

John Fielden
1836

EXTRAITS

THE CURSE
OF
THE FACTORY SYSTEM ;

OR,

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE ORIGIN OF FACTORY CRUELITIES; OF THE ATTEMPTS TO PROTECT THE CHILDREN BY LAW; OF THEIR PRESENT SUFFERINGS; OUR DUTY TOWARDS THEM; INJUSTICE OF MR. THOMSON'S BILL; THE FOLLY OF THE POLITICAL ECONOMISTS; A WARNING AGAINST SENDING THE CHILDREN OF THE SOUTH INTO THE FACTORIES OF THE NORTH.

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By JOHN FIELDEN, M.P. FOR OLDHAM,
AND MANUFACTURER AT TODMORDEN IN LANCASHIRE.

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1

ON the 27th of February last, I received a copy of a memorial addressed by certain Manufacturers of the Borough of Oldham to "*The Right Honourable the Lords of His Majesty's Privy Council for Trade, &c. &c.*" together with a request in writing, that I would go with my colleague, Mr. LEES, to whom the original was sent, and support the request of the memorialists. As this document came from a part of my own constituents, I felt bound to comply with their request, unless it was contrary to my own convictions, and, finding it to be so, I wrote to them to that effect. A copy of the memorial and of the correspondence I will now insert :

" Oldham, 25th February, 1836.

" SIR,

" I am instructed by the Master Spinners and Manufacturers in this Township to forward you the inclosed copy of a Memorial, the original of which has this day been forwarded to JOHN FREDERICK LEES, Esq., one of the Members for this Borough, for presentation to the Lords of His Majesty's Privy Council for Trade, and to solicit your assistance and influence in obtaining an alteration of the present Factory Regulation Act.

" I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

" KAY CLEGG,

" John Fielden, Esq., M.P.,
" House of Commons, London."

" To the Right Honourable the Lords of His Majesty's Privy Council for
 " Trade, &c. &c.

" The Memorial of the Undersigned Mill-owners, Occupiers of Mills,
 " Master-Spinners, and Manufacturers of the Township of Oldham, in
 " the County of Lancaster,

" Showeth,

" That an Act of Parliament was made and passed in the third and
 " fourth years of the reign of his present Majesty, entitled ' An Act to regu-
 " late the labour of children and young persons in the Mills and Factories of
 " the United Kingdom.'

" That the eighth section of the said Act enacts ' That after the expiration
 " of thirty months from the passing of such Act it shall not be lawful for
 " any person whatsoever to employ, keep, or allow to remain, in any factory
 " or mill for a longer period than forty-eight hours in any one week, any
 " child who shall not have completed his or her thirteenth year of age.'

" That the said Act has prohibited the employment of children under
 " twelve years of age for more than nine hours in any one day since the first
 " day of March one thousand eight hundred and thirty-five, and such prohi-
 " bition has tended greatly to injure the interests both of your Memorialists
 " and the parents of such children, without any advantage resulting to the
 " children themselves.

" That your Memorialists are looking forward with great anxiety and
 " alarm to the situation in which they will be placed on the first day of
 " March next, by the working of children under thirteen years of age being
 " restricted to forty-eight hours in one week, for that such restriction will
 " have the effect of throwing all children under thirteen years of age wholly
 " out of employment, and will render it impossible for your Memorialists to
 " work their respective mills with advantage, in proof whereof your Memo-
 " rialists confidently appeal to the Factory Inspectors of this district for the
 " truth of their assertion.

" That your Memorialists are far from wishing a total repeal of the pro-
 " visions of the said Factory Act, but humbly submit that it is absolutely
 " necessary to the carrying on of the cotton trade with advantage, to allow
 " the employment of children of eleven years of age for sixty-nine hours a
 " week.

" That your Memorialists approve of the principle of appointing respon-
 " sible superintendents over the mills and factories of the United Kingdom,
 " and are favourable to a restriction of the employment of young persons
 " under twenty-one years of age to sixty-nine hours in the week.

" Your Memorialists, therefore, pray that a Bill may be forthwith
 " introduced by his Majesty's Government, which shall prevent
 " the latter part of the above-mentioned section from coming into
 " operation on the first of March next, and which shall permit
 " children of eleven years of age to be employed for sixty-nine
 " hours per week in the mills and factories of the United
 " Kingdom."

This memorial is signed by seventy-two mill-owners, but I do not think it necessary to publish their names. The following is the answer that I returned to Mr. Clegg :—

“ London, Feb. 29, 1836.

“ SIR, I have received your letter of the 27th, and a copy of the memorial sent to Mr. LEES.

“ The prayer of the Memorialists, that young children between eleven and thirteen years of age should be allowed to work in factories sixty-nine hours in the week, instead of forty-eight hours a week, which the law now prescribes, is so revolting to my feelings, and so opposed to my views of the protection such children are entitled to, that I must decline supporting the prayer of the Memorialists.

“ The work-people have long petitioned that the maximum of time for those under twenty-one should be fifty-eight hours per week. This I should be glad to see adopted, as an experiment, and would support such a proposition by my vote; but I do not think the restriction is sufficient.

“ I am embarked in the same business with the Memorialists. I have had long experience in it. I have paid great attention to this question; and, after mature consideration of it, I am convinced that eight hours work per day, in factories, is as long as ought to be exacted from either children or adults; and I am of opinion, too, that such a regulation, combined with a daily system of training and instruction, would be more advantageous both to masters and servants, than the regulation now in practice. But the subject is so important, and is likely to be brought under the consideration of Parliament so soon, that I propose to publish my opinions, and the reasons for those opinions; and the conclusions I have come to on this question, in reply to the Memorialists.

“ I am, Sir,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ JOHN FIELDEN.

“ Klay Clegg, Esq. Oldham.”

Whether owing to the recommendation of the memorialists, or not, I do not know; but Mr. POULETT THOMSON has brought in a bill to repeal so much of the Act 3rd and 4th W. 4. c. 103 as prohibits the working of children under thirteen years of age beyond eight hours a day. But, it is necessary that I should state the circumstances under which this Act was passed.

The late Mr. SADLER, in 1832, attempted to pass an act through the House of Commons, providing that no person under eighteen years of age should work more than ten

hours a day in factories. He failed, and was not returned to the succeeding Parliament of 1833; but Lord Ashley took up the subject, brought in a ten-hour bill, and had proceeded with it to the second reading, when on the 3rd of April, 1833, Mr. WILSON PATTEN moved as an amendment that a Commission should be appointed to take evidence as to the *expediency of the measure*. The Commissioners went forth, and the result was, a report in which they state distinctly (pp. 33, 34) that Lord Ashley's bill for restriction to ten hours' labour *will not afford a sufficient protection to children*, and then they go on to recommend as follows :

“ That children under nine years of age shall not be employed in mills or factories, subject, however, to the considerations hereinafter stated. That, until the commencement of the fourteenth year, the hours of labour during any one day shall not in any case exceed eight. That, until the commencement of the fourteenth year, children shall not in any case be allowed to work at night; that is to say, between the hours of ten at night and five in the morning.”—[p. 52.]

The Act above-named was passed, and, according to Section VIII., its operation was to be gradual; that is to say, no child who had not completed its eleventh year, was to work more than eight hours a day after the 1st March, 1834; and, in the same manner, no child who had not completed its twelfth year, was to work a longer time than eight hours in a day after the 1st March, 1835; and, on the 1st March, 1836, *no child who had not completed its thirteenth year, was to work more than eight hours in the day*. And it is this last provision that the Bill introduced by the Right Hon. the President of the Board of Trade is intended to repeal.

Against this repeal I protest; for it is taking from an unoffending and feeble part of the labouring classes the main provision of a law which, in some shape or another, has been called for for these thirty years, not only by the unfortunate people themselves, but by some of the wealthiest and most considerate masters, who have been put to shame by the just but unsparing remonstrances of a host of the most eminent physicians and surgeons in England.

In tracing the progress which has been made in the attempts to better the condition of factory children, it may not be amiss to inquire how it came to pass originally, that, in England, always boasting of her humanity, laws were necessary in order to protect little children from the cruelties of the master manufacturer, and even of their own parents.

It is well known 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 old. 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 to see to the works, whose interest it was to work the children to the utmost, because their pay was in proportion to the quantity of work that they could exact. Cruelty was, of course, the consequence ; and there is abundant evidence on record, and preserved in the recollections 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 heart-rending were practised upon the unoffending and friendless creatures who were thus consigned to the charge of master-manufacturers ; that they were ha-

passed 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 of 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 malignant 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 those remote glens became even partially known. The masters themselves, proof against the dictates of ordinary humanity, were not proof against ma-

* See "Memoir of ROBERT BLINCOE, an Orphan Boy sent from the Parish of St. Pancras" in 1799 into Nottinghamshire; and I wish every man and woman in England *would see* and read this pamphlet. It is published at Manchester, where the crippled subject of the memoir now lives to testify the truth of all that I have said above.

lignant fevers, nor strong enough to set the public voice at defiance, and therefore they instituted a Board of Health in Manchester, which made the following Report in 1796 :—

“ It has already been stated, that the objects of the present institution are
 “ to prevent the generation of diseases ; to obviate the spreading of them by
 “ contagion ; and to shorten the duration of those which exist, by affording
 “ the necessary aids and comforts to the sick. In the prosecution of this in-
 “ teresting undertaking, the Board have had their attention particularly di-
 “ rected to the large cotton factories established in the town and neighbour-
 “ hood of Manchester ; and they feel it a duty incumbent on them to lay be-
 “ fore the public the result of their inquiries :—1. 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 apartments, but in the families and neighbourhoods
 “ to which they belong. 2. The large factories are generally injurious to the
 “ constitution of those employed in them, even where 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 na-
 “ ture points out as essential in childhood and youth, to invigorate the sys-
 “ tem, and to fit our species for the employments and for the duties of man-
 “ hood. 3. The untimely labour of the night, and the protracted labour of
 “ the day, with respect to children, not only tends to diminish future expecta-
 “ tions as to 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 off-
 “ spring. It appears that children employed in factories are generally de-
 “ barred from all opportunities of education, and from moral or religious in-
 “ struction. 5. From the excellent regulations which exist in several cotton
 “ factories, it appears that many of these evils may, in a considerable degree,
 “ be obviated ; we are therefore warranted by experience, and we are assured
 “ we shall have the support of the liberal proprietors of these factories, in
 “ proposing an application for Parliamentary aid (if other methods appear
 “ not likely to effect the purpose), to establish a general system of laws for
 “ the wise, humane, and equal government of all such works.”

Nothing was done, however, till 1802, when the late Sir ROBERT PEEL, being a Member of the House of Commons, procured an Act (42 Geo. 3. c. 73) to regulate the labour of apprentice children worked in factories ; but the evidence on which that Act is founded (if any there was) I have never been able to procure. However, from the circumstance of the provisions of the Act being limited to *apprentices*, as

well as from evidence taken subsequently, it appears that the main body of factory children were then of the description that I have mentioned as being sent into the north from London and elsewhere; an unfortunate race, wholly destitute of natural guardians, and who were, therefore, easily coerced into the ways pointed out by their new masters. I draw attention to this fact, because I am anxious to show what was the *origin* of "that encouragement to idleness, extravagance, and profligacy in the parents, who, contrary to the order of nature, subsist by the oppression of their offspring;" a fierce denunciation dealt out by the Board of Health against those parents who suffered their children to be treated only in the same manner that the masters were treating the forlorn orphan and the destitute whom the parishes of London had confided to their care. I am the more anxious to do this, because this stain, which, in some measure, even now rests on the character of English poor parents, ought, in fact, to rest on that of the master manufacturers. The custom of over-working was forced by them upon the unhappy apprentice, who had no parent to insist on the observance of former customs; no friend to teach him any traditions; who was, in short, a living machine and not a free agent; and who was, therefore, wholly incapable of making any resistance to his master, or any appeal to mother, father, friend, or neighbour.

The Apprentice Act naturally, but gradually, wore out the newly-adopted custom of taking factory apprentices; for, as the masters would work the long hours, they now had recourse to the children of parents on the spot; which it became easier for them to do, as, about this time, the application of steam power to cotton factories by WATT, was getting into vogue; so that the moving power, which before had been water-falls, and which, of course, could only be had by building the factory on the stream, was now, an engine, that could be put up in the midst of the people wherever they could be found; and, therefore, in the year 1816, Sir ROBERT PEEL procured a Committee of the House of Com-

mons to examine into the expediency of a Bill to apply the provisions of the Act above named to *all* children worked in factories; and he put in a paper, from which I take the following:—

“Diffident of my own abilities to originate legislative measures, I should have contented myself with the one alluded to [42 Geo. 3.], had I not perceived, that, owing to the present use of steam power in factories, the 42nd of the King is likely to become a dead letter. Large buildings are now erected, not as formerly on the banks of streams, but in the midst of populous towns; and instead of parish apprentices being sought after, the children of the surrounding poor are preferred, whose masters being free from the operation of the former Act of Parliament, are subjected to no limitation of time in the prosecution of their business, though children are frequently admitted there to work thirteen or fourteen hours per day at the tender age of seven years, and even in some cases still younger.”

And this paper concludes with these words:—

“Such indiscriminate and unlimited employment of the poor, consisting of a great proportion of the inhabitants of trading districts, will be attended with effects to the rising generation so serious and alarming, that I cannot contemplate them without dismay; and thus that 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, will be converted into the bitterest curse.”—[*Evid. taken 1816, p. 133.*]

The evidence taken before the Committee of 1816 establishes many important facts; but, in particular, the evidence of Sir ROBERT PEEL himself is well worthy of attention. In the paper above quoted, he states how his mind was drawn to the subject: “Having other pursuits, it was not often in my power to visit the factories [speaking of his own]; but whenever such visits were made, I was struck with the *uniform appearance of bad health, and, in many cases, stunted growth of the children.* The hours of labour were regulated by the interests of the overseer, whose remuneration was regulated by the quantity of work done,” &c. [p. 132]. He says also that he was dissatisfied with the conduct of his overseers; that he received representations that the children were improperly worked; that the proper hours for work were twelve; and “if that limitation had contented the overseers, I am persuaded the health of the

"children would have been protected;" but that they frequently worked them from fourteen to fifteen hours [p. 135]. And a considerable part of his evidence is then taken up in showing that, after the passing of the Factory Apprentice Act, the children of very poor people were brought into the mills, and, not being apprenticed, were worked during the long hours prohibited as to apprentices.

The evidence of John Moss, overseer of Backbarrow Mill, near Preston [p. 178], is to the effect, that the apprentice Act was constantly set at nought. The witness did not even know of it. The children in the mill were almost all apprentices from London parishes; they were worked from five in the morning to eight at night, all the year round, with only one hour for the two meals; in making up lost time, they frequently worked from five in the morning till ten at night, and invariably they worked from *six on the Sunday morning till twelve*, in cleaning the machinery for the week! In speaking of the consequent fatigue, the evidence is this [p. 180].

"Did the children sit or stand at work?—Stand.

"The whole of their time?—Yes.

"Were there any seats in the mill?—None.

"Were they usually much fatigued at night?—Yes, some of them were very much fatigued.

"Where did they sleep?—They slept in the apprentice house.

"Did you inspect their beds?—Yes, every night.

"For what purpose?—Because there were always some of them missing; some sometimes might be run away, others sometimes I have found asleep in the mill.

"Upon the mill floor?—Yes.

"Did the children frequently lie down upon the mill floor at night when their work was over, and fall asleep before their supper?—I have found them frequently upon the mill floor, after the time they should have been in bed."

The same witness states that, in the same mill, there were some few children not apprentices; but that they were the children of very poor persons, mostly Irish; and that these complained of the long hours of work that their children were subjected to, but that they submitted to it on account of their poverty.

It is evident, in short, that the long hours of work were brought about by the circumstance of so great a number of destitute children being supplied from the different parts of the country, that the masters were independent of the hands ; and that, having once established the custom by means of the miserable materials which they procured in this way, they could impose it on their neighbours with the greater facility.

The result of this Committee was, not an Act at once passed, but the Act of 59 Geo. 3. c. 66, which was passed in July 1819, and which did not apply to any but cotton-wool factories. Sir ROBERT PEEL encountered great opposition from the manufacturers, who urged (as they always do) that, if cruelties were practised formerly, they were no longer resorted to ; but the House had received information that opened its eyes ; it was not content to trust to men who had been so guilty, and Mr. HORNER called to its recollection that, as enormous abuses *had* existed, the possibility that they might arise again, demanded interference. He observed, with regard to the Factory apprentice, that, “ These children were often sent one, two, or three hundred miles from their place of birth, separated for life from all relations, and deprived of the aid which even in their destitute situation they might derive from friends.” He described this as “ repugnant to humanity, and a practice that had been suffered to exist by the negligence of the legislature.” In referring to the results of this inhuman practice, he said, “ It had been known that with a bankrupt’s effects, a gang, if he might use the term, of these children had been put up to sale, and were advertised publicly, *as a part of the property*. A most atrocious instance had come before the 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, had come to his 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 !”

These horrible facts were spoken on the 6th of June, 1815, when Sir ROBERT PEEL first moved to bring in his Bill ; and, though the motion was carried, the Bill slumbered along till 1819, when it was passed. It was delayed by the appointing of the committee to inquire, which established all that was necessary to show how urgently the case called for the interference of Parliament. The provisions of the Act were ; *first*, that no child under nine years of age should be employed in any factory for the spinning of cotton wool ; and, *second*, that no child under sixteen years of age should be employed in any such factory for more than twelve hours during the day, exclusive of the meal-times. This was a twelve hours Bill for children, which seems to have been all that Sir ROBERT PEEL could obtain. But, the question here, is, was this enough ? Did it sufficiently lessen the labour performed by children ? The medical men of the greatest eminence were examined by the Committee, and all of them agreed that the labour as then performed by children, would of necessity produce the evils described by the witnesses as having taken place, namely, stunted growth, deformity, fearful abridgment of life, and complaints of a nature hereditary. It would lengthen this part of my subject too much if I were to dwell any longer on this part of my narrative and give a summary of the medical evidence ; but, in page 32, I find an emphatic answer given by Sir ASTLEY COOPER to this question :

“ At what age may children, without endangering their health, be admitted to close labour for thirteen hours per day ?—I THINK AT NO AGE.”

So that, by fixing on twelve hours as the number which a child of from nine to sixteen years old should work, the Parliament did but condemn them to labour just one hour less than that precise number which Sir ASTLEY COOPER says *no child at any age* can work without injury to its health.

I need scarcely make any comment on this, and, therefore, I will proceed to the next measure brought before Parliament for protecting the factory children.

After the passing of this Act, there were four others to amend, to alter, or to render valid this one ; but these were all repealed by the 1 and 2 Wm. 4. c. 39, commonly called Sir John Hobhouse's Act. The principal provision of this Act, is, one which makes it unlawful to work any child in a factory, and who is under eighteen years of age, for more than sixty-nine hours in the week ; but this Act also is confined to cotton factories.

In 1832, the late Mr. SADLER made great efforts in favour of the factory children. He brought a Bill into Parliament to limit the hours of labour for all under eighteen years of age, to fifty-eight hours in the week ; and the provisions of this Bill were to extend to woollen, flax, and silk, as well as cotton, mills. On moving the second reading on the 13th March, he was met by strong opposition, and a cry for investigation. Unable to resist it, he acceded to a Committee being appointed, and of that Committee he became the chairman. It made no Report to the House, excepting of the very valuable evidence that it had taken, so that, we have to wade through an immense volume in order to arrive at conclusions upon all the points which it embraces ; but no one can open this volume of evidence without perceiving that all the attempts that have been made by Parliament are shamefully set at nought, that children are still worked beyond their strength, and that they cry aloud for protection. The most important evidence, however, taken before this Committee was that of the eminent surgeons and physicians of London. There were examined, amongst many others, Dr. BLUNDELL, Sir A. CARLISLE, Sir BENJAMIN BRODIE, Dr. ROGET, Dr. FARRE, Sir G. TUTHILL, Sir C. BELL, Mr. GREEN, Mr. KEY, Mr. TRAVERS, and Mr. GUTHRIE. I appeal to every man but the sordid to read the evidence of these gentlemen. From some of them we have mild, to be sure, but serious expressions of horror at our cruelty : by others we are openly

denounced as the murderers of infants. From them all we have a lesson that we ought to attend to, and the Parliament is distinctly told, that, if it is a part of its duty to make laws to protect men from the arm of the murderer, laws of the same protecting kind are necessary in the case of these children, where the murder is as certain as in any other instance, and more cruel, because the death is more lingering.

The Parliament has passed an Act to abolish slavery in the English colonies, and not only the *name* but the essence of slavery ; for, in that Act, it has taken care to provide that no negro shall work more hours in the week than *forty-five*, which is no more than *seven and a half* in the day. Now, then, if this Act of humanity was necessary, see how much more necessary is the eight-hour Act for the children of English "*free men*." I will quote the words of Dr. FARRE when examined by Mr. SADLER's Committee, in 1832. It will be found in pages 598 to 602. He states that he was a medical practitioner in Barbadoes :

"That he thinks twelve hours a-day labour is too much for a very large majority of human beings."

And then he is asked about the condition of the slaves in the island of Barbadoes :

"What were the regulations in respect of the labour of children and young persons?—As far as I am acquainted with them, they consisted in not employing them in field labour, in digging or in carrying manure, but in exercising them in gathering the green crops for the stock. The plan of working them lightly in the open air and feeding them, not trusting to the food provided by the parents' care, but by the care of the master, had the most beneficial effect in improving their condition.

"Supposing the employment of children in the factories of this country is spread over twelve or fourteen hours a day, and often with very short intervals for the taking of meals; is there any thing equal to that sort of labour imposed upon the children of the slaves in that island?—Nothing of the kind; even the adult, in the most vigorous condition of body, is not subjected to labour of that duration.

"So that you consider that the limitation of the length and degree of the labour of the children and young persons in Barbadoes is eminently advantageous to the planter himself, with a view merely to his own interest and future advantage?—Certainly: it is necessary. In English factories, every thing 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."

In page 601, he says that he never heard of such a thing as night-working in the West Indies; and in the same page, the evidence is:

"It appears from an official document that the mortality exists in a greater proportion whenever this system of long and irksome labour is allowed; would you be prepared for such results, from the principles you have stated?—I think that the result is so inevitable, that I view it as a species of infanticide, and a very cruel, because lingering species of infanticide, resulting from the over-extension of a principle in itself good, the cheap production demanding over-labour; and that the only safeguard to the state consists in opposing this principle of political economy by the medical voice, whenever it trenches on vital economy.

"You think that political economy, supposing it were made manifest that the system would produce national wealth, ought not to be suffered to interfere with vital economy?—It ought not to be suffered to trench on vital economy, because if it does, it is guilty of homicide. I have no hesitation in affirming, that the voice of the profession would maintain this truth, and never assent to life being balanced against wealth. That the life is more than the meat, is a divine maxim which we are bound to obey.

"Assuming that the children of this country are not free agents, can you have any doubt whatever, the slightest hesitation on your mind, that they demand protection equally with the child of the West India slave?—I think the word *demand* is a very proper mode of putting the question; for I myself consider that the nation is responsible for it, and, as a medical man, I assert, that, if you deem it a part of your duty to make laws against murder, I consider that legislation is equally necessary for the prevention of death in any mode in which it can be prematurely inflicted; and certainly this must be viewed as a most cruel mode of inflicting it."

Mr. GREEN, at the conclusion of his evidence, is asked:

"What should you judge to be the effect of this system, as at present carried on, upon the moral and physical welfare of the community, generally considered?"

His answer is given at considerable length, and, therefore, I will only insert the impressive words with which he closes that answer. They are as follows:

"It is indispensable, I say, in regulating a manufacturing system, that the labourers employed should never be considered as merely the means to its success, but that their condition, moral and physical, should constitute an essential object of the system, and its success, as the source of wealth and power, be subordinated thereto. But, if instead of this legitimate object,

" and this wholesome restraint, ruled by the insatiable avarice of gain, the
 " manufacturing system is without check, and has no bound but the possible
 " means of creating wealth, and of making the rich richer ; if we find that the
 " population is indefinitely increased, that human beings are called into
 " existence by, and their existence wholly dependent upon, manufactures, the
 " demand for which, in many instances, has only the precarious tenure of
 " caprice and fashion ; if, then, in consequence of this multiplication of la-
 " bourers, wages be lowered till it be simply calculated upon how little life
 " and the motion of a pair of hands can be supported ; if we find that these
 " human beings are only regarded as parts of the machinery which they set
 " in motion, and with as little attention to their moral welfare ; if we find
 " that these, even to the tenderest age, and without respect to the distinctions
 " of sex, and without regard to decency, are crowded together under all the
 " circumstances that contribute to disease and vice, and all this to add to the
 " wealth of their employers, to minister to the luxuries of the rich, and to
 " make overgrown capitals still more vast and oppressive, whilst the labourers
 " themselves are degraded into the mere negro slaves of Europe ; then, I say,
 " that these and all the physical evils incident to such a state, require no
 " medical opinion, but demand unsparing moral correction, or they await the
 " punishment due to depriving man of the birthright of his humanity, of
 " degrading him into the class of means and things to be used, instead of
 " recognising, as the end, his happiness and dignity as a moral and respon-
 " sible agent."

All these gentlemen give it as their opinion, that *ten hours of actual labour is the utmost that can be endured by even the adult* ; and that, if so much be imposed upon youth, it should be light and varied. Indeed, they all evidently think even this too much for children. But, labour beyond that, and for children, they invariably pronounce to be far too much. Sir ANTHONY CARLISLE calls it a "*sin against nature and humanity*," and "an offence against nature which, alas ! is visited on the innocent creature instead of its oppressor, by the loss of its health, or the premature destruction of its race." Sir WILLIAM BLIZARD calls it "*horrible*," and varies the term to "*dreadful*." In short, the wonder in the mind of every man who takes on himself the trouble of reading through the evidence of this one Committee, must be, that any Government (pretending to the name) can rest satisfied until it has effectually removed this curse and shame to the nation ; but much greater must his wonder be, to see the everlasting difficulties which the Go-

vernment throws in the way of every attempt to remove it by the only effectual means ; namely, an Act to regulate the labour of all who work in factories, and to bring it down to one standard for all ages.

I have now gone through a very brief sketch of the history of factory regulations by Act of Parliament, up to 1831 ; to which I will only add, that, as all have been evaded, or set at defiance, it was the notoriety of this fact that urged Mr. SADLER to lay the ground for an efficient Act to protect infancy in all factories of cotton, woollen, silk, and flax. On the meeting of the first Reformed Parliament, Mr. SADLER not being a member, Lord ASHLEY was prompted to take the question in hand, as I have described at the outset of this paper. He was beaten in the House of Commons on the motion of Mr. PATTEN, because the Ministers joined that gentleman, they being so self-sufficient as to imagine that they could protect the children, without interfering with the adults ; and thereupon they listened to the advice of their own Commissioners (though one of these even dissented from the Report), in defiance of the warnings of every man, whether manufacturer or operative, who had spoken on the matter from 1816 to 1832. They were in this dilemma : the Committees had always discovered the same cruelties in practice ; the same over-working, and the same horrifying results ; the medical men who were examined always, and all of them, gave the same testimony, differing only in a slight degree in the terms expressive of their disgust at what was proved. They could not refuse to protect the children. But they are “ political economists ; ” and though, *as men*, they could no longer screw up their minds and hearts so far as to sacrifice any more limbs and lives of infants, the science would not suffer them to invade the “ freedom of industry,” by involving the adult in that protection which they were obliged to give to the child. It is this absurd attempt to separate the adult from the child in its labour, that has rendered every Act that has ever been passed to give protection to children, almost void ; and it is

only by forcing the masters to obey this Act now in existence, that will bring *them*, and after them the *Government*, to yield to the really practicable and salutary measure that the whole of the factory labourers require at their hands.

The question, as it now stands, appears to me to be this : Did not the Commissioners, sent down into the north in 1833 by the Government, find that protection to the children was called for on grounds of bare humanity? And, then, have not the Inspectors, sent down by the Government to put in force the Act founded upon the Commissioners' Report, stated that it is impracticable, because of the attempt to legislate for *children* only?

These two questions must be answered by referring to the Reports, *first*, of the Commissioners, and *then* of the Inspectors. The Commissioners have given a short summary in pp. 26 to 28 of their report, of the "EFFECTS OF FACTORY LABOUR ON CHILDREN," from which I make the extracts following. It is taken, it appears, from the mouths of the children themselves, their parents, and their overlookers. The account of the child, when questioned, is,—

" Sick-tired, especially in the winter nights ; so tired she can do nothing ;
 " feels so tired she throws herself down when she gangs home, no caring what
 " she does ; often much tired, and feels sore, standing so long on her legs ;
 " often so tired she could not eat her supper ; night and morning very tired ;
 " has two sisters in the mill ; has heard them complain to her mother, and
 " she says they must work ; whiles I do not know what to do with myself ;
 " as tired every morning as I can be."

Another speaks in this way :—

" Many a time has been so fatigued that she could hardly take off her
 " clothes at night, or put them on in the morning ; her mother would be
 " raging at her, because when she sat down she could not get up again
 " through the house ; thinks they are in bondage ; no much better than the
 " Israelites in Egypt, and life no pleasure to them ; so tired that she can't
 " eat her supper, nor wake of herself."

The Commissioners say the evidence of parents is generally this :—

" Her children come home so tired and worn out they can hardly eat their

"supper; has often seen her daughter come home so fatigued that she would go to bed supperless; has seen young workers absolutely oppressed, and unable to sit down or rise up."

They say that the evidence of the overlooker is,—

"Children are very often tired and stiff-like; have known children hide themselves in the stove among the wool, so that they should not go home when the work is over; have seen six or eight fetched out of the stove and beat home; beat out of the mill however; they hide because too tired to go home."

Again, an overlooker says :—

"Many a one I have had to rouse when the work is very slack from fatigue; the children very much jaded when worked late at night; the children bore the long hours very ill indeed; after working eight or nine, or ten hours, they were nearly ready to faint; some were asleep; some were only kept awake by being spoke to, or by a little chastisement, to make them jump up; I was obliged to chastise them when they were almost fainting, and it hurt my feelings; then they would spring up and work pretty well for another hour; but the last two or three hours was my hardest work, for they then got so exhausted."

Another child says :—

"She often falls asleep while sitting, sometimes standing; her little sister falls asleep, and they wake her by a cry; was up at four this morning, which made her fall asleep at one, when the Factory Commissioners came to inspect the mill."

A spinner says :—

"I find it difficult to keep my piecers awake the last hours of a winter's evening; have seen them fall asleep, and go on performing their work with their hands while they were asleep, 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 piecing when they were fast asleep, when there was no work to do, and they were doing nothing; children at night are so fatigued that they are asleep often as soon as they sit down, so that it is impossible to wake them to sense enough to wash themselves, or even to eat a bit of supper, being so stupid in sleep."

In alluding to the cruelty of parents, who suffer their children to be overworked in factories for their own gain, as spoken of in the Report of the Board of Health in Manchester, above-quoted, the Commissioners say that

"It is not wholly unknown in the West Riding of Yorkshire, for parents to

" carry their children to the mills in the morning on their backs, and to carry them back again at night."

And, further, that

" It appears in evidence that sometimes the sole consideration by which parents are influenced in making choice of a person under whom to place their children, is the amount of wages, not the mode of treatment, to be secured to them."

If this is not enough to show that there were grounds for the further protection, I will now refer to the same Report of the Commissioners, to show, that from Scotland the details are full as affecting, and even more disgusting. At page 18 (Report) the Commissioners open with these words :—

" Had the fact not been established by indubitable evidence, every one must have been slow to credit, that in this age and country the proprietors of extensive factories could have been indifferent to the well-being of their work-people to such a degree as is implied in the following statements :"

And then they quote from the evidence :—

" Privies situated in view ; common to males and females : this, in his (witness's) opinion, has a tendency to destroy shame and conduce to immorality."

And again :

" But one water-closet for both sexes, which children, and men, and women, use indiscriminately."

Referring to the evidence myself, I find in A 1, p. 40, in the mill of Messrs. DUNCAN and Co., Glasgow :—

" No water-closets, but tubs, not peculiar to either sex."

In A. 1, p. 39, a workman deposes, that

" He has seen the boys, when too late of a morning, dragged naked from their beds by the overseers, and even by the master, with their clothes in their hands, to the mill, where they put them on ; that he has seen this done oftener than he can tell ; and the boys were strapped naked as they got out of bed."

A female confirms this statement, having worked at the same mill, and she adds, that she

" Remembers William Edwards, an overseer, coming to the booth one

" morning when one of the girls was too late and in bed, that he turned her round and took her out of bed naked ; that he took her out of the booth in this state, but she prigged sair (pleaded earnestly), and he at last let her come back to put on her claithe before going into the mill."

In page 41 an half-overseer gives this evidence :

" Does not like the long hours ; he is very tired and hoarse at night ; and that some of the young female workers in his, the spinning flat, have so swelled legs, one in particular, from standing so long, about seventeen years old, that she can hardly walk ; that various of them have their feet bent in and their legs crooked from the same cause ; that he has seen it, *but the young women will not acknowledge it from pride, as it might spoil their market.*"

In short, so universal is this complaint of "sair tired," and of swelled legs, ankles, feet, hands, and arms, that it almost seems as if one voice spoke the facts ; for if we find them varied, it is only here and there by touches like the above, so true to nature, that one would think they must pierce even the most callous and avaricious man to the very core. In one page we find a little child of eight years old complaining that she is "sair tired" every night, and has no time *for going to play* ; here we find young women concealing the deformities which work has brought on their persons, lest by avowing it they should become repulsive in the eyes of men ! On these facts, the Commissioners report,

" That, at the age when children suffer these injuries from the labour they undergo, they are not *free agents*, but are *let out to hire*, the wages they earn being received and appropriated by their parents and guardians, and therefore they think that a case is made out for the interference of the legislature in behalf of the children employed in factories."—p. 32.

To this are added reports from medical men, tending to confirm that of the Committee of 1832 ; but of these reports I will only take one extract from that of Dr. Loudon :

" Upon the whole, there remains no doubt upon my mind, that, under the system pursued in many of the factories, the children of the labouring classes stand in need of, and ought to have, legislative protection against the conspiracy insensibly formed between their masters and parents, to tax them to a degree of toil beyond their strength. In conclusion, I think it has been clearly proved, that children have been worked a most unreason-

“able 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 for more than eight hours a day. From fourteen upwards I would recommend that no individual should, under any circumstances, work more than twelve hours a day; although, if practicable, as a physician, I would *prefer the limitation of ten hours, for all persons who earn their bread by their industry.*”—*Second Report* (1833), p. 5.

The Commissioners hereupon recommended an Act for limiting the labour of children under *thirteen* years of age, to eight hours a day, as the utmost that they should be allowed to labour; giving it as their opinion, that *double sets of hands* could be procured by the masters, so that one set of children might relieve the other; thus leaving the adults to work thirteen, fourteen, or fifteen hours a day, while the young hands relieved one another by sets; and, under this delusion, the Act, 3 and 4 Wm. 4. c. 103, was passed. Inspectors were sent down into the manufacturing districts to see to its being put in force, and now I will advert to the reports of these inspectors to show that the Government is constantly told by its own officers how impracticable that Act is, because of the attempt to legislate for children only.

The Reports of Mr. RICKARDS who superintends the district which contains the greatest number of factories are sufficient for my purpose. His first is dated on the 24th December, 1833, and his last, on the 16th February, 1836. In the first page of the first Report, he speaks of the inconvenience that will be felt in the attempt to make the young hands work a less number of hours than the adults, in these words :

“In regard to the forty-eight hours’ labour per week they [both masters and men] observed, that if the children were removed from their attendance on the machinery driven by steam-power, after eight or nine hours’ work in the day, *the whole must stop at the same time*, which would in fact be reducing them [*adults as well as children*] to an eight-hours’ Act instead of twelve as intended.”

In the next page (25) he says that “one and all declared that it would be quite impossible to procure a sufficient number of young hands to work by relays; or, if it could

"be done, it must be by fresh emigration from Ireland," &c. He repeats this over and over again, and refers to it in all the Reports in which he does not specifically repeat it; and he comes to the conclusion in his Report dated Leeds, 12th August, 1834, p. 38, "That children of *eleven years of age*, "are old enough and strong enough, to work in mills for "twelve hours in each day, or sixty-nine hours in the week;" says that "the labour of the children is light, requiring "no great exertion of muscular strength;" and that "the "reports which I have from medical gentlemen appointed "to grant certificates to children in mills, fully confirm this "opinion." And, hereupon, in his Report of 25th August, 1835, at p. 7, he recommends a short Act to be passed, doing away with those clauses of the Act 3 and 4 Wm. 4. c. 103, which prohibit the working of children under twelve years old to any greater length of time than eight hours in the day.

In page 70 of the first Report of Inspectors, the other three, Messrs. HORNER, HOWELL, and SAUNDERS, join in reporting the same difficulties as those reported by Mr. RICKARDS, and in the same recommendations; and they state that

"Mr. Howell and Mr. Saunders are of opinion, that even children, who "have attained their eleventh year, may, under certain circumstances, be "safely allowed to work more than forty-eight hours in the week."

So that, after all the distinct evidence given by the surgeons and physicians before Mr. SADLER's Committee as to the physical capacity of children, proving the necessity for further protection for children than that which is given by Sir JOHN HOBHOUSE's Act; and, after the Report of the Government Commissioners sent down to inquire in 1833, and in which they roundly assert, that Lord ASHLEY's Ten-hour Bill does not go far enough, in these words:

"This Bill 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*. "For the same evidence which shows that the legislative protection of "children is necessary, shows that the restriction of the labour of children "to *ten hours a day*, is not an adequate protection."—(p. 38, Report, 1833.)

After this, and after an Act passed by the Ministry to give this further and *adequate* protection, the very men who were sent down to put it in force, amuse themselves in writing up to the Government, suggestions, that a short Act may be passed to carry us back, not to the time proposed by Lord ASHLEY, but to that of Sir JOHN HOBHOUSE's Act!

Thus, then, I think I have clearly shown, *first*, that some Act to give further protection to children was necessary in 1833; and, *secondly*, that this Government was not the fit inventor of such an Act.

But, nothing daunted at their own ill-success, the Government, through Mr. POULETT THOMSON, have now brought in a Bill, not, to be sure, the very Bill recommended by the Inspectors; but a Bill to take from all those children who are in the thirteenth year of their age, the protection of the Act passed on the recommendation of the Commissioners; a Bill to suffer these children to be worked twelve hours a day, or, rather, as is clearly shown to be the case in the Inspector's Reports, to be worked during the thirteen or fourteen hours a day that the adults are compelled to work; a Bill, in short, to re-enslave 35,867 (according to the Inspectors' returns) little children whom the Parliament promised in 1833 should be emancipated on the 1st of March, 1836! The Ministers stand, therefore, in this position: they threw out Lord ASHLEY's Ten-hour Bill, because Commissioners of their own told them it did *not give protection to children*, whose labour ought to be restricted to *eight hours*. Then, as their Eight-hour Act will not work pleasantly, upon the advice of their Inspectors, they want to drive us back to *twelve hours*, because *that is adequate protection!*

But, we, who contend for a Ten-hour Bill, are now just where we were when the Ministry began to dabble officiously in affairs which it did not understand. We yielded in 1833 to the overwhelming majorities of the newly "*Reformed House of Commons*"! We were obliged to let the Ministry have its own way; but now that it has found out its own

insufficiency, it might, one would think, have the modesty to leave the matter in other hands ; and, therefore, one of two things we ask for : “ *Give us a Ten-hour Bill as proposed by Lord Ashley, or, Carry your own Act into full effect. PROTECT THE CHILDREN* some way or another : do it wisely, if you can ; but do it. And do not sport with us and them by passing an Act one day upon the authority of a set of Commissioners, and by repealing it the next day upon the authority of Inspectors. Recollect, that you would have the Commission, and that, if you appointed to it men who supplied you with false information, the country has had to pay a large sum of money for volumes of falsehoods ; and, if it was truth that the country thus bought at your instance, the country expects that you will not suffer the men who are appointed to put in force an Act passed on grounds so well established, to shrink from the duties that they, in their turn, are well paid to perform, and relieve themselves from the task of protecting poverty and feebleness from the gripe of wealth and strength, merely because it is a disagreeable duty. For, observe, though your Inspectors call the main provisions of the Act “ *impracticable,*” they show clearly that, taken in the letter they are not so, for they find ‘benevolent’ men who adhere to the Act in its very letter. Recollect these things ; *make us all comply with this Act, or, give us the Ten-hour Bill* for which we moved in 1833.” This is what we say to the Government, and, any thing short of one or the other of these will not content the manufacturing people. (...)

I have mentioned above that one of the Commissioners of 1833 dissented from his brethren in the Report to Government, and I will explain what I mean. There were fifteen commissioners appointed by the KING, of whom any three were to make the Report, and the other twelve were to go into the country to collect facts. Accordingly *three* remained in London as a Central Board, and they were, THOMAS TOOKE, *Edwin Chadwick* (who afterwards became Secretary to the Poor-law Commissioners) and THOMAS SOUTHWOOD

tion to ten hours per day, is *not a sufficient protection to children.*

The work at which I was employed in my boyhood, while it was limited to ten hours a day, was similar to the work that children have to do in the woollen mills of Yorkshire at the present time, with this difference, that wool is the manufacture in the Yorkshire mills to which I allude, and the manufacture that I was employed in was cotton, the mode of manufacturing which, has been altogether changed since that period by the improvements made in machinery. These are facts which I mention, because the labour of the child in the woollen *now*, is what its labour in the cotton *was then*, the work being done on what are called "billies" and "jennies;" and I mention them, too, because the woollen manufacturers would have it believed (and Mr. Rickards the Inspector appears to countenance the opinion) that the work of children in woollen mills is lighter still than that in the cotton factories, and that children, much younger than those whose labour is now limited to eight hours a day, may, without injury to their health, be worked sixty-nine hours per week. Indeed, it is on this, that the Yorkshire mill-owners have petitioned the House of Commons to allow them to work children of *eight years of age* as many as *seventy-two hours* in the week, or, *twelve hours in the day!*

Another remarkable fact within my own knowledge I must also state: when my father introduced the machinery that is now used, into his own mill, the hours of labour were increased to *twelve*, for five days in the week, and *eleven* for Saturdays, making seventy-one hours in the week. This he was obliged to do in his own defence, because others who used the same sort of machinery, worked their hands *seventy-seven* hours, and some even so much as *eighty-four* hours a week, a practice which continued until 1819; when the 59th of Geo. 3. was passed, and which limited the time-labour for children under sixteen years of age to seventy-two hours in the week, that is, one hour more than the time of work of both children and adults at the establishment in which I

had worked myself, but in which I had now become interested as a partner. These hours I always thought and said were excessive; I thought so from my own practical bodily experience; and, therefore, I have always been an advocate for a reduction by legislative enactment. When that worthy man, the late Mr. NATHANIEL GOULD of Manchester, began his endeavours to obtain protection for the factory workers (and in which he lost many friends and encountered great persecution), he applied to me to assist him. Accordingly, I and my partners, joined by all our hands, petitioned the House of Commons. I sent the petition to Lord MILTON, requesting him to present it; and, I stated to his lordship, that any Factory Bill, to be effective, must restrict the labour, not only of children, but of those older hands with whom they worked; for that the work of both was so connected, that it could not be carried on by the adult hands without the assistance of the younger. But this fact our adversaries always attempt to turn against us. Most of the masters are obliged to admit the excessive hours of labour imposed on children, and the Ministers have done it in the most solemn manner; but they cannot interfere with the labour, the "free labour" of the adult, because that is against sound principle! According to their own showing, it is a choice of evils; but, contrary to reason, contrary to all acknowledged principle and to universal practice, they would choose the greater: they would overwork the child, though nature forbids it, rather than shorten the labour of the adult, who is also overworked. In short, their "principle"; their true and scarcely disguised "principle," is the principle of self against nature.

Here, then, is the "curse" of our factory-system: as improvements in machinery have gone on, the "avarice of masters" has prompted many to exact more labour from their hands than they were fitted by nature to perform, and those who have wished for the hours of labour to be less for all ages than the legislature would even yet sanction, have had no alternative but to conform more or less to the pre-

vailing practice, or abandon the trade altogether. This has been the case with regard to myself and my partners. We had never worked more than *seventy-one* hours a week before Sir JOHN HOBHOUSE's Act was passed. We then came down to *sixty-nine*; and, since Lord ALTHORP's Act was passed, in 1833, we have reduced the time of adults to *sixty-seven and a half* hours a week, and that of children under thirteen years of age to *forty-eight* hours in the week, though to do this latter, has, I must admit, subjected us to much inconvenience, but the elder hands to more, inasmuch as the relief given to the child is in some measure imposed on the adult. But the overworking does not apply to children only; the adults are also overworked. The increased speed given to machinery within the last thirty years, has, in very many instances, doubled the labour of both. Mr. Longston's evidence before Mr. SADLER's Committee establishes this fact beyond dispute, and my own knowledge of the subject requires that I should confirm, as I do, the truth of his statement.

As a further confirmation of the fact, however, I cannot help taking an extract from a pamphlet, which has been generally attributed to Mr. GREG of Manchester, and published in 1831, in which that gentleman, who is connected with establishments, which, I believe, consume more cotton than any other house in the kingdom, says as follows :

“ As a second cause of the unhealthiness of manufacturing towns, we place
 “ the severe and unremitting labour. Cotton factories (which are the best
 “ in this particular) begin work at half-past five or six in the morning, and
 “ cease at half-past seven or eight at night. An interval of half an hour, or
 “ forty minutes, is allowed for breakfast, an hour for dinner, and generally
 “ half an hour for tea, leaving about twelve hours a day clear labour. The
 “ work of spinners and stretchers [these are adults] is amongst the most
 “ laborious that exists, and is exceeded perhaps by that of mowing alone;
 “ and few mowers, we believe, think of continuing their labour for twelve
 “ hours without intermission. Add to this, that these men never rest for an
 “ instant during the hours of working, except while their mules are doffing,
 “ in which process they also assist; and, it must be obvious to every one,
 “ that it is next to impossible for any human being, however hardy or robust,
 “ to sustain this exertion for any length of time, without permanently injuring
 “ his constitution. A collier never works above eight, and a farm-labourer