulty and disappointment dogged his steps, he gave to the system a tremendous blow, from which, by God's blessing, it will never recover.

We have now lying before us a pamphlet lately published by Mr. John Fielden, member of parliament for the new borough of Oldham. It is a document well worthy of consideration. Its general merits would demand attention, but the name and circumstances of the author heighten its value: he is a gentleman of vast practical knowledge in every stage and department of the business; he has carried on for many years the trade of a manufacturer, and that on no contracted scale; for we speak from authority when we say, that the firm in which he is a partner works up nearly one-hundredth part of all the cotton-wool imported into this country. A reference to official papers will exhibit the magnitude of his concern in the manufacture, since we find by Burn's Glance, that the total amount of imported cotton, was, in 1835, more than 330,000,000 of pounds. This, at least, affords a presumption that his advice is tempered by just views of interest, and that he cannot be rushing, with the temerity of a pauper, into every proposition of enthusiasts or coxcombs. His notions of the evil and its remedy concur with our own, and we shall quote from him largely, as occasion may require; nor can we begin better than with his narrative of those causes which first compelled an unwilling inquiry into the abominations of the factory:—

'It is well known,' says Mr. Fielden, 'that Arkwright's (so called, at least) inventions took manufactures out of the cottages and farm-houses of England, where they had been carried on by mothers, or by daughters under the mother's eye, and assembled them in the counties of Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and more particularly in Lancashire, where the newly-invented machinery was used in large factories, built on the sides of streams capable of turning the water-wheel. Thousands of hands were suddenly required in these places, remote from towns; and Lancashire, in particular, being till then but comparatively thinly populated and barren, a population was all she now wanted. The small and nimble fingers of little children being, by very far, the most in request, the custom instantly sprang up of procuring apprentices from the different parish workhouses of London, Birmingham, and elsewhere. Many, many thousands of these little hapless creatures were sent down into the north, being from the age of seven to the age of thirteen or fourteen years.

'The custom was for the master to clothe his apprentices, and to feed and lodge them in an "apprentice house" near the factory. Overseers were appointed, whose interest it was to work the children to the utmost, because their pay was in proportion to the quantity of work they could exact. There is abundant evidence on record, and preserved in the recollection

lection of some who still live, to show, that in many of the manufacturing districts, but particularly, I am afraid, in the guilty county to which I belong, cruelties the most heartrending were practised upon the unoffending and friendless creatures; that they were harassed to the brink of death by excess of labour; that they were flogged, fettered, and tortured in the most exquisite refinement of cruelty; that they were, in many cases, starved to the bone, while flogged to their work, and that even in some instances they were driven to commit suicide to evade the cruelties of a world in which, though born to it so recently, their happiest moments had been passed in the garb and coercion of a workhouse. The beautiful and romantic valleys of Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and Lancashire, secluded from the public eye, became the dismal solitudes of torture and many a murder.

'The profits of manufactures were enormous; but this only whetted the appetite that it should have satisfied, and therefore the manufacturers had recourse to an expedient that seemed to secure to them those profits without any possibility of limit. They began the practice of what is termed "night-working," that is, having tired out one set of hands, by working them throughout the day, they had another set ready to go on working throughout the night,—the day-set getting into the beds that the night-set had just quitted, and, in their turn again, the night-set getting into the beds that the day-set quitted in the morning. It is a common tradition in Lancashire that the beds never got cold! These outrages on nature, nature herself took in hand; she would not tolerate this; and accordingly she stepped forth with an ominous and awful warning;—contagious fevers broke out, and began to spread their ravages around; neighbourhoods became alarmed; correspondences appeared in the newspapers, and a feeling of general horror was excited, when the atrocities committed in these remote glens became even partially known.

'The masters themselves, proof against the dictates of ordinary humanity, were not proof against malignant fevers, nor strong enough to set the public voice at defiance, and therefore they instituted a board of health at Manchester, which made a Report in 1796.'—Fielden, p. 5.

This is the graphic language of humanity and just indignation; of a mind informed, but not hardened by experience; of a man who measures life and limb by the sufferings of his kind, and sets more value on mercy than on pounds of yarn. But what says the Manchester Report of 1796?

'1st. It appears that the children and others who work in the large cotton factories are peculiarly disposed to be affected by the contagion of fever; and that when such infection is received it is rapidly propagated, not only amongst those who are crowded together in the same apartment, but in the families and neighbourhoods to which they belong. 2nd. The large factories are generally injurious to the constitution of those employed in them, even when no particular diseases prevail, from the close confinement which is enjoined, from the debilitating effects of hot or impure air, and from want of the active exercises which

which nature points out as essential in childhood and youth, to invigorate the system and to fit our species for the employments and duties of manhood. 3rd. The untimely labour of the night, and the protracted labour of the day, with respect to children, not only tends to diminish the general sum of life and industry, by impairing the strength and destroying the vital stamina of the rising generation, but *it too often gives encouragement to idleness, extravagance, and profligacy in parents, who, contrary to the order of nature, subsist by the oppression of their offspring.* It appears that children employed in factories are generally debarred from all opportunities of education, and from moral or religious instruction.'*

Applicable in all its bearings to the present day! Now, let it be observed, that this is no mawkish and empty declamation, got up to round a sentence, or please a mob; the doctors pledged their science, and the mill owners confirmed it; and, in such an act of sincerity, published their own condemnation. Terror at length had prevailed over shame, and to secure universal co-operation, they proclaimed the issues of universal cruelty. But it was a tardy and reluctant step—long, long before, had the same frightful evil stared them in the face, ravaged their mills, and afflicted the children; and what was the result after all? An investigation, which produced a report, and a report which produced nothing else, satisfied their consciences, or at least allayed their fears. '*Nocte pluit totâ, redeunt spectacula manè.*' When the dangers of infection were removed, the precautions of mercy were forgotten; Mammon again opened the campaign with Moloch.

Subsequent committees, and private narratives, disclosed many horrors; but this world will never know all those deeds of darkness; 'instruments of cruelty were in their habitations.' Children became of less value than cattle, for the salesman demanded a price for his oxen, but the teeming work-houses rejoiced to give. Hundreds and thousands of their destitute wretches without father or mother, or natural protector, or christian friend, were sent down by cart-loads to the dens of covetousness; there every form of suffering awaited them, unceasing toil through day and night, exasperated by noise and pestilential effluvia; food alike disgusting and scanty—dirt, deformity, and disease—the strap and the thong, to animate their courage, and renew their strength.

In a debate of 1815, Mr. Horner described in these words the practices of the apprentice system:—

'It has been known,' said he, 'that with a bankrupt's effects, a gang, (if I may use the word) of *these children, have been put up to sale,*

* See, in the works of Thomas Percival, M.D., the report of the Physicians of Manchester on the contagious fever in the Radcliffe Mills.

and were advertised publicly as part of the property. A most atrocious instance was brought before the Court of King's Bench two years ago, in which a number of these boys apprenticed by a parish in London to one manufacturer, had been transferred to another, and had been found by some benevolent persons in a state of absolute famine. Another case more horrible came to my own knowledge while on a Committee up stairs; that, not many years ago, *an agreement had been made between a London parish and a Lancashire manufacturer, by which it was stipulated that, with every twenty sound children, one idiot should be taken!*'

To correct in some measure this prodigious evil, the late Sir R. Peel introduced the first legislative measure for the protection of children. He proposed it in the year 1802, and ultimately obtained the Act, which is commonly known as the 42nd Geo. III., 'For the preservation of the Health and Morals of Apprentices and others, employed in Cotton and other Mills.' The Act did not rapidly come into practical observance; but wherever it prevailed, the effects were good; and Sir Robert, in a review of it a dozen years afterwards, declared, 'That the hours of work allowed by the bill, being fewer in number than those formerly practised, a visible improvement in the health and general appearance of the children soon became evident, and since the complete operation of the Act, contagious disorders had rarely occurred.'

But a great revolution in the trade had now taken place, which disturbed the old arrangements and sites of the manufacture—the general introduction of steam-power superseded the water-mills, and brought the factories into towns and populous districts. The buildings had hitherto been erected on streams, oftentimes in remote situations, the force of the fall being much more considered than the circumstances of the vicinity. To work such engines the hands had been furnished from London and Birmingham; the supply was obedient to the economist's law of being equal to the demand; and the trade from the workhouse to the mill was as regular and ruthless as from Africa to the Brazils. Steam-power now prevailed where labour was most rife, and capital began to flow into the towns; it bore with it those habits of cupidity and oppression, learned and practised in the former solitudes; and despite the law, despite opinion, ran such a course of fraud and cruelty, that Sir Robert Peel declared, in 1816, that the system would 'be attended with effects to the rising generation so serious and alarming that he could not contemplate them without dismay; and thus, that the great effort of British ingenuity, whereby the machinery of our manufactures has been brought to such perfection, *instead of being a blessing to the nation, would be converted into the bitterest curse.*'

The law of 1802 had been limited in its operation to the class of

of *apprentices;* and since it was, on whatever quibbling grounds, maintained that the wording of the Act restrained it to these alone, Sir R. Peel proposed a new measure to meet the new circumstances. Children, instead of being imported as formerly from distant workhouses, were now hired abundantly from the families around; their services were dignified by the style of 'free labour,' their persons excluded from the protection of the Act; and because they were not apprentices they became in fact slaves. This second Bill was presented in June, 1815, was read a second time, and committed; but on account of the lateness of the season, Sir Robert did not see fit to press it any further that year. The proposition, however, was of value,—it stamped his sanction, and that of the House, on limitation of labour, and protection to young persons between the ages of ten and eighteen, whether apprentices or *free;*—it approximated, moreover, to the great object of our hopes, by declaring that the period of toil should not exceed *ten hours and a half*—half an hour only beyond the term which the sternness of parliament now denies to the prayers of the people.

In the following session a committee was appointed to investigate the condition of children in the factories; it made a report of evidence to the House, but no one introduced any legislative measures. The session of 1817 produced as little, the indisposition of Sir Robert Peel having precluded him from his usual activity in public business; but in 1818 he prepared a bill, and carried it after much opposition; that measure limited the number of hours to eleven, of actual labour, for all persons between the ages of nine and sixteen. It was read a first and second time in the Lords, and referred to a committee up stairs, that further evidence might be taken. Lord Kenyon, to whose worthy hands the bill had been entrusted, opposed in vain this proposition for delay; his arguments were overruled,—the inquiry was granted,—and the bill in consequence lost by the prorogation of the Houses. His Lordship, however, renewed his efforts in the following session; the committee was again appointed, and with happier results; for a bill was framed, similar in all its main provisions to the one received from the Commons,—it passed the Lords, went down to the other House, and, after the cruel addition of an hour of daily labour, ultimately became law in 1819. Thus three reports, from three several committees,—two from the Lords and one from the Commons,—were now before the public. Their contents, however, excited little interest; a few members of parliament, and one or two of the cotton districts, seemed alone aware of the enormities revealed. But their matter is very instructive. Never was a more striking illustration of

the mode of defence that avarice and tyranny have ever adopted to shelter their haunts from view, and their practices from detection. It shows, too, the depth and continuance of the leprosy, the unclean and virulent disease, which, beginning with a spot, had overspread the whole body with pain and loathsomeness. Had the nation been wise they would have noted these things, and by a vigorous effort of humanity and power have spared future parliaments abundant trouble.

The investigation, to say no more of it, was at least extensive,—one hundred and fifty witnesses attested the merits or mischiefs of the system; seventy in defence, and eighty for amendment. Thirty-four of the whole were medical men, twenty-one being surgeons and thirteen physicians; about one hundred were persons engaged in the business in some way or other; and the remainder consisted of general witnesses, inclusive of two clergymen and one major-general. It would puzzle any confiding and inexperienced mind,—

> 'Spotless without, and innocent within,
> Which feared no evil, for it knew no sin,'—

to assign any meaning to a large portion of the evidence adduced against the measure. Involved, as it is, in prolixity and confusion, the opponents must have relied on the universal superstition that much is proved where much has been said. What object could they have had in the production of such stuff but to delay the inquiry, and overload the minutes? In this mass of trumpery, the evidence of their doctors is the most worthless lump. It is sad that a profession so accomplished and humane should have 'nourished and brought up *such* children' at her feet; but their own testimony condemns them. Did they speak as partizans, we need pass no comment; and did they speak from their science, a barber might confound them.

'Edward Hulme, M.D. of Manchester.*—*Q.* Suppose I were to ask you, whether you thought it *injurious to a child to be kept standing three-and-twenty hours out of the four-and-twenty*, should you not think it must necessarily be injurious to the health, without any fact to rest upon, as a simple proposition put to a gentleman in the medical profession? *A.* Before I answered that question I should wish to have an examination, to see how the case stood.—*Q.* Would it be injurious to a child, in your judgment, as a medical man, if, at the time he got his meals, he was still kept engaged in the employment he was about? *A. Those* are questions *which I find a great difficulty in answering'!!*

Well; but the next was more easy,—

'*Q.* I ask you, as a medical man, whether, supposing a person, during the time he was eating his meals, was employed in manual labour, is it

* Evidence before Lords' Committees of 1818 and 1819.

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your judgment that the food will be as nutritious to him as it would be if he were unemployed? *A.* I should imagine that the food would be equally nutritious to him, *if he did the manual labour of handling his knife and fork*' ! ! !

Mr. Whatton (surgeon) 'could not, as a man of science, *form any idea* of the number of hours a child of eight years ought to be employed in a factory.' Why, then, was he summoned to give evidence?

'Dr. Hardie.—At what age do you think it would be perfectly safe to the constitution of an infant, working in the temperature of 80°, to work eighty hours per week? I have no fact to guide me in replying.—You do not feel capable of answering that question? *No, I do not.*—How many hours in the day do you think children from six years of age to twelve may be employed, in a temperature of 80°, at an employment which requires them to stand much the greater part of their time, consistently with safety to their constitution? I have no fact to direct me to any conclusion. . . . .

'Mr. Wilson, surgeon.—Is it not, in your judgment, as a medical man, necessary that young persons should have a little recreation or amusement during the day; is it not contributary to their general health? *I do not see it necessary.* . . . .

'Mr. Ainsworth, surgeon.—Can a child from six years of age to twelve be employed from thirteen to fifteen hours daily in a temperature of 80°, and in an erect position, consistently with safety to its constitution? I never saw an instance of the kind as a fact brought before me, and therefore cannot say.—Am I to understand you, *as a medical man*, can *give no opinion*, whether it would not be more exhausting to the human body to keep in *an erect position* for twelve hours, than in a *reclining* position? *I have no facts to lead me to conclude.* . . .

'Thomas Turner, surgeon.—Do you think it would benefit a child's health of eight years old to be kept twelve hours upon his legs? *Really I am not prepared to answer that question.*—What do you think of it? I really cannot tell you.—You can form no opinion, whether to a child of eight years of age being kept standing fourteen hours without intermission would be injurious to his health or not? I have no facts to guide me.'

Of the same kind was the evidence of several other sages—but they were all overtopped by Mr. Samuel Barton, surgeon. This gentleman was a pattern of activity and penetration; indeed we must ascribe to a natural humility his forbearance to assume the character of a prodigy. Mahomet was nothing to him; within an incredibly short space the prophet had three thousand conferences with an angel, but said nothing on the matter. This gentleman saw eleven hundred and seventy patients in about eight hours, and *reported upon them all!*

Such being the amount of science and philosophy that the mill owners adduced in support of their system, a most powerful contrast

trast was established by those who had undertaken to expose it. The recital of the names might well be sufficient; and, indeed, our limits will scarcely allow us room for much more. Dr. Matthew Baillie, Dr. Pemberton, Sir George Tuthill, Sir Gilbert Blane, Sir Astley Cooper, and Sir Anthony Carlisle, had already declared it to be perilous and cruel; they had foretold, as its results, suffering, deformity, abridgment of life, and sicknesses, which, if not immediately fatal, must lay the foundation of mortal attacks, and the seeds of hereditary disorder. Drs. Winstanley, Ashton, Jones, Ward, and Jarrold, adduced their long experience in the factory districts of the various mischiefs consequent on the system. These gentlemen did not speak, like their opponents, in mystification or doubt; but openly, and indignantly denounced the evil. Messrs. Graham, Bellott, Dean, Badley, Boutflower, and Simmons, surgeons of great practice in those parts, were equally explicit. We will call the attention of our readers to some specimens of their evidence.*

Dr. Ashton had inspected six factories in Stockport, in company with Mr. Graham, surgeon, and examined the workpeople individually.

'Our report,' said he, 'will show that in the six factories we visited, the aggregate number consisted of 824. We have reported 183 healthy, 240 delicate, 43 very much stunted; 100 had enlarged ankles or knees, and 37 of that number were distorted in the inferior extremities, and 256 unhealthy.'

But what a bungler was here! Mr. Barton, as we have seen, inspected and reported on 1170 workers in eight hours; this gentleman, in the examination of 824, spent as many days.

'The impression,' continued Dr. Ashton, 'was extremely unfavourable as to the employment—it is certainly prejudicial to the health of the children—highly so. Speaking of peculiar diseases, the first that presented itself to my mind, in those who had entered early, *was something very pulmonary, shortness of breathing, and swelled ankles—sure preludes to diseases of a more dangerous nature.*

'Mr. Graham.—Do many children employed in cotton-factories, at Stockport, die of consumption? A considerable number go off in consumptions.—Are many of these distorted? A considerable number.—Are they apt to be short? Very frequently stunted.—To what cause do you ascribe all these effects? I suppose it is owing to putting them to work too early, and standing too long upon their feet.—From your experience of twenty-four years at Stockport, are you of opinion that a greater number of children die, in proportion, who have been working in cotton-factories, than have died among children in other employment? I can have no doubt of it; I think by

* Evidence before Lords' Committees of 1818 and 1819.

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the bill of mortality for the parish of Stockport, there were not less than 200 who died of consumption in the last year.'

'Dr. Ward.—Are you of an opinion that working thirteen hours and a half in a factory is likely to exhaust young persons? I am astonished for my own part that we do not hear of instances of their dropping down dead while at work.'

'Mr. Dean.—Children are subject to glandular diseases particularly; but along with it a great number of instances occur of swellings of the extremities, and of deformities of the spine, the thorax, and the lower extremities.—Is the employment in cotton-factories, as at present carried on, more particularly prejudicial to girls than boys? Yes.'

'Mr. Boutflower.—Do you imagine the children outgrow the diseases? No; I think, on the contrary, it is fastened on their constitutions. . . . . I have seen a great many instances of chronic asthma from the effects of the flue getting into their lungs; they become stuffed.'

'Mr. Simmons.—Contagious diseases are generated from confined human effluvia: by a sudden change of temperature from heat to cold, the body being poorly defended by clothing, acute inflammation frequently arises; or, escaping all these sources of danger, the strength is gradually wasted, until scrofula, or some other disease of debility, makes its appearance in the shattered frame. Scrofula is the endemic disease of this district; it manifests itself in a great variety of forms, but the most common are consumption, sore eyes, and white swelling of the joints: this latter form of scrofula supplies a great majority of the numerous amputations which take place at our infirmary. . . . . Throughout I have directed my remarks to the condition of the male sex employed in factories; to the female sex, however, their application is still more forcible. In passing into the state of womanhood, the health is often peculiarly delicate, and should they survive that critical period, distortion of the spine may be seriously apprehended. This deformity is not uncommon, and when situated low down in the spine, will aggravate the peril of childbirth; and, in an extreme case, render it necessary to devote the life of the child to the preservation of the life of the mother.'

'Mr. Jones, accoucheur.—Have you reason to believe that the girls and young women have been much injured by the cotton-factory employment? I cannot give a decided answer to that question; but I will state the fact, that, during the short period of my practice at Holywell, viz. from eight to ten years, I met with more cases requiring the aid of instruments, that circumstance showing them to be bad ones, than a gentleman of great practice in Birmingham, to whom I was previously a pupil, *had met with in the whole course of his life.*'

These are but samples of the stock; but we must pass to a summary of the various evidence. It appeared, then, that the labour, in nearly all the cotton-mills of Lancashire and its neighbourhood, was, excepting Saturday, from thirteen to sixteen hours a day, inclusive of one hour, or less, *nominally* allowed for dinner. Many of those subjected to such labour were children of nine, eight,

eight, seven, and six years of age, and previously to the stirring of the investigation, under six, and, in some instances, *under five!* * The children continued constantly at work so long as the machinery was in motion, during which time they were not permitted to sit down or to leave the factory. They often complained (naturally enough, our readers will think) of fatigue, and aching limbs; in this state of exhaustion, towards the close of the day, they were beaten by the spinners, or overlookers, or even by their own parents, that blows might supply the deficiency of strength. In most cotton-factories, during the greater part, and often the whole of the time *nominally* allotted for dinner, the children were occupied in cleaning the machinery; no time was allowed for the breakfast or afternoon meals, which were snatched in mouthfuls during the progress of uninterrupted labour; the refreshment not unfrequently remaining untouched till it became cold, and covered with dust and dirt from the cotton-flyings. It appeared, moreover, that the temperature in many cotton-mills was from 75° to 80°, in others from 80° to 85°, and occasionally as high as 90°. The medical gentlemen satisfactorily proved the children in cotton-mills to be in general unhealthy; that the protracted toil they underwent had a tendency to create debility, sickness, loss of appetite, distortions, swelled knees, and consumption. They generally expressed their opinion that the mode of conducting these establishments was highly injurious to young persons: that where it did not cut life short in the bud—its sure tendency was to bring on a premature old age.

It was on this basis that a bill was introduced; the generous nature of their Lordships assigned eleven hours, but the Commons *amended* the period to twelve of actual labour. The bill was passed, and the world called it mercy; and mercy it was by comparison with the recognition of unlimited power over the labour of the children; but still it was a most inadequate measure. The law still *allowed* seventy-two hours of weekly toil, amid all the grease, and gas, and noise, and filthy atmosphere; and we may be assured that what the law allowed, the masters took, whenever the demand for labour was lively. After the lapse of a few years Sir John Hobhouse tried his hand at an amendment of the law, and endeavoured to effect some wise and humane provisions for the relief of the children. His bill (an eleven-hours bill for every day, or sixty-six hours a week) was hotly opposed by the flax-spinners of Scotland, who would not submit to be included within its pale. He obtained, however, an act in 1825, which limited the labour of persons under sixteen to sixty-nine hours in the

* *Even now* we see, by the Commissioners' Report of 1833 (p. 15), that children are found in the mills at six years of age.

week,

week, twelve on five days and nine on Saturdays. But his bill comprised the cotton-factories only. In 1831 it was somewhat improved by the prohibition of night-work for all under twenty-one, and by the advance of the ages entitled to protection from sixteen to eighteen years. He deserves, and shall ever receive, our warmest thanks for his amiable exertions :—'O, si sic omnia!'

But these measures were insufficient to remedy those evils, which, by the mighty extension of the manufacturing business, were forcibly recalled to general attention. The period of labour, had it even been exacted with all the alleviations that humanity could suggest, was barbarously long; and while the factories flourished the children declined. A new champion then appeared in the field to maintain the cause of these wretched infants; and Providence, in its wisdom, has seldom raised up a man more fitted to the hour. Mr. Sadler resided in the midst of those districts, and 'his spirit was stirred within him,' when he saw the daily sufferings by which avaricious men amassed their treasures, under the sanction of inhuman laws. In 1831 he appealed to the country, by speech and writing, in public meeting and private conversation; and having begotten an enthusiastic sympathy, he introduced a bill into parliament in the following session. It is very instructive and very consolatory to mark the labours of that excellent man. Difficulties of every kind beset his path; calumny preceded, and insult followed him, yet his patience was unwearied. Though possessing neither parliamentary following nor family connexion, he undertook a cause buttressed by wealth, and interest, and party, and power; their resistance was equal to their hatred; and had not his talents been directed by truth, and his courage supported by religion, faintness and disgust must utterly have overpowered his affectionate and honest heart. But he was peculiarly the man that the circumstances required; his powers of research and combination were wonderful; few could equal his natural ability, and none surpass his industry; both were sustained by principle; and in drawing new strength from the difficulties around them, displayed him with admirable consistency, a Christian in soul, and a patriot in conduct.

His bill was stifled in its birth by a vote of the House, which sent it to a committee-room, the hopeless subject of a coroner's inquest. Providence, indeed, brought good out of evil; the result of this inquiry, instituted for delay, and the decencies of interment, was a revival of the question in all its breadth; a body of evidence, which, in depth, extent, and science, has never been approached, alarmed and disgusted the world, and afforded so marvellous a refutation of empirics, past, present, and to come that

'Fops were silent, and wits almost just,'

But

But the policy of delay had been partially successful; the investigation was protracted to the end of the session; the parliament was then dissolved, and Mr. Sadler obtained no seat in the next House of Commons. This was a mighty triumph; many a pæan was heard from the masters, and many a dirge from the children.

This was the position in which the matter stood at the assembling of the first reformed parliament, in 1833; Lord Ashley then acceded to the solicitation of the factory delegates, and undertook, in pursuance of the plan of Mr. Sadler, to submit a bill to the consideration of the legislature. He gave notice of his intentions on the first day of the meeting, and introduced, on the following 5th of March, a bill exactly the same in principle as Mr. Sadler's, and nearly so in details; both of them sought to mitigate the appalling evil by a restriction of the toil to a period of ten hours for all ages from nine to eighteen; and it is now our duty to quote as largely as our limits may allow, the testimony on which the necessity of such measures was maintained.

The evidence of 1832 is the development and completion of that of 1816, 1818, and 1819; the first was the child, the second the adult,—and a perfect Caliban in filthiness and cruelty. The labour ought to have been spared; for the evidence adduced was a mere repetition, varied only by the wider extent of the mischief, and intensity derived from longer continuance. But still the subject was now more profoundly exhibited. Above eighty witnesses described what they had seen, and spoke what they had felt; slavery and torture could inflict no worse; and forsooth, were it not done under the *appearance* of free agency, it would never be permitted for an hour. Oh liberty! what crimes are committed in thy name!

No less than six physicians and fourteen surgeons, twenty English gentlemen of reputation and experience, submitted to a personal examination before the committee. To these must be added the documentary statements of twenty-six more from Scotland—seven physicians and nineteen surgeons.—*e. g.*

'Sir Anthony Carlisle, F.R.S.—Factory children demand legislative protection for their own sakes, and for the sake of future generations of English labourers, because every succeeding generation will be progressively deteriorated, if you do not stop these sins against nature and humanity. I am quite sure, that the foundations for debility, decrepitude, and premature death, are to be found in these unnatural habits.'

'Sir William Blizard, F.R.S.—*Q.* You think the average of such hours of labour (twelve and upwards) would be an extravagant imposition on the human frame? *A. Dreadful.* Not more than ten hours' actual labour ought to be demanded in behalf of young persons between nine and eighteen. I heartily concur in that opinion of my late honoured

honoured friend, Dr. Baillie, that the duration of a day's actual labour of ten hours is quite enough, and as much as can be ordinarily endured *at any age with impunity*.'

'Sir Charles Bell, K.G.H., F.R.S.—From nine to eighteen years, ten hours' labour a-day, to which must be added the time necessary for taking meals and refreshment, making twelve hours a-day, is as much as can be endured, generally speaking, *with impunity*, by those so occupied, *and more than that is painful in idea*.'

'Sir George Leman Tuthill, F.R.S., M.D.—I think that ten hours of actual labour is as much as children and young persons from the age of nine to eighteen, of either sex, can endure with impunity.'

'Joseph Henry Green, F.R.S. (surgeon of St. Thomas's Hospital, and Professor of Surgery at King's College.)—This is indeed a melancholy list of maladies (scrofula, tending to produce spinal complaints, white swellings, pulmonary consumptions, &c.), and one which I am sorry to say might be greatly augmented, as traceable to the neglect and improper management of those whose tender years demand our kindest care and attention. I fear that this country will have much to answer for in permitting the growth of that system of employing children in factories, which tends directly to the creation of all those circumstances which inevitably lead to disease. I say, that these, and all the physical evils incident to such a state, require no medical opinion, but *demand unsparing moral correction*.'

'Sir Benjamin Brodie, F.R.S.—*Q.* It has been stated by a preceding witness, that out of about 2,000 children and young persons who have been carefully examined, about or nearly 200 were deformed, some of them very considerably, though it was considered many cases had escaped detection in the females, which their dress would more easily hide; do you conceive that would be a great portion of deformity to befall persons under those circumstances? *A.* Certainly, *an immense proportion*.—Do you conceive that it is more than ordinarily necessary to give protection to the female about the age of puberty? Yes.—Are you of opinion that a young person from nine to eighteen ought to labour beyond twelve hours a-day, including the necessary intervals for taking meals? *I should think twelve too much for all*, and indeed I think ten too much for children of ten or twelve years of age.'

'Peter Mark Roget, M.D., F.R.S., (late a Physician to Manchester Infirmary.)—It appears to me, that the period mentioned (twelve hours a-day, with due intermission for meals) is quite as much as the human frame is calculated to endure for any length of time, *even in the adult stat .*'

'William Lutener, Esq. surgeon, (Newton, Montgomeryshire.)—*Q.* Have you had reason to remark in your professional duties, that accidents occur when the children became over-fatigued? *A.* We have frequent accidents, because the children get sleepy at night, and get their hands in the work; I have had frequently to amputate the hands and fingers of children.'

'George James Guthrie, Esq., F.R.S.—*Q.* Have you not been a medical officer in the armies of this country for a considerable length of time? *A.* Yes.—

A. Yes.—Is eight hours out of the twenty-four about the amount of ordinary duty required of a soldier? *A soldier is never kept under arms more than four or six hours, unless before the enemy.*'

'John Richard Farre, M.D. (a physician of forty-two years standing.) —*Q.* Were you engaged in medical practice in the West Indies? *A.* I was. —Supposing that the employment of children in the factories of this country is spread over twelve or fourteen hours a-day, and often with but very short intervals for the taking of their meals; is there anything equal to that sort of labour imposed upon the children of the slaves in Barbadoes? Nothing of the kind; *even the adult, in the most vigorous condition of the body, is not subject to labour of that duration.* In English factories everything which is valuable in manhood is sacrificed to an inferior advantage in childhood. You purchase your advantage at the price of *infanticide;* the profit thus gained is *death* to the child.'

The like testimony was given by many other physicians and surgeons of equal experience and authority: among others, by Doctors Young, Elliotson, and Blundell—Messrs. King, Malyn, Sharp, Simmons—and last, not least, Mr. Travers, of St. Thomas's Hospital.

This was the evidence that roused the country and dismayed the mill-owners. The masters were at their wit's end, and saw no outlet for escape; delay, therefore, became as usual their darling plan; but while the policy was old, the method was new. They resolved upon *a Commission,* trusting to find, in its delays or its reports, a refuge that the truth denied them; it was novel and specious,—gave opportunities of personal survey, and while the commissioners roved, furnished unanswerable grounds for procrastination.—An address to the crown for such an appointment was moved by Mr. Wilson Patten, in the month of April, and, being supported by ministers, it was carried by a majority of *two!*

A long interval succeeded; towards the end of which Lord Ashley, not without great difficulty, effected a second reading of his bill, Lord Althorp declaring that he would admit the principle, but not the details of it. In the month of July, after many interrogations in the House of Commons, the Commissioners made their report in a volume of most repulsive magnitude. And it served a purpose; for the extent of the evidence, combined with the lateness of the session, seemed to furnish an argument for extraordinary measures, and Lord Althorp therefore proposed, on the 5th of July, that the bill should be referred to a committee up stairs, under limitations to consider merely the provisions of the bill, and to report to the House in time for legislation. But secrecy would have served his end as well as delay; he was therefore resisted, and with success, for the House determined, by a majority of twenty-three, to reserve to itself the entire question.

Though

Though the scheme of the Commission had partial success, inasmuch as it gave ministers a temporary power to overwhelm the ten-hours bill, yet their huge folio contained within itself an antidote to the poison;—it recommended a plan of two sets of children, and showed clearly that only one set was practicable; it excluded many from the pale of the protection, and demonstrated that they ought to be within it. Thus it recommended one thing and proved another; and now that the legislature has made trial of the recommendation, it will, we hope, shortly have recourse to the proof. If that portentous document be accurately examined, and properly estimated, we shall require no aid from any former evidence. Speakers and authors, committees and commissioners, have tried their skill; but all have failed,—the accursed upas tree still sheds its venom over all who approach its fatal influence, and confounds, by a visible refutation, the whole herd of apologists from *the first Whig* to Dr. Ure.

The commissioners were instructed to ascertain, among other things, the credibility of Mr. Sadler's witnesses, and pronounce upon the value of the evidence adduced before his committee. Now let us admit, for the sake of argument, (and it is for that only,) that they proved some exaggeration on the part of the operatives; the facts they collected more than supplied the statements they reversed. In *one* or *two* instances, the individual testimony of a wretched artisan (whose form, nevertheless, seemed to attest his veracity) may have been stated (not proved) by these commissioners to have been inaccurate, or somewhat coloured—of the method of inquiry which elicited the inconsistent answers, we will here say nothing; but we may emphatically remark that the discrepant replies (if any) affected only the individual, and, even in him, merely particular portions of his depositions. But what did they leave untouched? Almost everything; nay, they confirmed and expanded the results of Mr. Sadler's investigation; and we would undertake to show from their own documents that he would not have done ill to accept their evidence instead of his own, and raise his appeal to humanity on the admission of his enemies.

Why, they begin their suggestions with an exaggeration of his principle. '*This* bill,' (the ten-hours bill,) say they, '*does, and attempts to do, little* for children.'—*Report*, p. 34. Out upon such mock philanthropists! 'It does not accomplish the object at which it purports to aim. Its professed object is the protection of children, *but it does not protect children.* In the same evidence which shows that the legislative protection of children is necessary, it is also shown that the restriction of the labour of children to ten hours a-day is not an adequate protection.'—*ibid.* p. 33.

In

In consistency with this statement the general report then proposes, that '*until the commencement of the fourteenth year* the hours of labour during any one day *shall not in any case exceed eight.*'—*ibid.* p. 52. Their reasons for fixing on the fourteenth year need not be given, for though they be 'plenty as blackberries,' they are not quite so good—it is a pity that such an admirable conclusion should be vitiated in part by such trumpery arguments. But we must implore the attention of our readers to some of their facts.

In Scotland the complaints of the children 'may be said to be uniform'—*e. g.*

'Sick, tired, especially in the winter nights; feels so tired, she throws herself down when she goes home, not caring what she does. She looks on the long hours as a great bondage; thinks they are not much better than the Israelites in Egypt, and their life is no pleasure to them.'—*Factory Commission*, 1833, *Report*, p. 26.

A Lancashire witness says,—

'Children at night are so fatigued that they are asleep often as soon as they sit down, so that it is impossible to waken them to sense enough to wash themselves, or scarcely to eat a bit of supper, being so stupid in sleep.'—*Mr. Tuffnell's Report*, p. 28.

Another says,—

'The long standing gives her swelled feet and ankles, and fatigues her so much that sometimes she does nae ken how to get to her bed.'—*ibid.* p. 29.

These statements are confirmed by the evidence of the adult operatives—*viz.* that

'the children are often very swere (unwilling) in the mornings;' 'the long hours exhaust the workers, especially the young ones, to such a degree, that they can hardly walk home;' 'they *often cannot raise their hands to their head;*' 'the children, when engaged in their regular work, are *often exhausted beyond what can be expressed;*' 'the sufferings of the children absolutely require that the hours should be shortened.'—*ibid.* p. 26.

'I have known the children,' says one witness, '*hide themselves in the store among the wool*, so that they should not go home when the work was over, when we have worked till ten or eleven. I have seen six or eight fetched out of the store and beat home; *beat out of the mill however*. I do not know why they should hide themselves, unless it was that they *were too tired* to go home.'—*ibid.* p. 27.

The depositions of the overlookers are to the same effect; one says—

'I always found it more difficult to keep my piecers awake the last hours of a winter's evening. I have told the master, and I have been told by him, THAT I DID NOT HALF HIDE THEM! This was when they worked from six to eight. I have seen them fall asleep, and they have been performing their work with their hands while they were asleep, after

after the billey had stopped, when their work was over. I have stopped and looked at them for two minutes going through the motions of piecening, when there was no work to do, and they were really doing nothing. I believe, when we have been working long hours, that they have never been washed, but on a Saturday night, for weeks together.'

The Reporters themselves furnish a modest summary of *unimportant* particulars—

'The excessive fatigue, privation of sleep, pain in various parts of the body, and swelling of the feet, experienced by the young workers, coupled with the constant standing, the peculiar attitudes of the body, and the peculiar motions of the limbs required in the labour of the factory, together with the elevated temperature, and the impure atmosphere in which that labour is often carried on, do sometimes ultimately terminate in the production of *serious*, *permanent*, and *incurable* diseases.'—*ibid.* p. 29.

Now is it not something more than preposterous to call this a refutation, or an abatement, of the evidence collected by Mr. Sadler? The commissioners were keen in their investigation of 'cruelty,' hoping that they might demolish, at least, the charges of personal violence; they report that severity has been abated, and arbitrary punishment forbidden in the larger mills. Well, be it so; we will admit and rejoice in the truth; but these large establishments do not constitute the majority; and to illustrate the paternal treatment in the other mills, we may quote the language of the commissioners themselves.

'Our inquiries,' say they, 'have obtained from the children, from their parents, from operatives, overlookers, proprietors, medical practitioners, and magistrates, such statements, among others, as the following:—"When she was a child too little to put on her ain claithes, the overlooker used to beat her till she screamed again." "Gets many a good beating and swearing." "They are very ill used. The overseer carries a strap." "The boys are often severely strapped; the girls sometimes get a clout. The mothers often complain." "Three weeks ago the overseer struck him in the eye with his fist, so as to force him to be absent two days." "Has often seen the workers beat cruelly. Has seen the girls strapped, but the boys were beat so that they fell to the floor in the course of the beating, with a rope with four tails called a cat. Has seen the boys black and blue, crying for mercy." "The slubbers are all brutes to the children; they get intoxicated, and then kick them about." '—*Report*, p. 19.

Of one of these mills Mr. Stuart, the Commissioner, remarks, that 'it seemed more to resemble a *receptacle of demons* than the workhouse of industrious human beings.'

But we must not close the mill owners' case, without alluding to the strong testimony, original and collected, adduced by the medical Commissioners. Four physicians of note, Dr. Loudon, Sir David Barry, Dr. Bissett Hawkins, and Dr. Southwood Smith, were appointed by his Majesty for this purpose. Dr. Smith remained

remained in London to analyse and compare the several reports; the other gentlemen travelled into the counties—Dr. Loudon into Yorkshire, Dr. Hawkins into Lancashire, and Sir David Barry into Scotland. They report thus:

Dr. Loudon.—'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*. I am of opinion no child under fourteen years of age should work in a factory of any description more than eight hours a-day. From fourteen upwards, I would recommend that no individual should, under any circumstances, work more than twelve hours; although, if practicable, *as a physician*, I would prefer the *limitation of ten hours* for all persons who earn their bread by their industry.'—*2nd Report of Factory Commissioners*, p. 5.

Sir David Barry.—'Although all the sources of immediate and prospective suffering may be so far remedied or mitigated, as to render twelve hours of factory work compatible with average health and longevity, yet I am of opinion that less labour ought to be required from the infant workers, and that more time should be allowed them for sleep, recreation, and the improvement of their minds, than they at present enjoy.'—*ibid.* A. 3., p. 76.

Dr. Hawkins.—'I am compelled to declare my deliberate opinion, that no child should be employed in factory labour below the age of ten; *that no individual under the age of eighteen should be employed in it longer than ten hours daily;* and that it is highly desirable to procure a still further diminution of the hours of labour for children below thirteen years of age. As to the reduction for all below eighteen, I feel the less distrust in my own opinion, because it is sanctioned by a *large* majority of eminent medical men practising in Lancashire.'—*ibid.* D. 3., p. 1.

Such is a summary of the opinions formed by those respectable physicians, who had too much honour to disguise the truth. The testimony which led them to such conclusions must be read at large in the reports; they went out, it was hoped, to *settle* the question of *ten* hours, but they came back, and raised the question of *eight*.

With this evidence in his hand further postponement being altogether impossible, Lord Althorp moved, on the 18th July, 1833, an instruction to the committee of the whole House for a specified amendment to the measure before them. After a debate which lasted ten hours, this proposition was affirmed by a majority of 145, and Lord Ashley conceiving that his bill had thereby lost its beneficial character, stripped himself of the charge, and surrendered it into the hands of government.

The result was that precious law which now regulates the factories; a law got up in haste to serve a purpose; approved by none, yet supported by a large majority, all of whom knew it to be

be impracticable, and some said so; but it had a specious exterior, and claimed superiority over Lord Ashley's bill as far more 'liberal and humane;' clauses for education that were never to be enforced — and limitations of labour which it had been resolved should be nominal, were not without their effect. A period of eight hours for all under thirteen, and one of twelve for those between thirteen and eighteen, were substituted for a provision of ten hours for all. Smooth pretexts, however, had an easy victory; the government and mill-owners obtained a law which they had previously determined should remain a dead letter; the public was lulled—the inspectors were directed to wink at all violations—and the attempt of the last session has fully shown that the earliest possible repeal of the bill was actually determined on while the minister was propounding it.

By an artful clause, it was provided that the act should come into operation by parts, each in succession. At the end of six months, children under eleven were to enjoy the benefit of the eight hours' limitation; at the end of eighteen, all under twelve; and at the end of thirty, all under thirteen. Two years of nominal protection had now elapsed, and the third was begun, when the minister gave notice in the month of March 1836, nine days only after the completion of the act, that he intended, by a sudden and arbitrary movement, to throw it back to the position it was in just a twelvemonth before—to exclude thereby all the ages between twelve and thirteen from the shelter of its clauses—and legalize the slavery of some forty thousand children, for the most part females. A more faithless proposal was never made to the integrity and understanding of a legislature; the pledge to the country, that children should be 'protected up to a certain point'—the compromise between the masters and the operatives, guaranteed by the interposition of the government—and the inductions of common sense, which required at least the fair trial of so solemn an enactment, were all equally violated. The ministry encountered, however, an opposition they little dreamt of; after their ordinary procrastination the new bill was offered for a second reading on the 9th May—and stoutly resisted; the masters and ministers were reminded that the bill of 1833 was their own, that they were *bound to its engagements and promises,* that if they withdrew the guaranteed protection they must provide a substitute, and that honour and humanity, life and limb, were not to be trifled with. The government confided in their strength, and pressed the measure to a division—and a majority of *two* in a House of 354 members decided in their favour; but they deemed this too small for a continuance of their bill—they, in consequence, withdrew it, having stated their conviction that the House was

desirous to submit the present act to *a fair experiment*,—(and why should this not have been considered necessary until three years after it had been passed?)—and we have since learned that the proper authorities have issued an ukase, that England at last expects every inspector to do his duty.

Such has been the history of the progress of the evil, and of the legislative endeavours to correct it—resistance has proved effectual to retard the remedy, but not to dishearten the petitioners. To divert their minds now by temporary enactments is utterly hopeless; they neither mistake nor forget their object; they seek, and, by God's blessing, will persevere in seeking, a ten-hours bill, in the full conviction that it will be the most just, both for masters and men; most humane in its average of toil to all ages, and most likely to ensure observance and success.

We have before alluded to the effects of the existing system on domestic life; the facts are admitted by many who would perpetuate the evil they denounce; but they denounce it under one aspect, and perpetuate it under another; reason and humanity become at variance with action; to philosophize is pleasant, but to practise is costly.

In this view the world must acknowledge its obligation to the speculative wisdom of Dr. Kay, and still more to that of Mr. Rathbone Gregg, the first a respectable physician of Manchester, and the second a partner in the largest cotton establishment of England, at Bury in Lancashire. Their facts and their reasonings are worthy of each other, authentic and powerful. Toil, says Dr. Kay in twenty passages of his paper, toil has degraded the working classes; toil, says Mr. Gregg in his equally able work, has abased the people, and leads them to the excitements of sensuality and the gin-shop. But when the ten-hours bill was propounded as a remedy, that, by restraining the cause, it might controul the mischief, these gentlemen grew wary; Dr. Kay was silent, and Mr. Gregg *explained*.

But their facts remained, and their inferences too; let us examine a few of them. In anticipation of the cholera, the *streets* of Manchester were surveyed, that precautions might be taken; these are the results from the tables of Dr. Kay, published in 1832:—

No. of District.	No. of Streets Inspected.	No. of Streets Unpaved.	No. of Streets partially Paved.	No. of Streets ill Ventilated.	No. of Streets containing heaps of Refuse, Stagnant Pools, &c.
1	114	63	13	7	64
2	180	93	7	23	92
3	49	2	2	12	28
4	66	37	10	12	52
5	30	2	5	5	12
6	2	1	0	1	2
7	53	13	5	12	17
8	16	2	1	2	7
9	48	0	0	9	20
10	29	19	0	10	23
11	0	0	0	0	0
12	12	0	1	1	4
13	55	3	9	10	23
14	33	13	0	8	8
Total..	687	248	53	112	352

Now this does not furnish an unfair picture of a manufacturing town, inasmuch as in Manchester the hours are limited, the masters, on the whole, considerate, and the work regular. But the Doctor shall comment on his own tables.

'A minute inspection of this table,' he writes, 'will render the extent of the evil affecting the poor more apparent. Those districts which are almost exclusively inhabited by the labouring population are Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 10. Nos. 13, 14, and 7 also contain, besides the dwellings of the operatives, those of shopkeepers and tradesmen, and are traversed by many of the principal thoroughfares. No. 11 was not inspected, and Nos. 5, 6, 8, and 9 are the central districts containing the chief streets, the most respectable shops, the dwellings of the more wealthy inhabitants, and the warehouses of merchants and manufacturers. Subtracting, therefore, from the various totals those items in the reports which concern these divisions only, we discover in those districts which contain a large proportion of poor, namely, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 10, 13, and 14, that among 579 streets inspected, 243 were altogether unpaved, 46 partially paved, 93 ill ventilated, and 307 contained heaps of refuse, deep ruts, stagnant pools, ordure, &c.; and in the districts which are almost exclusively inhabited by the poor, namely, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 10, among 438 streets inspected, 214 were altogether unpaved, 32 partially paved, 63 ill ventilated, and 259 contained heaps of refuse, deep ruts, stagnant pools, ordure, &c.'—*Kay*, p. 17.

'The replies to the questions proposed in the second Table, relating to *houses*, contain equally remarkable results, which have been carefully arranged by the Classification Committee of the Special Board of Health. The results are as follows:—

District.	No. of Houses inspected.	No. of Houses reported as requiring White-washing.	No. of Houses reported as requiring Repair.	No. of Houses in which the Soughs require Repair.	No. of Houses Damp.	No. of Houses reported as ill Ventilated	No. of Houses wanting Privies.
114	6951	2565	960	939	1435	452	2221

'It is to be lamented,' adds Dr. Kay, 'that even these numerical results fail to exhibit a perfect picture of the ills which are suffered by the poor. The replies to the questions contained in the inspector's table, refer only to cases of the most positive kind, and the numerical results would, therefore, have been exceedingly increased, had they embraced those in which the evils existed in a scarcely inferior degree. Some idea of the want of cleanliness prevalent in their habitations, may be obtained from the report of the number of houses requiring white-washing; but this column fails to indicate their gross neglect of order and absolute filth.'—*Kay*, pp. 18, 19.

Such the condition! now for the cause.

'The population employed in the cotton-factories,' continues the Doctor, 'rises at five o'clock in the morning; works in the mills from six till eight o'clock, and returns home for half an hour or forty minutes, to breakfast. This meal generally consists of tea or coffee, with a little bread. Oatmeal porridge is sometimes, but of late, rarely used, and chiefly by the men; but the stimulus of tea is preferred, and especially by the women. The tea is almost always of a bad, and sometimes of a deleterious quality; the infusion is weak, and little or no milk is added. The operatives return to the mills and workshops until twelve o'clock, when an hour is allowed for dinner.

'Amongst those who obtain the lower rates of wages, this meal generally consists of boiled potatoes. The mess of potatoes is put into one large dish; melted lard and butter are poured upon them, and a few pieces of fried fat bacon are sometimes mingled with them, and but seldom a little meat. Those who obtain better wages, or families whose aggregate income is larger, add a greater proportion of animal food to this meal, at least three times in the week; but the quantity consumed by the labouring population is not great. The family sits round the table, and each rapidly appropriates his portion on a plate, or, they all plunge their spoons into the dish, and with an animal eagerness satisfy the cravings of their appetite. At the expiration of the hour, they are all again employed in the workshops or mills, where they generally again indulge in the use of tea, often mingled with spirits, accompanied by a little bread. Oatmeal or potatoes are, however, taken by some, a second time in the evening.

'The population nourished on this aliment, is crowded into one dense mass, in cottages, separated by narrow, unpaved, and almost pestilential streets, in an atmosphere loaded with smoke and the exhalations of a large manufacturing city. The operatives are congregated in rooms and workshops,

workshops, during twelve hours of the day, in an enervating heated atmosphere, which is frequently loaded with dust or filaments of cotton, or impure from constant respiration, or from other causes. They are engaged in an employment which absorbs their attention, and unremittingly employs their physical energies. They are drudges who watch the movements, and assist the operations of a mighty material force, which toils with an energy unconscious of fatigue. The persevering labour of the operative must rival the mathematical precision, the incessant motion, and the exhaustless power of the machine.

'Prolonged and exhausting labour, continued from day to day, and from year to year, is not calculated to develope the intellectual or moral faculties of man. The dull routine of a ceaseless drudgery, in which the same mechanical process is incessantly repeated, resembles the torment of Sisyphus. The toil, like the rock, recoils perpetually on the wearied operative. The mind gathers neither stores nor strength from the constant extension and retraction of the same muscles. The intellect slumbers in supine inertness; but the grosser parts of our nature attain a rank developement. To condemn man to such severity of toil is, in some measure, to cultivate in him the habits of an animal. He becomes reckless—he disregards the distinguishing appetites and habits of his species—he neglects the comforts and delicacies of life—he lives in squalid wretchedness, on meagre food, and expends his superfluous gains in debauchery.

'Hence, besides the negative results—the total abstraction of every moral and intellectual stimulus—the absence of variety—banishment from the grateful air and the cheering influences of light,—the physical energies are exhausted by incessant toil and imperfect nutrition. Having been subjected to the prolonged labour of an animal—his physical energy wasted—his mind in supine inaction—the artizan has neither moral dignity, nor intellectual nor organic strength, to resist the seductions of appetite. His wife and children, too frequently subjected to the same process, are unable to cheer his remaining moments of leisure. Domestic economy is neglected, domestic comforts are unknown. A meal of the coarsest food is prepared with heedless haste, and devoured with equal precipitation. *Home has no other relation to him than that of shelter*—few pleasures are there—it chiefly presents to him a scene of physical exhaustion, from which he is glad to escape. Himself impotent of all the distinguishing aims of his species, he sinks into sensual sloth, or revels in more degrading licentiousness. His house is ill furnished, uncleanly, often ill ventilated, perhaps damp; his food, from want of forethought and domestic economy, is meagre and innutritious; he is debilitated and hypochondriacal, and falls the victim of dissipation.'—*ibid.* pp. 8—11.

Our readers cannot fail to be struck with the force and feeling of the writer; but what an exhibition is this of human beings! and what but a superintending Providence restrains, for a while, the natural effects of such a system!

Mr. Gregg is an equally impartial witness, and fortifies his speculations

culations by personal experience—having enjoyed, perhaps, unparalleled means of arriving at conclusions, he must be heard with all the deference such authority demands. He begins by affirming, that 'he shall assume nothing, infer nothing, exaggerate nothing, extenuate nothing, but simply state the nature and amount of the evil, lament its existence and suggest its cures.' He concurs with Dr. Kay in the statement given above of the method and character of the operative's diet, describes it as scanty in measure and noxious in quality, and adds, 'the pernicious practice of mixing a large proportion of spirits in every cup they take prevails to an inconceivable extent among the manufacturing population, at every age and in both sexes.' He proceeds, 'Ardent spirits are not the only stimulus which this class of people indulge in. Many of them take *large quantities of opium*, in one form or another; sometimes in pills, sometimes as laudanum, sometimes in what they call an anodyne draught, which is a narcotic of the same kind.'

But a more frightful picture, if possible, is exhibited in the following extract—the unfortunate operative is hedged in on every side—infant or adult, the system dooms him to vice: while young, he is trained to corrupt tastes; and when grown, his toil compels him to indulge them; he cannot escape; it is at home that he acquires the rudiments of the gin-shop.

'In consequence,' says Mr. Gregg, 'of the mothers being employed from home, their children are entrusted, in a vast majority of cases, to the care of others, often of elderly females, who have no infant family of their own; and most of whom, having in their youth had their children nursed by others, have never formed those habits of attachment and assiduous attention to their offspring, which could alone afford a probability of a proper care of the children committed to their charge. These women often undertake the care of several infants at the same time; their habits are generally indolent and gossipping; the children are restless and irritable, from being deprived of a supply of their natural food (as, when the mothers suckle them, they can only perform that duty in the intervals of labour); and the almost universal practice among them is, to still the cries of the infant by administering opiates, which are sold for this purpose under several well-known and popular forms. *The quantity of opium* which, from habit, *some children become capable of taking, is almost incredible*, and the effects are correspondingly destructive. Even when the infants have a healthy appearance at birth, they almost uniformly become, in a few months, puny and sickly in their aspect, and a very large proportion fall victims to bronchitis, hydrocephalus, and other diseases, produced by want of care, and the pernicious habits we have detailed. We must mention also, that spirits, *particularly gin*, are frequently given when the infants appear to suffer from pain in the bowels, which, from injudicious diet, is very common amongst them.' —*Gregg*, p. 17.

Well

Well then, that immorality and ignorance should frightfully abound, can surprise no one—thus taught by experience, and furnished with principles, the children enter the factories at a very tender age—congregated in large masses, excited by heat, and half-stripped of their clothing, they fill the intervals of toil (when they have them) with blasphemy and obsceneness—the mode of life in such high temperatures hastens puberty, and the prolonged absence and untimely hours furnish occasion. The evidence before the committee gives some awful details, but we will hear Mr. Gregg again on this matter:—

'First, then, we shall remark,' says he, 'that nothing but personal observation, or the testimony of eye-witnesses, can be relied on for satisfactory information. The returns of illegitimate children (in the few cases where they can be procured) are worse than useless, for it will be obvious, on a few moments' consideration, that in such cases, they can afford us no possible criterion of the desired result. On this subject, some writers on political economy betray the same ignorance, as in the assertion of the extensive use of animal food among the manufacturing labourers.

'The fact undoubtedly is, that *the licentiousness* which prevails among the dense population of manufacturing towns, is carried *to a degree which it is appalling to contemplate*, which baffles all statistical inquiries, and which can be learned only from the testimony of personal observers. And, in addition to overt acts of vice, there is a coarseness and grossness of feeling, and an habitual indecency of conversation, which, we would fain hope and believe, are not the prevailing characteristics of our country. The effect of this upon the minds of the young will readily be conceived; and is it likely that any instruction, or education, or Sunday schools, or sermons, can counteract the baneful influence, the insinuating virus, the putrefaction, the contagion of this moral depravity which reigns around them?

"Nil dictu visuque fœdum hæc limina tangat
Intra quæ puer est!"

'After all, what motive has either sex, in the class and situation to which we allude, for being virtuous and chaste? Where they are unshackled by religious principle, as is too generally the case, they have no delicate sentiments of morality and taste to restrain them from gratifying every passion: they have few or no pleasures beyond those which arise from sensual indulgence; it involves no loss of character, for their companions are as reckless as themselves; it brings no risk of losing their employment, for their employers know that it would be unsafe to inquire into these matters.'—*ibid.* p. 25.

These are the natural products of a system, which from childhood to death treats man as a machine, estimates his value by the amount of his work, and regards him as useless but when he is 'a-going.' To this effect of the operatives' condition, most ample

ample testimony was borne by many clergymen. Mr. Bull* described its influence in the West Riding of Yorkshire, and Mr. Gordon† in the town of Aberdeen; he produced written documents from thirty other clergymen of his district to attest the same; Mr. Stewart‡ was empowered to present the remonstrances of fifteen, and Mr. Adamson§ those of ten more, against the further toleration of the existing state of things. They spoke in deep and conscientious fear of the evils to be anticipated; 'the dissoluteness,' says Dr. Macfarlane,‖ 'of the men and women in our manufactories is frightful;' and yet the Scotch of this class are, upon the whole, better educated than the English. Profligacy and vice will necessarily spring from brutal ignorance, and bad example; the parents furnish the one, and the mockery of Sunday schools will not counteract the other—if any children perforce attend them, their labour is lost; it is an addition to their troubles, and none to their knowledge. Petitions signed by more than 200 teachers of such schools were presented to Parliament in the last session, declaring the utter impossibility of imparting instruction to those feeble and weary beings,¶ and praying that their toil may be shortened on the week day, that so they may be able to feel themselves alive on the Sabbath. Poor things! were their bodies elastic, and their spirits awake, the Sunday school would afford them the best recreation, and genuine repose; but that man must be either a blockhead or a hypocrite, who, having read the gracious words, 'Suffer little children to come unto me,' would obey them by the compulsory attendance of those worn and weeping victims!

Previously to the bill of 1833, the legal period of labour had been fixed at twelve hours; many mills had been constructed on better principles, and the ventilation was essentially improved; contagious disorders became in consequence much more rare, and less of arbitrary violence was known in the larger establishments. This, so far as it went, was an unmixed good; but it left as much evil, and more than it removed. Though the hours had been shortened, the speed of machinery had advanced; and the labour of the day, if lessened in duration, had increased in intensity. A vast number of old mills yet remained; and many where the proprietors

* Evidence of 1832, Rev. G. S. Bull, p. 413. † Ibid., Rev. A. L. Gordon, p. 214.
‡ Ibid., p. 349. § Ibid., p. 382. ‖ Ibid., p. 220.

¶ 'I have,' says one teacher, 'taught the children in one of the spinning mills of Dundee; the children have been invariably so much fatigued by the labour of the day, as to fall asleep almost immediately on their entering the school. The master of the mill assisted me. A considerable part of his time was occupied *in keeping them awake*, either by tickling their nostrils with a feather, or in making them stand a certain time on one of the forms, in order that they might be compelled to keep awake *from a fear of falling*.'—Evidence of 1832, p. 357.

were

were insensible alike to humanity and shame. Thus the mischief had continued its progress; one generation had transmitted its accumulated evils to its successor; puny and sickly parents had given birth to puny and sickly children; when Dr. Hawkins declared in his report on Manchester, that 'never in any town of Great Britain or Europe had he seen such a degeneracy of form and colour from the national standard.'*

The witnesses to the mischief, and the causes of it, are so numerous and experienced, that those who would interfere to suggest a remedy, must be acquitted at least of the charge of officiousness; and as little do they deserve to be termed headstrong and speculative, when, in reliance on the same testimony, they would reduce the evil, by drying up the spring. Toil—heart-breaking, excessive toil lies at the root, and must be mitigated—we do not mean to assert that thereby would be removed every action and appearance of mischief; but we do assert that, without such abridgment of labour, all hope is groundless, and every effort vain. 'As a second cause of the unhealthiness of manufacturing towns (says Mr. Gregg), we place the *severe and unremitting labour*. The work of spinners and stretchers is among the most laborious that exist, and is exceeded, perhaps, by that of mowing alone; and few mowers, we believe, think of continuing their labour for twelve hours without intermission.'—p. 12. He afterwards emphatically adds, 'a reduction in the hours of labour is *most important* to the health of the manufacturing population, and *absolutely necessary* to any general and material amelioration in their moral and intellectual condition.'—p. 27. And yet vast objections are raised against the proposal; and mighty dangers are portended, in the event of a ten-hours bill, both to the persons who shall be the subjects of it, and the country at large. It is, however, no new thing to be told that the happiness of the children, and the welfare of the state, are bound up indissolubly with fourteen hours' labour. Every argument now urged against the ten-hours bill, was urged with equal vehemence against the late Sir Robert Peel—but will not the public say, that where life and limb are concerned, we have a right, after the lapse of sixteen years, to expect, from the opponents of the measure, something besides stale predictions, *then* disproved by reasoning, and *since* falsified by experience?

They are, notwithstanding, as positive as soothsayers—and unhappily they present the very reverse of Cassandra; too many believe them, though they never speak the truth. In vain do we urge the past; quote their unaccomplished predictions—increase,

* Second Report of Commissioners, p. 3.

instead

instead of loss, and prosperity where they fainted in expectation of ruin. To terrify Sir Robert, they foretold the dismissal of all the children under the protected age—none were dismissed, but many were added; they foretold that the reduction of hours would injure the industrious operative, by the concomitant reduction of his wages—his wages remained the same without any abatement; they foretold that the limitation of labour would induce a limitation of the quantity produced—alas! it was multiplied threefold. But all this is to no purpose; we must 'fight our battles o'er again;' and having demolished the substance, must lose our time in struggling with the shadow.

Of all the terrors ever excited, foreign competition is the most unreal—yet wise and good men are victims of the delusion, and own an influence that they cannot approve—they are like children who have been frightened in the dark; the fancy has become diseased; and indefinable apprehensions haunt them through life, immoveable alike by reasoning, and the evidence of the senses.

This question may fairly be disposed of in a few tabular statements. The argument, drawn from the consequence of a limitation of hours, in respect of its bearing on the foreign competitor, is simply this: that, while in other countries all circumstances remain the same, we in England shall be exposed to greater restrictions on our means of industry; and thus that while the foreigner continues, under the same hours of labour, to manufacture the same quantities, we shall be necessarily reduced to a far less produce at a higher price. It would be needless to enumerate the pamphleteers and the witnesses who have maintained this position; and equally needless to mention the various proportions of calculated diminution and loss—let us look at the argument as stated. Now, should such a change be the result, the effect, we admit, would be alarming; should no change take place, we could well afford to be humane; but if the precise reverse of these forebodings be the happy and gracious consequence, the advocates of limitation would have not only reason, feeling, and justice, but interest also, and political economy on their side.

The first parliamentary limitation of the hours of labour took place in 1802, under Sir Robert Peel's Act. This, concurrently with other causes, as we have shown above, of a most afflictive and alarming character, effected, by degrees, a considerable reduction in the hours of working—the labour in the mills was gradually diminished from ninety to eighty hours a-week. To verify their predictions, the opponents of limitation may be called upon to show a corresponding diminution in the produce of the country—let them divide the periods at pleasure, but the result will alike manifest a certain and rapid increase, despite of restriction.

We

We will first take periods of four years each, from 1798 to 1818:—

'From 1798 to 1801, increase 95 per cent.
1801 to 1805, „ more than 35.
1805 to 1809, „ more than 100.
1809 to 1813, „ numbers missing.
1814 to 1818, „ more than 35.'

Now, to suit other tastes, let us show the result by periods of five years, from 1802 to 1817:—

'1802 to 1807, increase more than 35.
1807 to 1812, „ more than 70.
1812 to 1817, „ about 30.'——

If our readers have more leisure than ourselves, they may break up the time into intervals of two and three years, with equal advantage to the argument before them. But we must now press onward; the next sample to be given of the ruinous effects of restriction, lies in a comparative statement of the two years (the number is arbitrarily chosen) which preceded the second period of more general limitation, with the two years which immediately followed it. It has been stated that in the year 1819, the late Sir Robert Peel, after many grievous and cruel defeats, carried a measure to restrict the labour of young persons in cotton-mills to twelve hours in the day, or seventy-two hours in the week:—'*Sæpe sinistra prædixit cornix*;' the pamphlets and speeches of the day abounded in the most disquieting prognostics of danger to our export trade; to our national greatness; to everything that can render England politically safe, comfortable, and glorious. Sixteen masters of experience deposed to these propositions:—1st. That the measure would lead to a limitation of produce. 2nd. To a rise in prices. 3rdly, and consequently, to an advantage to the foreigner. With palpitating hearts let us turn to the results!—

'Official value of goods exported in
1817, 1818 = (the two years preceding restriction) £41,426,320.
1820, 1821 = (the two years following restriction) £42,152,862.
Difference = £726,542 of increase.'——

Nor was this advantage obtained by a countervailing loss; the raven misled them no less upon the price, than in his croakings upon the quantity, *e. g.*:—

'Declared value of goods exported in
1817, 1818 = £30,821,601 1820, 1821 = £27,630,526
£3,191,075 decrease in price.'——

We may just add the amount of twist and yarn, to finish the statement of our commercial woes:—

'1817, 1818 = 242,203 cwt. 1820, 1821 = 392,083 cwt.
149,880 cwt. increase.'——

Having

Having given these accounts in detail, it will be convenient that we should exhibit them in the aggregate:—

'Official value of manufactured cotton *goods* exported in the twelve years preceding 1819, and in the twelve years following:—

1807 to 1818 (both inclusive) = £188,951,016
1820 to 1831 (both inclusive) = £325,119,429,

an increased quantity, under restriction, in round numbers, of £137,000,000.'

The same return for cotton twist and yarn gives:—

'1807 to 1818 = £11,276,760 : 1820 to 1831 = £44,582,721: an increased quantity, in round numbers, of £33,000,000.'*

Now, let us compare the *declared* value of the manufactured goods exported in one year, 1816, a period before restriction, with that of those exported in another, 1831, a period under it:—

'1816 Declared value £13,072,757 : 1831 £13,207,947.'

The difference is almost nothing; and a hasty inquirer might thence infer that the quantities were very nearly equal. Had the prices remained the same, his inference would have been correct; and had it increased (as the mill-owners foretold) the quantity must have been less—but how stands the account?

'Official value—1816 = £16,335,124 : 1831 = £33,682,475:'

a return which shows, to the utter confusion of every soothsayer, augur, and mill-owner, that more than *double* the quantity was exported at the same cost, or 100 per cent. of increased quantity, without any increase of price.

The statement is still more satisfactory in the matter of twist and yarn, for we find there, in the same years,

'Official value.	Declared value.
1816 = £1,380,486	1816 = £2,628,448
1831 = 5,674,600	1831 = 3,974,989'——

which shows that, while the quantity was multiplied by four, the price of the whole was diminished by one half. The trade, nevertheless, must have realized a profit, inasmuch as it was continued, and is daily receiving still further extension.

How triumphant is this statement! how demonstrative its conclusions! for our readers should observe that, of the twelve years which preceded restriction, eight were years of war, but also of mono-

* 'That a reduction in the hours of labour,' says Mr. Gregg, 'would cause a corresponding reduction in the quantities produced, we entirely deny!'—p. 28. . . . 'We know that in some cases, when the mills only worked four days in the week, they have often produced five days' quantity, and the men earned five days' wages. That this would be the case to a considerable extent, every one must be aware, as all men will be able to work much harder for *ten* hours than they can for *twelve*.'—*ibid.* This is confirmed by the evidence of M'Nish, in his examination before the Committee of 1832, who had proved the truth of it in his own person.

poly

poly and exclusive possession—the following twelve were years of peace, when every nation had free scope to enter on competition; when monopoly was at an end; and the capital and industry of the whole civilized world brought into rivalry with our single efforts! But the energies of the nation were commensurate with the necessity; and none of the prophets of evil can deny that the result has shamed them. They prophesied in 1819—their prophecies were falsified in the most minute details; they prophesied in 1832, because they could not refer for corroboration to the past; nothing daunted, they prophesied in 1833; and now again they prophesy in 1836, although there be not extant one single fact, one single experiment, whereby, from the past, they may augur evil of the future. Why do they not quote diminished produce and increased prices? Why do they not show the markets that have been closed to us, and the goods that have been superseded? Why do they not exhibit a sickly and declining condition of the trade? Because they are shrewd enough to know that such a paper as the following would stare them in the face:—

'Cotton wool imported into Great Britain—
1818 = 173,940,000 pounds. 1835 = 330,829,834 pounds.
Average *weekly* consumption of ditto—
1818 = 3,345,000 pounds. 1835 = 6,362,112 pounds.'

Why do they not prove, by incontestable documents, the alarming truth, that capital, in its terror, has receded from the trade, and sought an investment in safer occupations? They would, doubtless, if they could; but this sad statement is against them;

From a table given in 1819, by the secretary to the proprietors of cotton-mills:—

'Total cotton establishments in England and Scotland = 344
Do. do. in 1835 (from Porter's tables) = 1262
Add to this the number of spindles in 1812, in England and Scotland - - - = 4,988,330
Do. do. in 1835 - = 11,152,990.'—

This vast increase, too, consists of machinery of an improved and more powerful construction; and we learn, moreover, from the reports of the inspectors, that even now, new mills are rising in every direction; nay, that an increased power of full seven thousand horses is about to be added to the engines in the neighbourhood of Manchester alone.

But there yet remain two other woes to complete this picture of commercial ruin—the dismissal of the children and young persons; and the disemployment of many of the adults. It is heart-rending to narrate such a mighty falling-off in the national greatness, as may be seen in the tables of the respective periods:—

'Total

'Total number of persons employed in cotton-factories in 1818 - - - = 57,323
Young persons *only* between ages of eight and eighteen, in 1835 - - - - = 94,287'—

while the numbers of all above the age of eighteen, have exceeded the aggregate of the whole mass in 1818 (children included), by 68,554; the numbers standing thus—

'Whole number employed (1818) = 57,323
Numbers above eighteen (1835) = 125,877'—

and the grand total will stand at 220,134* 'persons employed in the cotton business, being *four times* as many as in 1818; a space of not more than eighteen years. Alas, alas, for this afflicted country!

But let us give one word, before we quit this part of the subject, to our foreign competitors. These fearful enemies are to be found in certain districts of Germany, Switzerland, America, and France. The German factories are thrown in as make-weights; no one ever thought seriously either of their skill or their durability. The Swiss, it is said, would undoubtedly rival us, had they but capital; and so the mill-owners would be unanswerable, had they but facts. America we may leave in the able hands of Mr. M'Culloch;† but we will simply remark that, had she entertained the smallest anticipation of surpassing Great Britain, she would not, for the sake of the tariff, have risked the dismemberment of her empire. France alone remains; and makes the greatest clamour on the smallest foundation; the most cry with the least wool; for the mill-owners, when driven to actual statement, could produce nothing stronger than the under-quoted table:—

'1820 French exports = £1,091,300
1830 do. = 2,192,240
Increase 102 per cent. in ten years.'

Now let us place alongside this statement, the contemporaneous increase in the British exports:—

'1820 British exports = £16,696,539
1830 do. = 31,810,474
Increase (within a fraction) of 100 per cent.'

It will require something more than their accustomed ingenuity, to show that there is not in this matter a most enormous advantage on the side of the British manufacturer. The French,

* This, though given by official authority, is evidently very much below the truth. We must, however, remember that it includes those only who are, actually and bodily, work-people in the business. Mr. Gregg says, that 'the number of individuals employed in the *different branches* of the cotton-trade, cannot now be far short of 1,500,000; and we may therefore compute those who, directly or indirectly, derive their existence from this great staple manufacture, at *four millions*.'—p. 1.

† See his very valuable Commercial Dict., art. Cotton.

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it is true, doubled their exports upon the basis of a million, but the English did the same, within a fraction, on a basis of more than sixteen millions; and thus, while the export trade of France remained, in 1830, at much less than two millions and a half, that of Britain had attained the prodigious amount of thirty-one millions eight hundred and ten thousand pounds!

This for the export *goods;* but the account is still more prosperous in twist and yarn; for upon the basis of a sum exceeding one million and a half, it had, within the same time, increased to an amount largely exceeding five millions, approximating, in the matter of yarn, to a ratio of increase of more than 200 per cent. *

In fact, the French labour under many disadvantages comparatively with ourselves; their machinery is dearer and of less capacity; their coal of inferior quality by full 6 per cent., and not cheap in proportion. Their yarns, we have heard from practical judges, are estimated, in the fine numbers, at 50 per cent., and in the less fine at 45, below the corresponding numbers of our own manufacture; nor have they any discipline and regularity in their mills; the operatives will suddenly discontinue their work to bathe, or sport, or gossip, or otherwise amuse themselves. Their labour, too, is individually less than our own. 'I have worked,' said Adam Young,† 'at mills in Alsace; a spinner in England would do twice as much as a Frenchman will do. Frenchmen would be frightened into fits by the speed of the machinery in England.' 'Have you any fear,' he was asked, 'that the French will beat us in cotton-spinning, or any of its branches?—No, they never will, so long as the world stands; their work cannot be called work; it is only looking at it and wishing it done.' 'I have known,' he added, 'my master buy yarn in England, *and sell it for his own spinning.*'

Be it observed, however, that in all these countries the periods of labour are extremely long; and in many parts of America longer than our own. Nor is the language of complaint confined to this side of the Atlantic; for it seems a fatality attendant on this system, that, although impelled by no necessity, it will never make money but through the medium of suffering; but American grievances assist our case, for we may reply to all our opponents, who attribute to aristocratic taxation, corn-laws, and a grim catalogue of kindred iniquities, the monstrous necessity of fourteen hours' labour, that toil and torture are as much complained of in the United States, as in the counties of Lancaster and York.

* See a luminous article on the cotton trade of France, in Blackwood's Magazine, No. CCXLIX.; and the excellent speech of Mr. Brotherton, M.P. for Salford, in the debate of the 9th of May last.

† Committee on Artisans and Machinery, p. 696.

But

But to proceed.—When the Houses of Parliament, in 1819, declared twelve hours of mill-work to be a sufficient period for human beings, they had respect not only to the length of time, but to the amount of labour, which occupied and exhausted the strength of the artizan.

Now, let us see how the account stands :—

'A table showing the distance over which a piecer had to travel, in following a pair of mules spinning cotton-yarn of Nos. 40, in the year 1815.

The spinner put up 820 stretches daily, on each of 2 mules 12 yards long each, and was attended by 3 persons.	Number of stretches daily.	Number of yards from mule to mule.	Number of yards comprising the piecer's work along each mule, and over which he must walk each stretch.	Total Number of yards.	Distance in miles.
	1640	5	4	14,760	8 and a fraction.'

Well, this was the distance over which a child travelled, in the midst of heat, and roar, and effluvia, and everything most offensive to its senses, and noxious to its health. Could the Parliament then have foreseen the following table, when it interposed, in 1819, to limit the duration of the labour of that day?

'A table showing the distance over which a child must walk, in following a pair of mules spinning cotton-yarn of No. 40, at Manchester, in 1832.

The spinner puts up daily 2200 stretches on each of 2 wheels.	Number of stretches daily.	Number of yards from wheel to wheel.	Average number of yards which a child walks along each wheel per stretch.	Total Number of yards daily.	Distance in miles.
	4400	5	3	35,200	20.'

This terrible increase in the number of stretches, and the length of their journey, has been inflicted on the operatives by the acceleration of machinery—the vast improvements in principle and construction—the incredible velocity of the wheels, and the power of the engines, have added five-fold suffering to a period of toil, which, not only for its duration, but the standing posture in which it is performed, had already been pronounced well nigh intolerable. Yet in some instances the statement is yet more dreadful :—

'A table showing the distance over whch a piecer must walk daily, in attending a pair of mules spinning cotton yarn, at Bolton-le-Moors, in 1832.

The spinner puts up 2000 stretches daily on each of 2 wheels, each wheel being 18 yards long.	Number of daily stretches.	Number of yards from mule to mule.	Number of yards piecer travels along each wheel or mule per stretch.	Total Number of yards.	Number of miles.
	4000	5	6	44,000	25.'

These are startling statements. But Mr. Fielden shall bear testimony to their truth, and in his own manly and effective language.

'To return,' says he, 'to the question of the "*light and easy*" work performed by children in factories, and to the representations which hold it up as a species of *amusement* rather than work; representations in which some of the commissioners of 1833 joined; and in which the inspectors seem to be unanimous, while some of them back up their notions by opinions professing to come from medical men, *whom they have employed to grant certificates to the children:* returning to this, I will show by minute calculations, what is the work performed in mere walking by a factory child; and after that, I want no philosopher of any description, nor even any medical man, to tell me whether or not it is more than a child ought to bear.

'This question was mooted at Manchester on 1st December, last year, by certain delegates from the factory people, who were appointed from Bolton, Bury, Ashton, Oldham, Chorley, Preston, and Manchester, to meet a few members of Parliament. One of these delegates gave a statement, with particulars, of a minute calculation of the number of miles which a child has to walk in a day, in following the spinning machine: it amounted to *twenty-five!* The statement excited great surprise; but this delegate was followed by another, who had also made calculations, and who has put them in print in the "Manchester Advertiser." He calculates that a child has to walk twenty-four miles in the day; and, if the distance that it frequently has to walk to and from home be thrown in, it makes not unfrequently a distance of nearly *thirty miles.* Observing the impression that these statements made on the minds of my brother members of Parliament, and being myself desirous of testing their accuracy, I resolved, on my return home, to make a calculation myself, by watching a child at work in the factory in which I am myself concerned. To my own surprise, I found that the distance was not less than *twenty miles in twelve hours;* and, therefore, I can easily believe the statements of the delegates, seeing that the machinery in my own works is not driven *at anything like the speed* of that on which their calculations are founded.'—*Fielden*, p. 39.

But this gentleman can bring in evidence on this matter, not only personal observation, but personal experience—he was himself in his time a factory child. Does he attest that the work was 'light and easy, amusement rather than toil?' We should do both him and the cause an injustice, were he not heard in his own narrative.

'I well remember,' says he, 'being set to work in my father's mill when I was little more than ten years old . . . . . for several years after I began to work in the mill, the hours of labour at our works did not exceed *ten* in the day, winter and summer, and *even with the labour of those hours,* I shall never forget the fatigue I often felt before the day ended, and the anxiety of us all to be relieved from the unvarying and irksome toil we had gone through, before we could obtain

relief by such play and amusements as we resorted to when liberated from our work.* I allude to this fact, because it is not uncommon for persons to infer, that because the children who work in factories are seen to play like other children when they have time to do so, the labour is therefore light, and does not fatigue them. The reverse of this conclusion I know to be the truth. *I know the effect which ten hours' labour had upon myself;* I who had the attention of parents better able than those of my companions to allow me extraordinary occasional indulgence. And he knows very little of human nature who does not know that, to a child, diversion is so essential, that it will undergo even exhaustion in its amusements.'—*ibid.* p. 31.

'I well know, too, from my own experience, that *the labour now undergone* in the factories, is *much greater than it used to be*, owing to the greater attention and activity required by the greatly increased speed which is given to the machinery that the children have to attend to, when we compare it with what it was thirty or forty years ago; and, therefore, I fully agree with the government Commissioners, that a restriction to *ten* hours per day is *not a sufficient protection to children.*'—*ibid.* p. 32.

It may well be asked why the wretched victims of this ferocious toil endure it so patiently?—let the government-inspector, Mr. Rickards, reply: 'The industry of the children and their parents is in thraldom, for *if it were not*, they would never submit to such bondage.' Necessity presses vigorously upon them; she holds, in either hand, starvation and slavery; one or the other they must choose.

'A steam-engine,' continues the inspector, 'in the hands of an interested or avaricious master, is a relentless power, to which old and young are equally bound to submit† . . . . . that tyrant-power may, at any time and without any effort, cripple or destroy thousands of human beings, if not duly restrained‡ . . . . . their position in these mills is, as I have formerly explained, that of thraldom; fourteen, fifteen, or sixteen hours per day is *exhausting to the strength of all*, yet none *dare quit* the occupation, from the dread of losing work altogether. Industry is thus in bonds; unprotected children are equally bound to the same drudgery, and hence the universal cry for restriction on the moving power.'§

Could any one believe that he was living in the heart of Great Britain, in the nineteenth century, in an age abounding in measures of freedom, and in talk of religion? Yet this evil is by some grave writers, not only coolly admitted, but openly justified and bepraised. Among these last is Dr. Ure, who has written a laborious book which the patience alone of Job, or an operative,

* Mr. Brotherton, M.P., attested the same; he also began the world as a factory-child, and has been ever since an able and zealous advocate for a limitation of labour.

† Report of Factory-Inspectors, August 25, 1835. ‡ Ibid. August, 1834.

§ Ibid. August, 1835.

could

could enable one to peruse. This learned Doctor meets the charge of inhumanity, by asserting, that the parents are the best judges of infantine power; and he sets aside the necessity of interposition, by the argument, that they are both able and willing to save their offspring from suffering and wrong.

Our inspector might be adduced as an adequate antagonist to the ingenious physician; but we tell him that the laws of our moral being, to which he so much trusts, are, by the diabolical system he extols, overborne and destroyed — the order of nature, and the precepts of revelation, are alike reversed; 'the children,' we read in holy writ, 'should not lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children;' but *the system* declares that the child shall labour by day and by night, in sickness and in health; shall give to toil the years that should be passed in physical development; and to ignorance and misery, the days of education, solely that its abandoned parents may pass their useless and evil lives at the gaming table or the pot-house. In many instances from necessity, in many instances from choice, the parents subsist by the labour of their children; necessity can hearken to no cry of pity; and *such* choice must have arisen from too brutal a source to be changed by the accents of nature, or the laws of God. This sad result of the factory system has long since been seen, and proclaimed by those who knew what that word meant, 'I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.' Dr. Aiken lamented this utter corruption; Dr. Percival and his colleagues reported, that the system 'too often *gives encouragement* to idleness, extravagance, *and profligacy in parents,* who, contrary to the order of nature, *subsist by the oppression of their offspring.*' Sir Robert Peel adduced the like testimony; and even Mr. Ashworth, a large manufacturer of Bolton, while writing in defence of the system, condemns himself out of his own mouth: 'You will next inquire,' quoth he, 'about the old men, who are said to die, or become unfit for work, when they attain *forty years of age* . . . . . it happens not unfrequently that they become *disinclined* to work, when the earnings of their families are sufficient to maintain them!'* A precious state of things, which superannuates an artisan in the prime of life, and throws him, by the authority of his master, or for the gratification of his indolence, to feed and riot where he should have sown. Dr. Hawkins remarks that—

'the factory children are usually very slow in coming on the sick clubs; *they usually go on working to the last possible moment, so eager are the parents to secure their wages* . . . . . the degree in which parents are supported by their youthful offspring at Manchester, is a peculiar

* Letters on the Cotton Factory System, by H. Ashworth, Esq. 1833. p. 20.

feature of the place, and an unpleasing one; the ordinary state of things in this respect is nearly reversed.'

Even the General Report of the Factory Commissioners of 1833 is to the same effect:—

'It appears,' say they, 'that parents encourage their children to make the extraordinary efforts, of which we have given some examples, by leading them to consider the wages they thus earn as peculiarly their own, although a cheat is often practised upon them, even with regard to these extra wages. While all the witnesses agree in the statement, that *whatever the child earns by its regular hours of labour, is uniformly appropriated by the parent*, it appears that a large portion of the additional wages earned by the extra hours is also taken by the latter.'*

Here, then, is a sweet picture of natural affection struggling with covetousness; in which any one but Dr. Ure, might easily foresee that the vice would prevail! But necessity comes in, at times, to extenuate the sin; parents may be willing to work—but are excluded from the opportunity; they are condemned to sit in idleness, while their offspring toil; and waste, in inactivity, that remnant of strength, which might alleviate, if not prevent, the exhaustion of the children. The truth is very well known, that the policy of the mill-owner is to remove from his factory all persons of mature age: Mr. Ashworth incautiously admits the fact, when he writes (Letter, p. 20) that 'old men of every description [forty years old!] adhere to habits contracted in early life; they often disagree with the overlookers, who are younger than themselves; *this may sometimes lead to their dismissal.*'

But apart from this, *the system* itself is working out the formidable result. 'It is the tendency,' say the inspectors, 'of improved machinery to throw more and more of work upon children, *to the displacement of adult labour!*'† Now, Dr. Ure, who is to maintain these displaced adults, unless it be their unhappy children, who, contrary to the rule and beneficence of nature, must, in their years of weakness, perform the labour of maturity, and supply the fountain from which they should have drawn?

The number of operatives above the age of forty is incredibly small. We must refer our readers to a curious but authentic document, arranged about the year 1831, during a great 'turn-out,' from forty-two mills in Mosley, Ashton, Staley-Bridge, and Dukinfield, of 1005 persons, whose ages ranged from fifteen to sixty. Of these 1584 were below forty-five; *three* only had attained a period between fifty-five and sixty; and not more than fifty-one between forty-five and fifty were counted, as fit for work! Mr. M'Nish, a witness entitled to the utmost credit, even by the ad-

* Page 14. Vide, also, Dr. Kay, p. 40.
† Vide, also, Report of Commissioners, p. 51.

mission

mission of the Commissioners, and in truth, as every one must perceive upon reading his evidence, a man of singular sagacity, deposed, in the year 1832, that, by actual enumeration of 1600 men in the factories of Renfrew and Lanark, he ascertained that not more than ten had reached forty-five years of age, and these, he added, were retained by the special indulgence and humanity of their masters. The spinners at that period are so broken down that they cannot produce the required quantity. 'Their eyesight fails,' and then they are turned off, and younger men employed—and yet they must subsist!—Unfit for their own business, and utterly so for any other—those who have children must live on their labour.

We will add just one statement more to this catalogue of reasons for the oppression of children. Many of them are fatherless, and thus fall under neither the one nor the other of these categories. Dr. Jarrold, in proof of his assertion that factory labour shortens the duration of human life, deposed, that 'having examined, in the schools, all the children whose fathers had ever worked, or were still working in factories, he found that from one third to one fourth were fatherless. He had seen, within a month of his examination, seven thousand children; and stating the numbers without fractional parts, he would say that, of one hundred children working in factories (and the children followed mostly the occupation of their fathers) thirty fathers would be dead, or thirty per cent.; but that of four hundred, not working in factories, only thirteen per cent.'* This statement was fully confirmed by the evidence of Mr. Dean; and yet it gives but an imperfect view, as it could be taken only upon the children who attended schools.†

It has been a sad consequence of such excessive toil, that multitudes remain unemployed—that while thousands are labouring beyond the strength of man, many are left in total idleness; nor is this the fault of their habit and disposition, but of the system. Again, the labour-market is subjected to great fluctuations, the demand being sometimes equal to the supply, sometimes far short of it. A limitation then of the hours of labour would extend more regularly throughout the twelve months that demand for workmen, which, under the present system of protracted toil, is confined to a part of them. Such an enactment would be especially beneficial to the children; their labour would be more tolerably apportioned; for many, whose limbs are now totally inactive, would be called to the aid of those who are perishing with toil. Against such a provision of mercy, no one has a right to urge 'foreign competition' (even though it were to the full, precisely what it *is not*); but the competition, in fact, to be

* Evidence before the Lords' Committees, 1818, 1819. † Ibid.

dreaded

dreaded by manufacturers, is not that of the foreigner, but amongst themselves. This has been, perhaps, more than any other, the cause of over-production and gluts. Eagerness to monopolize the entire orders, or desire to keep up the appearance of equal business with their neighbours, prompts a few to undertake with their single concern, what should be the occupation of many. The 'long hours' are favourable to these attempts; immense quantities are fabricated in short periods—but at last the mill-owners exceed the required supply. Then come a check, a glut, a cessation in the demand for labour—dismissal of the hands—losses to the manufacturer.

But there are other, perhaps even graver considerations behind. Whatever has a tendency to withdraw mankind from the duties and influences of domestic life, and slacken the bonds which nature has ordained, hurts the state in its citizens. Of old the manufacture was conducted in the cottages, and notwithstanding occasional abuses, the result was good. A man with his family worked together at the loom, and the articles required were produced at no expense of conjugal intercourse and parental duty. It is not possible to return to that state of things; but surely we might restore something of it. The husband, at present, goes to one mill, the children to another, and perhaps his wife to a third. How often may the operatives be heard to confess, that from one week to another they never see their children—and yet the poor want neither parental affection nor parental pride; they would gladly behold them 'grow up as tender plants,' and flourish like 'olive branches round about their table;' but the system denies this.

It is said that the advantages we would fain restore could only be obtained by the surrender of others. A reduction of wages is foretold as the result, with all its concomitant vexations. This we deny. No reduction of wages did ensue on the previous limitation of labour; other causes, distant both in time and principle, have contributed to abate the earnings of the operative. But though the assertion were true, our demand would lose nothing of its justice or its prudence, for the high wages of the workman avail him nothing, unless they be disbursed with skill and thrift. Let us, in argument, grant them twice the wages; to what purpose? With no knowledge of domestic economy, no skill in management, they waste as much as they consume, and enter into expenses where they should make savings. The ignorance of these matters among the manufacturing classes is almost incredible; the women, who have passed their early years in the all-absorbing toil of the mill, are totally uninstructed in the simplest requisites of domestic life. We have heard from the lips of operatives themselves, that in a vast number of families the females are wholly unable to dress

dress a dinner or mend a shirt, which necessary duties, from the incapacity of the wife, are performed by an hireling. Now, though it be true that 'a stitch in time saves nine,' the operative, for want of conjugal experience, can seldom verify it; and repairs are no slight article of outlay in a family of several persons. The evidence of Mr. Bull, in 1832, is most accurate and valuable on this head, and proves satisfactorily that a reduction of time is fully equivalent to an increase of wages; and we have before us a document, drawn up by an inhabitant of Manchester, demonstrating that, in a family of four persons, with aggregate wages of 19*s.* a week, full 7*s.* 4*d.* might, by a diminution of labour, be saved on the items of the weekly expenditure. 'The fact is,' says Mr. Gregg, 'that partly from thoughtlessness, partly from vanity, partly from habit, and partly from the love of selfish indulgence, but more than all from *actual ignorance of domestic economy*, their household affairs are carried on in the most unsystematic, slovenly, and expensive style, and display an almost incredible want of management, thriftiness, and care.'—(p. 33.) To this, if we add the miseries of frequent disorder, premature decrepitude, early failure of eyesight, and, at the age of forty, all the evils of fourscore, we shall be inclined to admit that the riches of Crœsus would be no compensation for the diseases of Job.

Such ameliorations as those proposed in Parliament, would affect, in a ten-fold degree, the condition of the children: they would restore them to the society and protection of their parents, and the parents to the duties they owe to their offspring; save many from orphanage, and re-establish, in some measure, the order of nature. 'Dos est magna parentum virtus'—a precious patrimony here, where physical necessity gives a whet to the edge of evil example! The youngest in these towns soon learn to tipple, and practise every form of nameless profligacy. Worn down, and all but annihilated by toil, these wretched infants seek the stimulus of spirits; and gin is now dealt out at the drinking shops in the smallest measures, and for the smallest sums, thus suiting the dram to every age and every capacity. Those that slink home, 'fall stupidly like the dogs upon the hearth,' (so speak their parents,) and awake again only to renew their toil; some, less fortunate even than these, are detained throughout the night, praying, however short it might be, for some interval of repose. 'I remember,' says that amiable man, Mr. Bull, 'that a little girl remarked to me, "at five o'clock we often say, I wish it was seven."' Ay, 'in the morning thou shalt say, would God it were even; and at even thou shalt say, would God it were morning;'* thus have we

* Deuteronomy xxviii. 67.

imposed,

imposed, upon an innocent and a helpless race, the curse that was deemed sufficient for a rebellious and sinful people.

Did we not know the inconsistencies of human nature, and the lamentable exaggeration of them in his Majesty's Ministers, we might well be surprised to hear them propose eight hours for the negro adult, and twelve for the child in the factory. But the surprise will decrease when we arrive at the cause; in either case they sought parliamentary votes; and having to deal with the same parties, but conflicting principles, they gave one law to mercy, and another to oppression. It was politic, but cruel; the loudest declaimers at anti-slavery meetings were the fiercest in demanding an autocracy over the children; there were some honourable exceptions—but their numbers were few—while Lancashire and Yorkshire, teeming with influence, mill-owners, and votes, denounced tyranny in the planter but bepraised it in themselves. The one system, however, has fallen, nor will the other stand long; it may possibly be the purpose of a gracious Providence to make them, like Sennacherib, the instruments of his power, 'howbeit they think not so;' for every argument and every principle, urged by themselves on behalf of the blacks, have an equal strength in favour of the whites,—the country at last will perceive and enforce it; the more extensive the inquiry the more accurate the parallel. Those who are at all conversant with factory-life, and have heard of the '*domestic virtues* of slavery,' will comprehend the resemblance without the specification of disgusting details. And, after all, in the slavery of the British Indies there was an advantageous contrast; the deficiency of the supply of labourers inspired the planters with an artificial humanity; but the redundancy here seems to blunt what is natural; *they* apportioned, moreover, the toil to the years of the child, and fixed its labour under the canopy of heaven!

We have received, while writing this paper, a little poem entitled, 'A Voice from the Factories,' which presents many touching and by no means over-coloured pictures of our accursed system of white slavery. Let us pause to consider the following striking stanzas, which assuredly could have come from no other than a mother's hand:—

> 'There the pale Orphan, whose unequal strength
> Loathes the incessant toil it *must* pursue,
> Pines for the cool sweet evening's twilight length,
> The sunny play-hour, and the morning's dew:
> Worn with its cheerless life's monotonous hue,
> Bowed down, and faint, and stupified it stands;
> Each half-seen object reeling in its view—
> While its hot, trembling, languid little hands
> Mechanically heed the Task-master's commands.

'There

'There, sounds of wailing grief and painful blows
Offend the ear, and startle it from rest;
(While the lungs gasp what air the place bestows;)
Or misery's joyless vice, the ribald jest,
Breaks the sick silence: staring at the guest
Who comes to view their labour, they beguile
The unwatch'd moment; whispers half suppressed
And mutterings low, their faded lips defile,—
While gleams from face to face a strange and sullen smile.

'These then are his Companions: he, too young
To share their base and saddening merriment,
Sits by: his little head in silence hung;
His limbs cramp'd up; his body weakly bent;
Toiling obedient, till long hours so spent
Produce Exhaustion's slumber, dull and deep.
The Watcher's stroke—bold—sudden—violent,—
Urges him from that lethargy of sleep,
And bids him wake to Life,—to labour and to weep!

'But the day hath its End. Forth then he hies
With jaded, faltering step, and brow of pain;
Creeps to that shed,—his HOME,—where happy lies
The sleeping babe that cannot toil for Gain;
Where his remorseful Mother tempts in vain
With the best portion of their frugal fare:
Too sick to eat—too weary to complain—
He turns him idly from the untasted share,
Slumbering sinks down unfed, and mocks her useless care.

Weeping she lifts, and lays his heavy head
(With all a woman's grieving tenderness)
On the hard surface of his narrow bed;
Bends down to give a sad unfelt caress,
And turns away;—willing her God to bless,
That, weary as he is, he need not fight
Against that long-enduring bitterness,
The VOLUNTARY LABOUR of the Night,
But sweetly slumber on till day's returning light.

'Vain hope! Alas! unable to forget
The anxious task's long, heavy agonies,
In broken sleep the victim labours yet!
Waiting the boding stroke that bids him rise,
He marks in restless fear each hour that flies—
Anticipates the unwelcome morning prime—
And murmuring feebly, with unwaken'd eyes,
"Mother! Oh Mother! is it yet THE TIME?"—
Starts at the moon's pale ray—or clock's far distant chime.'—
Voice from the Factories, p. 34.

To

To conclude—We must 'look to it, for evil is before us.' A population already vast is rapidly increasing, but not so morality and the knowledge of religion. Political privileges are more widely bestowed; and in proportion as external checks are withdrawn, the internal should be multiplied; though liberty be given to all, few only are fit for self-government; and it will be utterly impossible to rule a free state, where the minds of the people are left in total darkness, to be illuminated at intervals only by the livid and unwholesome glare of infidelity and sedition. We must not be answered by forced and fictitious tables—by relative statements from agricultural districts; did we allow them to be true (which assuredly they are not), such documents would prove nothing; the education in cities should be five-fold better, not only because there is five-fold opportunity, but because there is, in truth, a five-fold necessity. The contagion spreads fast in thickly-crowded towns; one infidel of talent may corrupt or disturb the faith of hundreds, and prepare the soil for the labours of the Jacobin, should he not already have united in himself both these fashionable and congenial characters. These are arguments for politicians; there are higher ones for Christians. Thousands of children never hear of God, except in the profanation of his name; very few even pass through the semblance of education; they live and die like the beasts of the field, with nothing to amend, and nothing to console them. Were their labour reduced, an hour a day might be given to learning; and the studies of the week sanctified and completed by the Sabbath-schools. But, alas! in many instances these useful institutions have been lamentably perverted; they have cloaked avarice, sheltered oppression, and cherished ignorance. Examples are not wanting where the master, who has pushed the labour of Saturday even to midnight, and commanded the renewal of it at one o'clock on Monday morning, has, during his Judaical nicety of observance, driven the unhappy children to a Sunday-school! But were the *whole* Sabbath honestly given, it would not be enough; some portion of every day should be placed at their disposal; and if man be not, as this system would make him, a mere animal, insensate, and irresponsible, the public is bound by duty as well as interest, to demand as his right, that he have both time and opportunity for the cultivation and exercise of his immortal part.

One thing is certain—the people of the manufacturing districts, old and young, male and female, are determined that they will never be quiet until parliament grants them a ten-hours bill. How long is their cry to be trifled with? During this unhappy agitation, we can hope for nothing but suspicion, hostility, and discontent

discontent throughout the manufacturing districts; a total annihilation of all friendliness and confidence between employer and employed; and something, perhaps, far worse in periods, which may soon come, of suspended labour and commercial revulsion. The masters, residing at a distance from the immediate scene of the evil, know but little either of the condition or the temper of their men—they should fathom them more deeply than through the meagre experience which is acquired by a visit to the counting-house, or a walk through the mill. Sir Robert Peel was a mill-owner, and continued incredulous till the alarm of contagion arose, and he felt it his duty to watch things with his own eyes; he saw, though late, the abominations of the system, declared his conviction, and applied a remedy.

We may have failed to stamp upon the minds of our readers the conviction that is so deeply impressed upon our own; we may have failed to set clearly before them the moral, political, and religious aspects of this mighty question; we may have failed to show that a change is necessary for the security and improvement of our wealth; but we have, at least, explained that it is a provision of mercy. By this, then, let the legislature determine their counsels; let this be their pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night; for surely it will never be found that the government of God is at variance with his laws; and that the same Omniscience, which gave a commandment 'to do judgment and love mercy,' will visit his willing and obedient servants with calamity and ruin. Rather let us believe that no blessing can accompany those riches which are produced in suffering and crime, but that eventual mischief must descend on a system which afflicts so large a portion of our race, and demands every hour of that life, and almost every energy of that soul, whereof a portion should be given to the pursuit of those noble ends, for which Providence endued man with understanding, and promised him immortality. Great and small, we have a common and an only hope; and it is by that common and only hope that we implore our legislators to have mercy on the children.*

* We are sorry that Mr. Wing's book, entitled 'Evils of the Factory System,' did not come into our possession before we began this article. The copy sent to us, just as we are concluding it, is indeed an incomplete one; but we have read enough to satisfy us that, had it been on our desk, it would have saved us a great deal of trouble in analyzing the Parliamentary Reports and Evidence on the subject—and supplied us, moreover, with many interesting facts gathered by the personal industry of this intelligent Surgeon in his recent examination of the manufacturing districts. As a lucid summary of the whole case, we anticipate a thankful reception for his work.