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Child-Labor and Legislation in Nineteenth Century England

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**CHILD-LABOR AND LEGISLATION
IN NINETEENTH CENTURY
ENGLAND**

by
Sister Mary Christopher McNaney, O.S.F.

**A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts**

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LIFE

Sister Mary Christopher McNaney, O.S.F. was born in Chicago, Illinois on February 18, 1922.

She attended St. Benedict Elementary School from 1927 to 1935, Alvernia High School from 1935 to 1939, and entered the School Sisters of Saint Francis, Milwaukee, Wisconsin in September of 1940. Graduation from Alverno Teachers College occurred in 1946.

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PREFACE

The back-log of child labor and legislation is, doubtless, an enormous one, and we hardly feel justified in presenting, in this brief study, a condensation of its prevalence in nineteenth century England; but an attempt has been made to present a compact review of the problem. Our thesis does not pretend to be exhaustive, for all bibliographical references gathered when this paper was initiated have not been utilized, primarily because they were unavailable.

A major part of the investigation was done at the Newberry Library. The Cudahy and Lewis Towers Libraries supplied a number of secondary sources, and the Chicago Public Library contributed some materials. I sincerely hope that an objective, balanced and satisfying treatment has been given to the English phase of the child labor problem in this paper.

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CHAPTER I

OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

The problem of child labor has been for all modern nations one subject to speculation, deep concern, and subsequent legislation. There exists no dictum which postulates that child labor is the direct offspring of modern industrial systems. It is not; it is antecedent to any and all industrial movements. The economy of child labor was recognized in medieval times, but the guilds, in their reasonable and well-regulated approach to the problem of child labor, prevented the exploitation of children by the regulation of the number of children a master might have in training.¹ The evident sanity of the traditional regulations of the guilds and their conformity to the Church's ideals of justice and charity acted as a safeguard for apprentices engaged in trades of various natures. Child labor was not a sudden development of nineteenth century industrialization, as many erroneously state, but can be considered as an integral part of the guild system of England since the Middle Ages. It is impossible to over-emphasize the fact that the Industrial Revolution and the introduction of machinery did not create juvenile labor nor the abuses associated with it.

¹ Olive Jocelyn Dunlop, Some Aspects of Early English Apprenticeship, London, 1871, 194-195.

The essential features of the earlier apprentice system were the contracts of service and instruction for a definite term of years which, in most instances, amounted to seven. The child was withdrawn from the home and the master acted in loco parentis. The age of employment was manifestly the same as that which prevailed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but the new mill and factory owners, the molders of the huge Napoleonic industrial fortunes, did not exercise the same care for the health and general welfare of apprentices as the medieval master who was obliged by contract to be responsible for the young men in his employ.²

Sadly enough, the growth of capitalism and the expansion of trade in the eighteenth century acted as major forces in the development of large businesses, and the bond between employer and apprentices became looser. Close personal supervision was less practical with work concentrated in large factories, and the economic doctrine of laissez faire et laissez aller relieved masters who failed to accept responsibilities from the pressure of public opinion. The employer had a free rein in choosing and using labor as his business interests dictated. The new conditions gave child labor a commercial value which it had not possessed in pre-industrial England.

2 Ibid., 199.

The apprenticeship system, however, had not disappeared.³ For a better understanding of the transition from the guild to the factory and mill and of early nineteenth century legislation relative to child labor, we will attempt a brief explanation of the apprenticeship system. Essentially it was an educational system, under the guidance and encouragement of the medieval Church. Local craftsmen established trades and conducted necessary business transactions relating to their trades according to Christian principles. In their shops, the masters had a boy or several boys who had been taken on according to contract. The term of apprenticeship had definite rules of conduct, and the young boys inducted into various trades were given handbooks which contained injunctions stating:

. . .but you are to remember, that you are now taken from the company of Giddy Boys, to that of Serious Men; that you are now transplanted from Play to Business; that you are now entered on a Scene of Life, that is to be the foundation of your future Welfare; and that of all your Life to come which will be influenc'd, in all probability, by your Behavior in this your first State of Probation. You are therefore to conclude the Boy, and begin the Man; . . .⁴

This system was not an ephemeral product of a decadent ecclesiastic-ridden era, but a vigorous integral part of the whole Christian life, and by the fifteenth century it had gained a firm

³ Olive Jocelyn Dunlop, English Apprenticeship and Child Labor, London, 1912, 262-263.

⁴ The Apprentice's Vade Mecum, London, 1734, 23.

hold in England. While it remains true that the system had its faults, its merits offset what failings it may have had. Delmege, quoted in Teleky, recounts the lot of apprentices in medieval industries.

Many of them [referring to industries] were carried on in badly lighted and poorly ventilated shops in unsanitary surroundings by workmen who seldom washed and took no precautions such as are used in our time. Medieval working hours were from 4 or 5 a.m. to 7 or 8 p.m. in summer; in winter, roughly from dawn to dusk. Half an hour was allowed for breakfast, another half hour at about 3 p.m. and an hour and a half at midday for dinner and siesta. . . There was, however, no night work, no work on Sundays, or even on the more important holidays and the work ceased at 4 on the eves of such holidays and on Saturdays. Altogether there were about 280 full working days in the year.⁵

Unfortunately, the establishment of a national church and the utter destruction or mutation of what had been Christian in theory if not always in practice, resulted in the nationalization of other phases of man's activities. The old guilds were nationalized under Elizabeth, but she was to reap the bad fruits of her labor in the form of pauperism and the decay of towns. Elizabethan statesmen were confronted with labor problems created by Elizabeth's statute, but they wisely dropped the entangling problem into the hands of the guilds, for at that particular moment in history the government did not have sufficient administrative machinery of its own to remedy the new and

⁵ Ludwig Teleky, History of Factory and Mine Hygiene, New York, 1948, 5.

sometimes awkward situation. The guilds continued to function in their traditional way, but were responsible for the administration of the statute of Elizabeth. In this manner, the tendency of individuals to use children as cheap labor was still kept in check.⁶

The prosecutions under the statute of Elizabeth were extremely rare, and as Onslow points out, only commenced when arising from personal malignity to the master, or jealousy of an individual in the employ of the master. Reasonably enough, an unskilful workman was never the object of an attack.⁷ This Statute of Artificers passed in 1562 formed no sharp dividing line between early and later apprenticeship, but it provided continuity between the two. The early apprentice system was the basis of the statute and the national system of technical instruction. To all intents and purposes it was the system evolved by the Christian guilds and was in practice from 1562 to 1813 during the centuries which saw the transformation of England from an agrarian economy to an industrial economy. The sure and solid foundations of her industrial and commercial position were laid in this time-span.⁸

6 Dunlop, Some Aspects, 205.

7 Arthur Onslow, "Substance of the Speech of Mr. Serjeant Onslow," Pamphleteer, London, v. 4, 1814, 308.

8 Dunlop, English Apprenticeship, 193-208.

Apprenticeship in the cotton factories established during the eighteenth century in the counties of Lancashire, Derby, York, and Nottingham placed a heavy demand on the parishes. The only claim so-called parish "apprentices" had on the word was a traditional one. These infant wards of the state were unacquainted with any trade, and thousands of them, inmates of pauper institutions from London and other large towns were shipped in droves to the new factory areas. The cotton lords took the precaution of legalizing them to maintain a semblance of conformity with the Statute of Artificers, fed and clothed them in barracks, and sometimes graciously gave them (David Dale of New Lanark Mills, Scotland) a minimum of schooling in the factory school.⁹

Accounts of the Worcestershire needle trade, operative long before the advent of industrialism in England, indicate that children were apprenticed at seven years circum 1799, at least twenty years before machinery had begun to change the conditions of the trade.

Doubtless the apprentice system suffered terribly during the inner turmoil of England's Civil War. Drastic changes in government after the War did away with the powerful Privy Council. This event, coupled with the conspicuous absence of Crown support, crippled the guilds and they lost ground in the aftermath of the civil struggle.

⁹ G.D.H. Cole, British Common People 1746-1938, New York, 1938, 189.

The Restoration proved no panacea for the guilds. The Government abandoned attempts to exercise an effective supervision over the quality of goods and maintenance of quality as well as the terms of prices. These were henceforth to be arranged by skilled wholesale buyers. Open criticism of the old guild methods was rife, and illegal workmen complained as much about the new companies as they complained about the workmen. Pamphleteers, those able defenders of eighteenth century causes, struck out bravely to champion the cause of trade. Irregular workmen no longer hid in back rooms, but kept open shop, maintaining that they were entitled to earn their living as best they could.

Much of the revolt against apprenticeship in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was, in reality, opposition to guild monopoly. Roughly, from 1650 to 1720 an increasing disregard for the Statute of Artificers prevailed. As we have indicated, the guilds stood alone in their efforts to enforce apprenticeship since the Government no longer took a prominent part in the administration of the Statute.

So far as any definite date can be set down for the collapse of apprenticeship the year 1780 perhaps marks the rather complete breakdown of the Elizabethan system of apprenticeship. The chief cause of its collapse was the growing pains of England's capitalistic system of enterprise and the lack of public support.

Apprenticeship prevailed legally until 1814, but children who were called "apprentices" worked under the industrial system as wage-earners. This unfortunate condition resulted most ordinarily from parental action. The need or greed of the parents or the pressure brought to bear upon them by manufacturers soon created a situation replete with abuse and exploitation.

Two and a half centuries after it had come into existence the Statute of Artificers was repealed. The old Elizabethan Act was outmoded and unsuited to the new methods, new markets and laissez faire principle adopted during the nineteenth century, and it was no longer possible to enforce a regulation and system which had been rendered impossible by the exponents of industrial freedom and expansion.

CHAPTER II

ABUSES IN SPECIFIC TRADES AND INDUSTRIES

The complete breakdown of the Elizabethan apprenticeship system, as we have noted, was around 1780. The chief cause of its collapse was the rise of industrial capitalism. An increasing disregard for the Statute of Artificers allowed capital to become bolder in its attempts to vitiate the old guild system and speed up the process of reorganizing trades on a capitalistic basis. The guilds stood alone in their efforts to enforce customary apprenticeship in the established trades. The Government of Britain no longer took an active part in the administration of the Statute. The law courts were definite in their open and continued opposition to it and the municipal authorities were fast becoming indifferent to the goods and evils in apprenticeship. Public opinion, ordinarily reflective of the temper of an historical period, was alienated from the old methods and ideas and from the guildsmen who supported them.

Probably the sole purpose the Statute of Artificers served during the late eighteenth century until its repeal in 1814 was to accommodate the proponents of capitalism and shroud them with a cloak of legality. It was an excellent cover for the transportation of

innumerable workhouse children. Parish apprentices were sent without remorse or inquiry from the workhouses of England and the public charities of Scotland to the mills and factories to be "used up" as "the cheapest raw material on the market."¹⁰ This was not a chance happening or an occasional expedient, but a constant continued systematic practice conducted by millowners. Nouveau riche millowners communicated with the overseer of the poor, and when demand and supply had been arranged to suit both contracting parties, a day was fixed for the examination of "the little children" by the millowner or his agent. The workhouse authorities had the dubious honor of propagandizing and conditioning the apprentices. They were duly informed that by entering the mills, they would become great ladies and gentlemen.¹¹

The parish apprentices were herded to the cotton factories located over the counties of Lancashire, Derby, York, Nottingham and other districts. Conditions far from ideal for children existed in nearly every area where manufacturing was carried on, but there were few champions for the children in the late 1700's. The day of the Peels, Robert Owen, Sadler and Oastler, and Lord Ashley was yet to come.

¹⁰ Samuel Kydd, History of the Factory Movement, I, London, 1857, 16-17.

¹¹ Ibid.

Prior to the passage of the Act of 1802 conditions became increasingly acute in the textile industries. The procurement of apprentices from the different parish workhouses of London and Birmingham particularly brought thousands of children ranging from four to fourteen, with occasional instances of three-year olds, down into the North. Agreements of the most revolting kind were often made between the manufacturers and the workhouse authorities for the contracting of children who were entirely ignorant of the fact that their lives were being promised away for a contracted number of years. The condition of the children was totally disregarded. The inhumanity of man to man which can and usually does exist in an atmosphere of material prosperity was evidenced by the provision whereby it was agreed that with every twenty sound children one idiot should be taken with the group.¹² Willoughby, in treating on the subject of parish apprentices, throws some dark overtones on the fate of these poor wretches.¹³

Sometimes middlemen were employed between the millowner and the workhouse beadle. The children, victimized and unable to comprehend their future lot were deluded with stories as to where they were going and what they would do. Unscrupulous agents related that they

12 William F. Willoughby, Child Labor, V, Baltimore, 1890, 15.

13 Ibid.

would be fed on roast beef and plum pudding, that they would be allowed to ride their master's horses and have plenty of coin and silver watches in their pockets.¹⁴

An account of the transportation of children given in Kydd relates that

On the day appointed, the children were drawn up to be inspected and selected; those chosen were then conveyed by coach, by waggon, or boat, to their destination, and as a rule, from that moment were lost to their parents and relatives. It sometimes happened that traffickers contracted with the overseers, removing their juvenile victims to Manchester, or other towns, on their arrival; if not previously examined, they were sometimes deposited in dark cellars, where the merchant in dealing with them brought his customers; the millowner, by the light of lanthorns, being enabled to examine the children, their limbs and stature having undergone the necessary scrutiny, the bargain was struck, and those poor "innocents" were conveyed to the mills. The general treatment of those apprentices depended entirely upon the will of their masters; in very many instances their labor was limited only by exhaustion, after many modes of torture had been unavailingly applied to force continued action; their food was stinted, coarse, and unwholesome; in "brisk times," their beds (such as they were) were never cool, the mills were worked night and day, and as soon as one set of children rose for labor the other set retired for rest. Discrimination of sexes was not regarded; vice, disease, and death luxuriated in those receptacles of human woe.¹⁵

The prime cause for the introduction of machinery on a large scale by millowners was the use of children in their expanding textile

14 Kydd, History of the Factory Movement, 18.

15 Ibid., 17.

mills. A young child perched on a stool could easily control a machine which performed work that had formerly employed the services of a number of skilled men, and it was purely natural that the tendency to expose the children to exploitation should receive an impetus and be carried to such excess as both parents and employer necessitated. The presence of small children in workplaces of all descriptions became more and more common, and the sufferings of the children became more and more acute as it was increasingly apparent how useful and cheap their services were, and how difficult it was for parents to subsist without the scanty earnings of the children who had taken their place in the manufacture of goods.¹⁶ Child labor was recognized by manufacturers as absolutely essential to the speedy building up of fortunes, and since no one apparently questioned the morality of their action, it was universally employed in the cotton mills and factories which began to densify the North. Manchester, one of the earliest industrial towns, became the seat of the cotton trade. It was a wealthy and populous center, but noticeably the greatest employer of child labor.

The economic individualism of the Manchesterian school can best be phrased in words of both political and economic implication--laissez faire et laissez passer. Hobson, commenting on the political

¹⁶ John Edward Whitehouse, Problems of Boy Life, London, 1912, 104.

economy of the era, states:

Why, since labour is always moving towards the place where it can be most profitably employed, is it necessary to do anything but let it flow? Why should the State or philanthropic people busy themselves about this matter? If labour is not wanted in one place, and is wanted in another, it will and must leave the one place and go to the other.¹⁷

One of the first occasions for the investigation of mill conditions was an outbreak of fever in the Manchester area. Early in 1784, the magistrates found it necessary to call in some doctors to investigate an outbreak of fever among the children employed in the Radcliffe cotton mills. The first report presented in 1796 to the Manchester Board of Health exposed the cruel conditions and abuses which prevailed in the Manchester mills. The Board, powerless to act in behalf of the children, referred the matter to Parliament, and asked that body to establish laws which would in some way alleviate the condition of the children in the mills.

In the same year (1784), an investigation was conducted in the Lancaster cotton mills. A certain Doctor Percival among other medical men who investigated the devastating fever scourge which had carried off large numbers of workers did not confine his attention to the effects of the fever, but brought to the notice of the authorities the long hours and the lack of recreation and instruction which

17 John A. Hobson, Problems of Poverty, London, 1891, 104.

existed. Unfortunately, the number of those who sympathized with Doctor Percival and demanded improvement was too small to bear any appreciable weight. They made no appeal to public sympathy, but merely based their approach to the glaring defects of the mill system on common sense.¹⁸ The emotional appeal which characterizes the later agitation and legislation was lacking.

Dr. Aiken, in his description of the country around Manchester (published in 1795), observed:

The prevalence of fevers among persons employed in cotton mills might be lessened, by the attention on the part of the overseers to the following circumstances. Besides a due regard to ventilation, personal cleanliness should be strongly recommended and encouraged, and the parents of children should be enjoined to wash them every morning and evening, to keep their shoes and stockings in good condition, and above all, never to send them to work early in the morning without giving them food.¹⁹

This report, ordered by the justices of the peace, forced the reform movement into parliamentary focus and subsequent consideration.

These instances led to the introduction of a bill in Parliament to alleviate the condition of child-workers. The energies of the children were being exploited in every industry which Englishmen found profitable to expand. Carlton, quoting from Walker's Political Economy, has this to say about the prevalence of child labor in industry:

18 Dunlop, English Apprenticeship, 282-283.

19 Kydd, History of the Factory Movement, 13.

The beginning of the present [nineteenth] century found children of five and even three years of age in England, working in factories and brickyards; women working underground in mines, harnessed with mules to carts, drawing heavy loads, found the hours of labor whatever the avarice of individual millowners might exact, were it thirteen, or fourteen, or fifteen; found no guards about machinery to protect life or limb, found the air of the factories fouler than language can describe, even could human ears bear to hear the story.²⁰

The band of those who attempted improvement was small, and they based their case upon matter-of-fact arguments as to the effect of juvenile labor upon the national health--arguments not apt to arouse much, if any, public sympathy. The later reformers, as we shall observe, used sentimental appeals and tear-jerking devices to effect much-needed legislation.

Another logical reason for the employment of children in the mills was the speed-up of competition which led employers to snatch at child labor. The child received a new industrial character which was a strong inducement to his employer to over-drive him. This change from home or shop was bad for the child because parents and skilled craftsmen were seldom such bad masters as factory foremen and the coarse factory workers proved to be. The noise of the machinery, the dirt and dust of the mills, and the herding together of hundreds in unventilated factories were undermining forces which led to malnutrition, disease, and sometimes death. The employer felt no

²⁰ Frank T. Carlton, History and Problems of Organized Labor, Chicago, 1911, 457.

responsibilities for his charges, and principles, if any employer was still uncalloused enough to scruple, went to the wall. The end, it was reasoned by the political economists of the day, justified any means at the disposal of the employer, and the sad result was that the health and strength of thousands of young people were exploited immeasurably.²¹

Owen, an agitator for parliamentary reform, stated that

The employer regards the employed as mere instruments, while these acquire a gross ferocity of character, which, if legislative measures shall not be judiciously devised to prevent its increase, and ameliorate the condition of this class, will sooner or later plunge the country into a formidable and perhaps inextricable state of danger. The direct object of these observations is to effect the amelioration and avert the danger. The only mode by which these objects can be accomplished is to obtain an Act of Parliament,

- 1st. To limit the regular hours of labor in mills of machinery to 12 per day, including one hour and a half for meals.
- 2nd. To prevent children from being employed in mills of machinery until they shall be 10 years old or that they shall not be employed more than 6 hours per day until they shall be 12 years old.
- 3rd. That children of either sex shall not be admitted into any manufactory,--after a time to be named,--until they can read or write in an useful manner, understand the first four rules of arithmetic and the girls be likewise competent to sew their common garments of clothing.²²

21 Dunlop, English Apprenticeship, 265.

22 Robert Owen, "Observations on the Effect of the Manufacturing System," Pamphleteer, London, v. 11, 1818, 259.

Still another factor which contributed to the buildup of the child labor system was the parental consent extended to the manufacturer. Parents sacrificed the well-being of their children by putting them to occupations by which the constitutions of their minds and bodies were rendered greatly inferior to what it might and should be under a system of common foresight and humanity. Owen comments thus:

Not more than 30 years since, the poorest parents thought the age of 14 sufficiently early for their children to commence regular labor: and they judged well; for by that period of their lives they had acquired by play and exercise in the open air, the foundation of a sound robust constitution; and if they were not all initiated in book learning, they had been taught the far more useful knowledge of domestic life, which could not but be familiar to them at the age of 14, and which as they grew up and became heads of families, was of more value to them than one half of their wages under the present circumstances.²³

Evidently the attitude of the religious sects, if such existed in a state-dominated Church, was favorable toward the manufacturing interests. Individual clergymen spoke out against the manifold evils of the system just as individual clergymen extolled it for its manifold opportunities provided for the patient practice of the Christian virtues of thrift and industry. A clergyman connected with the Religious Tract Society of London, and whose father, opportunely, happened to be a factory owner, addressed the young factory workers in these unctuous terms:

23 Ibid.

It is a great honour and pleasure to be usefully employed. This honour belongs to the young folks in the manufacturing districts. Boys and girls of nine and ten years old are doing that which is beneficial to society--and which can be done even better by their little nimble, delicate fingers, than it could be by grown men and women.²⁴

The tenor of the author's remarks undoubtedly places him in the camp of the laissez faire political economists and manufacturers who were only too glad to have justification for their exploitation of the children. This passage indicates the religious cloak sometimes used to palliate the problem of child labor.

Well, then, in the first place we congratulate you on being usefully employed--on being of some consequence in society. How much better it is to be working in a factory than to be idling in the streets! . . . It is a great disgrace to be idle and useless. If all the lazy boys and girls were sent out of the country, who would miss them for any good they do? But if all the industrious boys and girls who work in the factories or potteries were sent out of the country; it would be a real loss.²⁵

The influence of religious bodies in the manufacturing towns was, doubtless, small. The children were required, in the pre-legislation period, to clean factory machinery on Sunday mornings for several hours, which would certainly limit attendance at religious exercises. However, the religious bodies working among the children conducted separate evening classes and instructions for boys and girls in an effort to teach them the practical arts, and convey

24 The Young Folks of the Factory, London, 1840, 3.

25 Ibid., 4-5.

religious doctrines and inculcate good habits in order that they might become worthy elements of English citizenry. The Religious Tract Society laid great stress on honesty--and justice--to the employer. Edifying passages such as the one quoted below, are constantly recurring in The Young Folks of the Factory to encourage youthful readers to do in similar fashion.

Not long ago, one of the workmen at the mill tried to tempt my brother to do something dishonest, but, instead of doing it, he went directly and told the overseer, and the master of the factory had him into the counting-house, and talked to him, and made him a present of a very handsome Bible. He wrote in it, with his own hand, "James Wright, presented to him by his friend and employer, as a reward for integrity and good conduct." "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not," Prov i 10. The man was sent away from the mill, but James was soon after raised, and his friend taken on to work with him. When James brought home his Bible, he kissed his mother and said, "I may thank you for this; it would never have been mine if you had not taught me to be honest when I was a very little boy."²⁶

Living conditions among the factory and mill folk were squalid. The factory towns, such as Manchester and Birmingham sprang up haphazardly to accommodate the factory system. Disraeli in his description of Wodgate relates that it had the appearance of a vast squalid suburb with long lines of little dingy tenements with children lying about the road. He complained about the utter absence of public buildings of any kind. Churches, chapels, townhalls, institutes, and

26 Ibid., 114.

theaters were conspicuously absent. A glaringly noticeable feature was the coarse and grimy little shops located in the heart of the town. At every fourth or fifth house, alleys, which were seldom more than a yard wide and streaming with filth, opened into the street. On business days the sound of the hammer and file never ceased amid gutters of abomination, and piles of foulness and stagnant pools of filth were everywhere. The entire atmosphere was tainted by the foul odors arising from the litter and debris¹ of the narrow byways.²⁷

Life under miserable conditions such as these would be sufficiently difficult, but the length of factory hours added to the unpleasant circumstances of slum living. It was the common practice for parents to send their children, both boys and girls, at seven or eight years of age, in winter as well as in summer, at six o'clock in the morning, sometimes in the dark. The manufactories were heated to high temperatures which were not conducive to health. An hour was allowed for dinner and in most instances, the children remained at work until eight in the evening.

The Bill of 1802 introduced by Sir Robert Peel (the elder) after sufficient agitation, was entitled "The Health and Morality of Apprentices Act."²⁸ By this Act the hours of labor for apprentices were limited to twelve a day and children were to be taught to read,

27 Arthur Bryant, English Saga, London, 1940, 65-66.

28 Mrs. Hylton Dale, "Child Labor Under Capitalism," Fabian Society Tract No. 140, London, 1908, 5.

write, and do simple arithmetic. They were forbidden to work at night and it was enjoined upon them that church attendance once a month would be required. Girls and boys were not to sleep in the same apartments.²⁹

Needless to say, before the Act was passed, it met with the bitterest opposition from the manufacturers and political economists. Financial ruin was predicted as the result of such interference. Particularly active among the members of the opposition were the Manchesterians. A certain Mr. Ure, an active opponent of the bill, declared that the abuses of child labor had been greatly exaggerated, and had been used as a pretext by working-men who wished to obtain shorter hours for themselves. He spoke rather scathingly of the Spinners' Union:

In London and the agricultural counties, the Spinners' Union succeeded perfectly in mystifying their dupes by romantic representations of white slavery and of the hecatombs of infants sacrificed annually on the calico-crowned altars of Mammon; but they durst not utter such barefaced falsehoods in Lancashire.³⁰

Evidently the strength of the Lancastrian manufacturers was sufficiently great to bring pressure to bear in Parliament, for legislation on the Bill of 1802 was delayed so that parliamentarians might reap the full benefit of the remarks of the manufacturing interests before attempting so debatable and drastic a measure.

29 Ibid.

30 Dunlop, English Apprenticeship, 279.

This Act, unfortunately, pertained to poor law children only, and manufacturers merely substituted for them children who lived at home. For a long period of time the working class held that it was disgraceful for any father to allow his daughter to enter a factory. There was in the minds of the parents a strong repugnance to the new employment provided for children, and they rejected the attempts of millowners primarily because they were able to provide for the children and preferred to rear them in their own homes. The term "factory girl" was a title of disgrace, but as child labor began to supplant the labor of adults, it became more and more necessary for parents who wished to maintain a subsistence living-level to send their children into the mills and factories, regretfully or unwillingly. Robert Owen comments about the change by a contrast:

. . .most of these branches are more or less unfavorable to the health and morals of adults. Yet, parents do not hesitate to sacrifice the wellbeing of their children, by putting them to occupations by which the constitution of their minds and bodies is rendered greatly inferior to what it might be and ought to be under a system of common foresight and humanity. . . .Contrast this state of matters with that of the lost orders of the present day;-- with human nature trained as it is now, under the new manufacturing system.³¹

For every penny gained from the premature labor of their children, parents sacrificed the health, comfort, and good conduct of their offspring, and the evils of child labor continued to extend.

31 Owen, Observations, 257-258.

Manufacturers, particularly those of the Manchesterian school previously referred to, used a jingoistic argument to maintain the status quo. The remarkable prosperity of England, they postulated, depended upon the freedom of enterprise allowed manufacturers, and that if they were interfered with by legislation, the trade of the country would correspondingly decline, a depression would result, and England would lose her position as an economic power.

Economists failed to see labor as a body of men, women and children who were individuals with inherent rights which were being unjustly violated. Workers were merely statistical cogs in England's dynamo of trade which had to prosper and perpetuate Britain. Cobbett, commenting on the factory system, maintained that the "stay and bulwark of England lay, not as was hitherto supposed in her navy, maritime commerce or colonies, but in the labor of 30,000 little factory girls."³²

The ineffectiveness of the 1802 measure encouraged laissez faire manufacturers to draw more heavily on the child population. Sir Robert Peel (Senior), in the front ranks of the movement for reform, complained in unmistakable terms:

Large buildings are now erected, not only 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,

32 Bryant, English Saga, 55.

though children are frequently admitted there to work thirteen or fourteen hours per day at the tender age of seven years, and in some cases even younger. . .³³

The children continued to work twelve and thirteen hours a day with a brief interval for dinner. Parliamentary reports on the textile trades (1804--1813) indicate that more often than not during the busy season dinner was taken while tending the bobbins. Breakfast and tea had to be snatched while at work, no seats were provided in most mills and factories, and the children had to stand all day. Some were even requested by employers after they had put in a six-day week to dutifully clean the machinery after working hours or on Sundays.³⁴

It would be a futile task to attempt to trace the fate of the unfortunate children, for no one can tell how many died over a period of years. Respiratory diseases, especially tuberculosis and pneumonia were widespread because of the mill temperatures and the long exhausting hours. No records were kept, for it was no one's business to look after the children, and employers for the most part regarded the children as of less value than their machines, which at any cost were kept clean and carefully preserved. The factory owners were frequently from the "lower orders" themselves, with little or no education, and were intoxicated with their own sudden wealth. Consequently, they had little or no sympathy with the class

33 Kydd, History of the Factory Movement, 38.

34 Dale, "Child Labor Under Capitalism," Fabian Tract No. 140, 6.

from which they had sprung, and the children worked side by side with the adults for the same length of time, were beaten if fatigue overcame them at their work, received no personal care morally or physically, and no education. Many were living skeletons and some almost gibbering idiots. Of those who were able to survive in an atmosphere of economic Darwinianism which discarded the physically unfit and retained those who could survive the physical grind, many were constantly in poor health, ignorant of even the commonest things, and destitute of religious and moral training.³⁵

With the initial measure in legislative form, parliamentary reports were ordered on the textile mills. An investigation of the calico trade in 1804 dealt with the trade as a whole, but dwelt with particular emphasis on child labor. The chief complaint voiced in Parliament, strangely, did not center about the inadvisability of child labor or the great harm being done, but hinged around the objection that the work led to no after career, for the children were taken in place of adults and turned out as soon as they were not content with the work or wages.

Inquiries were made into the woolen trade in 1803 and 1806, probably because the woolen mills were among the first to make use of child labor on a large scale, and because the resultant abuses were striking enough to warrant investigation. The inception of

35 Dunlop, English Apprenticeship, 266-268.

wool-making as a mill industry had introduced machinery which was new and increasingly complicated to operate. One of the first machines used in the trade was the "billy-board" which was low and easily adaptable to child work.³⁶ The parliamentary reports indicated that both children and young persons were employed in large numbers in the trade despite the fact that few of them were bond apprentices. The tone of the report was contrary to that circulated on the calico trade. The Calico Report of 1804 stated that children who were working learned the trade and continued it in after life. It added, by way of explanation, that conditions were not all that could be desired, but that the inherent tendency of things was that they would right themselves if left alone. This optimistic note was not truly reflective of the prevailing circumstances, and the abuses became more and more acute.

The common belief was that England could outstrip her continental rivals only under a laissez faire economy. Political embroilment, involving England in the Napoleonic Wars, put Parliament in a peculiar predicament. The agitators for child labor reform were heard with increasing insistency, especially in the Commons, but Parliament could not afford to cripple the manufacturers who supplied to a great extent, the war funds. This factor is often overlooked as a valid reason for the slow start and drawn-out tactics of the reform group in promoting and sometimes forcing parliamentary measures to

36 Ibid., 265.

a conclusion. It can be stated with definity that the reforms did not keep pace with the growth of the manufacturing system.

The report on the woolen trade (1806) also indicated that the children began to work at an early age, and owing to the use of machinery, much of the work was conducted in the factories, many of which were utterly unsanitary. In Yorkshire, it was related, the employment of children was universal. They lived in their homes, and from the age of five or six either went to work at the factories or were employed at home upon similar work, earning in both cases about sixpence a day.³⁷

The ineffectiveness of the paper measure of 1802 and the triumph of the manufacturing interests in Parliament caused child labor to become even more prevalent. Factories in populous towns, and children of the poor in preference to parish apprentices rapidly became the keynotes of the 1802--1815 phase of our study.

As we mentioned previously, manufacturers began to use children whose parents were amenable to their employ in preference to the Poor Law apprentices. The industrial interests began to work actively for the repeal of the Elizabethan Statute of Artificers (1562) so that they might have a freer hand in the selection of workers. Their main argument related that the law had been contrived for feudal times in order to keep the farmer on the land, and that Elizabethan

37 Ibid., 269.

law looked for the advance of husbandry and the restraint of trade.

The Committee of Manufacturers of London in petitioning for the repeal of this Act inquired:

Are the Acts of a Queen who had so little regard for Trade as to prohibit the growth of one of the most useful plants because she did not like the smell of it—of A Queen of whom it is remarked by the Historian that "if she had gone on for a period of years, England would have contained at present as little industry as Morocco, or the coast of Barbary"—are the Acts of such a period to be esteemed inviolable, and unalterable?³⁸

The repeal of the Statute of 1562, aided by the agitation of pressure groups such as the Committee of Manufacturers, resulted in an increase of child labor and a further exploitation of the energies of the children. Since they no longer could claim to be apprentices, the Act of 1802 was without juridical effect, and children were compelled by their employers to work thirteen, fourteen, and even fifteen gruelling hours a day.

Sir Robert Peel again came to the fore and secured the appointment of a committee to "Inquire into the Expediency of Extending an Apprenticeship Act to Children of Every Description." The results of this examination were presented to Parliament in reports for the years 1816, 1817, and 1818.

Peel called the attention of the Commons (June 6th, 1815)³⁹

38 "Committee of Manufacturers of London and Its Vicinity," Pamphleteer, London, v. 3, 1814, 227.

39 Kydd, History of the Factory Movement, 41.

to the utter necessity of some legislative regulation for the purpose of restricting the employment of young children in manufacturing labor. He called for the restriction of labor for children under ten, either as apprentices or otherwise, and a limiting of labor to twelve and one half hours a day including time for education and meals which would leave ten working hours. Inspectors, Peel felt, had been remiss in the performance of their duties, and government appointees rather than local magistrates should be provided at quarter sessions and paid. The passage of this bill was delayed four years partially because of Peel's desire to conciliate his opponents, and partially because the vested interests in Parliament blocked the measure.

A Committee of Inquiry was moved and appointed. Witnesses were called in before the Select Committee of the House. Even though reports, hearings, and inquiries delayed the passage of legislation, they served at least two purposes; one was the creation of an awareness of the problem and the other was the gathering of a number of solid facts which could be referred to in continued agitation for legislation. Four doctors, among them Sir Gilbert Blane, declared their support of the bill. Sir Gilbert was asked by the Committee of Inquiry if children between the ages of six to twelve working for thirteen and a half hours a day (one and one-half hours for meals) would suffer in health. Sir Gilbert considerably answered in the affirmative.

As we have indicated, the manufacturing interests attempted to block Peel's Bill. Lord Stanley presented (Monday, February 16th,

1818) a petition from the owners and occupiers of cotton mills in Manchester and the vicinity. The manufacturers had heard that the House intended to revive the committee whose labors extended over so large a portion of the session of 1816. They complained that the charges brought against them were vague and inconsistent. Children employed in factories, they insisted, were in a generally good state of health and morals, and parliamentary interference for their protection was entirely unnecessary. Members of the House from Lancaster were invited to Manchester and its surrounding factories. The manufacturers indicated their willingness to appoint a special commission of their own choosing for the purpose of examining the actual condition of persons employed in factories.⁴⁰

Sir Robert presented his promised motion on February 19th, 1818. Wilberforce, that great friend of reform, supported the measure, while Finlay and Philips, among others, opposed it. Philips was not without a personal stake; he was a prosperous sleeping partner in a cotton combine. Finlay warned the House in unmistakable terms not to interfere with manufacturing and attempted to belittle the testimony of the medical men who had been quoted, declaring that they had never been in the cotton factories and were not infallible.

Peel countered by relating the misconduct of a Lancashire factory which employed children fifteen hours a day, and after any

40 Thomas Curton Hansard, The Parliamentary Debates, vol. XXXVII, January 27 to April 13, 1818, London, 1818, 440-441.

stoppage, from five in the morning to ten in the evening—seventeen hours a day, and this often for three weeks at a time. Sundays was machinery-cleaning time from six to twelve, and it was on evidence that children as young as five had been employed for fourteen hours a day. Harking back to the pre-legislation period, Peel indicated that prior to 1802 abuses existed in his own factory which had been kept from him by his overseer.

There was general agreement among the members that conditions were evidently much improved since the Bill of 1802. Sir John Jackson expressed concern over the moral duties of the children employed in the cotton mills and inquired about the possibilities of more instruction.⁴¹

On the occasion of the second reading of the Bill Sir Robert related that there were many poor children in every part of the kingdom whom there was no way of protecting but by act of Parliament. He referred to the fourteen children who had been burnt in the night in a cotton factory in an obvious appeal to abolish night work for children.

Mr. Philips expressed his usual opposition by stating that foreign powers wanted England to regulate her hours of labor so that she would lose ground in the trades and industries.⁴²

On April 6th, 1818, petitions in favor and petitions opposed to the bill were presented. Peel's impressive petition for the bill

41 Ibid., 559-566.

42 Ibid., 583-584.

had 1,731 signatures; noted clergymen and surgeons being among the signatories. The bill was tabled at this session, which meant further delay.

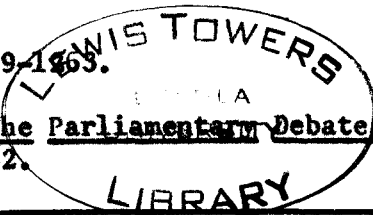
April 10th saw further developments in the form of a signed statement from Stockport. Seven cotton-spinning factory owners unbelievably were in favor of the bill. The opposition, this time in the person of Sir James Graham, said that Peel attached too great an importance to the Stockport petition; Mr. Curwen stated that the manufacturers themselves would reduce the hours from ten to twelve. Finlay added that there were many evils in other trades such as silks and patterns but no remedies had been applied to them. The bill was once more ordered to lie on the table.⁴³

Discussion in the Lords (Friday, May 8th, 1818) centered about the advisability of legislating for other textile industries. The Earl of Lauderdale, opposed to legislation, wanted to bring up medical men to give evidence on the state of health of the children employed. Debate ensued which culminated in an understanding that counsel and evidence should be heard against the bill before a committee of the whole House.⁴⁴

Lauderdale continued his opposition (Thursday, May 14th, 1818) by a declaration in the Lords that the report of the House of

43 Ibid., 1259-1263.

44 Hansard, The Parliamentary Debates, vol. XXXVIII, April 13 to June 10, 1818, 578-582.



1816 was two years old and abounded in inconsistencies and absurdities.⁴⁵

By May 19, 1818, enough lobbying had taken place to hold the proposed legislation over until the next session. Lauderdale indicated that the country was in an artificial state and it was highly dangerous for Parliament to interfere with the property and trade of individuals. Medical men, he felt, would testify that the employment of children, far from checking their growth, actually tended to promote it. Referring to the appearance of the Lanarkshire militia and the militia of Lancashire and Cheshire which were the tallest regiments in the service, he concluded that they were formed altogether from cotton spinners.

The Marquis of Lansdowne declared that a great evil did exist in the excessive labour of the children, and that it would be proper to introduce some measure on the subject.⁴⁶ The lateness of the session prevented any legislation on the proposed act.⁴⁷

Mr. Philips, evidently in sympathy with the vested interests, called the attention of the House to the fact that the petitioners had been grossly calumniated by statements which had been made in the

45 Ibid., 646-649.

46 Ibid., 792-796.

47 Ibid., 1252-1253.

1816 report.⁴⁸ All that gold and energy could do to enlist the working men of the factory districts on the side of the opponents of regulation was done between the sitting of the first Sir Robert Peel's Committee in 1816 and the Committee of Lords presided over by Lord Kenyon in 1819. The opposition in the Lords, though influential, was ineffective and the bill passed through the various stages and became a law. It was limited to cotton manufactories--an injudicious concession to Peel's opponents.

The Bill of 1819 prohibited the employment in cotton mills of children under nine years of age and limited the working hours of children under sixteen years of age to twelve a day.⁴⁹

Conditions in the mills were still far from satisfactory, and individual owners continued to overwork and maltreat the children in their employ. The protection and preservation of industry should be the object of the State, it was argued, and the proposed legislation would injure trade, reducing not only the capitalist but also the workers to beggary. Another main contention of the opposition was that the passage of the Bill would encourage vice, for leisure was the root of all evil. This line of reasoning proceeded from a conception of the manual-working or "lower orders" as being a class apart, almost an inferior race of mankind, without any claim in the

48 Ibid.

49 Dale, "Child Labor Under Capitalism," Fabian Tract
No. 140, 6.

humane way of life, and who ought to be kept properly to their one legitimate sphere, which most inevitably was that of hard manual work.

In the ensuing decade from 1820 to 1830, popular support of the parliamentary reform was gaining momentum, and by 1830, an influential section of the public was alive to the fact that many of the conditions of juvenile labor were deplorable, and as a consequence of their agitation for reform, more legislation followed.

The matter-of-fact arguments of the early reformers (Lord Ashley, Sir Robert Peel, Robert Owen) gave way to a certain sentimentalism in the House which proved to be an effective instrument in achieving legislation. The Manchesterianism of the House was tempered by the altruistic spirit of the younger members who entered the House full of enthusiasm for humanity and for the social reforms which seemed to them to be bound up with the success of their own principles.

Parliamentary reports, newspaper accounts and popular literature of the day reflect the changed approach to proposed reforms. The emphasis on and appeal to sentiment is evident in this pertinent passage:

Children have dropped down at their frames exhausted, the fingers of little ones have been snapped off instantly, their limbs have suffered in like manner; there have been living bodies caught in the iron gripe of machinery in rapid motion, and whirled in the air, bones crushed, and blood cast copiously on the floor because of physical exhaustion. We know those who have seen little children standing at their spindles asleep, their little hands and fingers, like the mechanical hands of the automaton, per-

forming their accustomed evolutions among the threads and spindles; it was at such times especially that hands and fingers were lacerated.⁵⁰

Unsatisfactory conditions were pointed up by the publication of one of the most sensational exposés of the evils of the factory system. Robert Blincoe's Memoirs heightened and colored the abuses existent, and served to arouse public sentiment in favor of reform. Blincoe had worked for some time at Litton Mills and relates that there was a constant food shortage among the child employees. He and others were so hungry that they waited eagerly for the appearance of the swineherd and when he had dumped food for the swine into the troughs and left, he and the others would leave their posts at the machines and steal the food, such as it was, from the animals. Sometimes, meatballs were brought to the swine and the children were especially on the alert for these. Finally the swine began to squeal their complaints, the swineherd investigated and the children were discovered and severely punished.⁵¹

Blincoe also relates that Palfrey, who was the smith at Litton Mills, had the onerous task of riveting irons upon any whom the master ordered to be so treated, and the irons were a great deal like the ones usually put on felons. Even young women, if suspected of an attempted break, had irons riveted upon their ankles, and which

50 Kydd, History of the Factory Movement, 22.

51 Ibid., 23.

reached by long links and rings up to their hips. They were compelled to walk to and from the mill and to sleep in these irons. One young woman, Phoebe Rag by name, despaired of her situation and threw herself into the dam at the end of the bridge next to the apprentice house. She sank at once because of the weight of her chains, but luckily, someone saw her sudden action and rescued her, pulling her out of the dam by her hair. Needham, the mill supervisor, heard of the incident and became afraid that the example might become contagious, so he ordered James Durant, a journeyman spinner, to take her away to her relatives at Cromford.⁵² She was one of the few who were relieved of her condition.

Although situations such as those mentioned above could and doubtless did prevail, it would be manifestly unfair to assume that all mills were operated as inhumanely as the Litton Mills. One of the more enlightened factory owners was a Mr. David Dale from whom Robert Owen later purchased the New Lanark Mills. Mr. Dale erected his mill on the banks of the Clyde in Scotland in a relatively obscure place. He was reported to have two thousand persons in his employ, five hundred of whom were children. He ordered that the children have some hours every day for exercise in the fields, saw to it that the apartments of the children were cleaned and well-aired, and had ten school masters in the tuition of the children. He even brought little presents to the children who regarded him as the friend

52 Ibid., 24.

of the working people.⁵³ Such instances as we have just recorded were rare, and the majority of mills could not be held up as models of cleanliness, sanitation, decency or favorable working conditions for the laboring element of England.

Kydd, in his account of the factory system, relates that:

. . .the factory apprentices were fed, chiefly on porridge, which was seasoned with beef and pork brine, bought at the Government stores, or those of contractors--the 'bottoms' of casks supplied to the navy. This nauseous mixture was sometimes so repulsive, even to hungry stomachs, that it was rejected. Whereupon, the overseer or overlooker was accustomed to stand over the apprentices with an instrument of punishment, a whip, or thong, or cow-hide, as the case might be, and compel them to swallow this disgusting diet. They were fed out of troughs, much resembling those used by pigs.⁵⁴

In 1825 another act pertaining to the cotton industry was formulated and passed. By it a partial holiday was ordained compulsory for every child employed in the mills. Saturday's work was limited to nine hours which had to be accomplished by 4:30 p.m., and weekly hours were set at sixty-nine. The work day was arranged from five in the morning till eight at night. Still, supervision was lax and the government had either carelessly or deliberately overlooked the appointment of inspectors to see that these regulations were carried out. Evasions were more frequent than infrequent, and abuses continued.

53 Ibid., 19-20.

54 Ibid., 25.

By 1830 an aroused public opinion was more than ready for further legislative reforms. Sir John Hobhouse and Lord Marpeth had introduced a bill in May of 1829 which applied (as originally introduced) to cotton, woolen, worsted, linen and silk factories. Hours were restricted to not more than eleven and one-half any one day nor more than eight and one-half on a Saturday. Children were not to have less than a half hour for breakfast and not less than one hour for dinner. No person under eighteen was to be allowed to work beyond these hours and no child under nine was to be allowed to work in a factory of any description.⁵⁵

Immediate opposition came for the proposed bill came from the millowners of Halifax who joined forces with the Scotch millowners and brought considerable influence to bear on the members of Commons. The political economists, following Adam Smith, added to the ranks of the millowners their fond belief that the happiness of the whole community would be promoted if each individual member could work out his own ends in his own way without restraint or control. The intellectual resources and vigor of the political economists backed by wealth triumphed, and Hobhouse's bill, considerably watered down, emerged with the following provisions: night-work was to be forbidden to all under twenty-one, and eleven hours a day was made the limit for

55 Ibid., 107.

those under eighteen.⁵⁶

Michael Sadler, who was certainly no partisan politician, but bent on serious reform, gathered about him like-minded members of Parliament who prepared the Bill of 1833 which was to extend not only to cotton but to all textile mills. Sadler's speech of March 16, 1832, on the occasion of the second reading of the bill, was as follows:

I would seriously ask any gentleman, who has himself gone through a modern flax-mill, whether he can entertain the slightest doubt that the occupation, as now pursued, must, in too many cases, be injurious to health and destructive of life. In many departments of these mills, the dust is so great, and known to be highly injurious. In those in which fine spinning has been introduced, the air has to be heated as in some of the cotton mills; the flax, also, in one of the processes, has to be passed through water heated to a high temperature, into which the children have constantly to plunge their arms, while the steam and spray from the bobbins wet their clothes, especially about their middle, till the water be wrung from them, in which condition they have during the winter months, to pass nightly into the inclement air, and to shiver and freeze on their return home. In the heckling rooms in which the children are now principally employed, the dust is excessive. The rooms are generally low, lighted by gas and sometimes heated by steam; altogether exhibiting a state of human suffering, the effects of which I will not trust myself to describe, but appeal to higher authority.⁵⁷

Commenting on the flannel manufactories in the Principality of Wales, Sadler had this to say:

56 Willoughby, Child Labor, 19-20.

57 Kydd, History of the Factory Movement, 166-167.

With certain fluctuations in the degree of labor, resulting from the difference in the demand of manufactured goods, the children here work twenty-four hours every other day, out of which they are allowed three hours only for meals &c. When trade is particularly brisk, the elder children work from six in the morning till seven in the evening, two hours being allowed for meals, &c., and every other night they work all night, which is a still more severe case; for this additional night they receive five-pence.⁵⁸

The emphasis in the parliamentary reforms, as we have had occasion to relate, swung from a purely rational appeal to an emotional one. It would hardly do justice to comment on the next Sadler speech in Parliament; it speaks eloquently for itself and its cause.

Then, in order to keep the children awake, and to stimulate their exertions, means are made use of, to which I shall now advert, as a last instance of the degradation to which the system has reduced the manufacturing operatives of this country. Sir, children are beaten with thongs prepared for the purpose. Yes, the females of this country; no matter whether children or grown up--I hardly know which is the more disgusting outrage--are beaten upon the face, arms, bosom--beaten in your free market of labour, as you term it, like slaves. These are the instruments.⁵⁹

With that, the honorable member exhibited some heavy black leather thongs which resounded through the House when struck on the table.

He continued:

They are quite equal to breaking an arm, but that the bones of the young are, as I have before said, pliant. The marks, however, of the thong are long visible, and the poor wretch is flogged before its companions--flogged,

58 Ibid., 170-171.

59 Ibid., 183.

I say, like a dog, by the tyrant onlooker. We speak with execration of the cart-whip of the West Indies, but let us see this night an equal feeling against the factory thong of England.⁶⁰

After much debate it was decided to appoint a select committee to investigate alleged conditions. One purpose of this action was to delay the passage of the bill. Meanwhile, popular demonstrations were held in Heckmondwike, Bradford, Huddersfield, Dewsbury, Keighley, Halifax, Leeds, Holmfirth and York. Oastler, whose assigned task was to speak at public demonstrations, addressed a group of supporters on December 26, 1831, at Huddersfield in these terms of appeal:

Take, then, a little captive, and I will not picture 'fiction' to you, but I will tell you what I have seen. Take a little female captive, six or seven years old; she shall rise from her bed at four in the morning of a cold winter's day; but before she rises, she wakes perhaps half-a-dozen times, and says 'Father, is it time? Father, is it time?' And at last when she gets up she feels about in the dark for her clothes, and puts her little bits of rags upon her weary limbs--weary with the last day's work; she leaves her parents in their bed, their labour (if they have any) is not required so early; she trudges onward all alone through rain and snow, and mire and darkness, to the mill, perhaps two miles, or at least one mile; and there for thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, or even eighteen hours she is obliged to work with only thirty minutes interval for meals and play!! Homewards again at night she would go, all in the dark and wet, when she was able, but many a time she hid herself in the wool in the mill, as she had not strength to go. The girl I am

60 Ibid.

speaking of died; but she dragged on that dreadful existence for several years.⁶¹

Aroused public sentiment led to further demonstrations. Thousands of laboring men and women trudged miles through fair or foul weather to attend open air demonstrations and march in rank with large agitation signs overhead. One demonstration which took place on April 24th, 1832, in Castle Yard, York, was known as a pilgrimage of mercy to liberate the children. Some had walked twenty-four miles singing hymns and songs as they marched such as--

How wretched is thy fate--to be
 Shut up in early years,
 From light, and life, and liberty,
 and all that life endears.
 No moral lesson taught to learn,
 Thy manners all defiled,
 Thou still must pass unheeded on,
Poor Little Factory Child.⁶²

The decided emphasis on sentiment is again evident.

Sadler and Oastler went into the heart of the manufacturing country at Manchester for the purpose of arousing the populace to support reform. One hundred thousand people attended a demonstration in the streets carrying banners with the inscriptions, "Welcome to Sadler", "Sadler and Oastler forever", "Cursed are they that oppress the poor", "Let us unite in laying the axe to the root of infant slavery", "No White Slavery", "Revere Oastler, the children's friend",

61 Ibid., 225-226.

62 Ibid., 239.

while Sadler and Oastler addressed the group amid flag waving and music supplied by neighboring bands.

No stone was left unturned by the parliamentary reformers in their efforts to better conditions. A publication entitled The British Labourer's Protector and Factory Child's Friend was published during the '30's to instruct and indoctrinate the public mentality. Whenever and wherever possible, articles found their way into London journals such as the Times and Illustrated London News in behalf of the cause. Tracts were written, societies such as The Metropolitan Society for the Improvement of the Condition of Factory Children were formed, and petitions containing thousands of signatures were directed to the House. The Times, Standard, Morning Post, and The Ten Hours Advocate spoke out in favor of the proposed measure of 1833. An Asiatic cholera epidemic in the North also supplied abundant material for reform agitation.

Meanwhile, parliamentary investigations were conducted by the Sadler Committee to determine the exact abuses in child labor and the extent of them. Eighty-nine witnesses were examined, among whom a certain James Turner from Manchester gave the following testimony:

It is quite common in the mill, for instance, to give prizes to those that can do the most work in a fortnight or so. Last Saturday three weeks, two of these boys had been striving for three pounds of bacon and three score of potatoes, which could do the most work for a

fortnight; the prize was decided on that day, and the little boy that had won it had often complained, when he got home, that he could hardly get to bed. Then when the two boys have done this quantity of work the overlookers almost insist that others should do the same. The girls they will give dolls to: they get two dolls, a big one and a little one, and hang them up in the frame, and those that do the most work get one of these dolls.⁶³

As a method of retaliation for giving evidence to the Sadler Committee some of the eighty-nine witnesses interviewed were barred from employment in the mills and the employers circulated lists to neighboring factories which were posted in the entrance-halls of the mills so no one else would hire those who had been courageous enough to state the actual conditions of child labor in the mills.

Another very quotable bit of verse which again stresses the near-maudlin sentimentality which had crept into the movement is given directly below. It was used in the evidence of Gilet Sharpe of Keighley.

The Factory Child's Last Day

'Twas on a winter's morning,
 The weather wet and wild,
 Three hours before the dawning
 The father roused his child;
 Her daily morsel bringing,
 The darksome room he paced,
 And cried, "The bell is ringing,
 My hapless darling, haste!"

63 Ibid., 304.

"Father, I'm up but weary,
 I scarce can reach the door,
 And long the way, and dreary--
 O carry me once more!
 To help us we've no mother,
 And you have no employ:
 They killed my little brother--
 Like him I'll work and die!"

Her wasted form seem'd nothing,
 The load was at his heart:
 The sufferer he kept soothing,
 Till at the mill they part.
 The overlooker met her,
 As to her frame she crept,
 And with his thong he beat her,
 And cursed her as she wept.

Alas! what hours of horror
 Made up her latest day;
 In toil, and pain, and sorrow,
 They slowly passed away:
 It seemed as she grew weaker,
 The threads the oft'ner broke,
 The rapid wheels ran quicker,
 And heavier fell the stroke.

The sun had long descended
 But night brought no repose;
Her day began and ended
 As cruel tyrants chose.
 At length a little neighbor,
 Her halfpenny she paid,
 To take her last hour's labor;
 While by her frame she laid.

At last the engine ceasing
 The captive homeward rush'd;
 She thought her strength increasing--
 'Twas hope her spirits flush'd:
 She left, but oft she tarried;
 She fell and rose no more,
 Till by her comrades carried,
 She reached her father's door.

All night with tortured feelings,
 He watched his speechless child;
 While close, beside her kneeling,
 She knew him not—nor smil'd:
 Again the factory's ringing
 Her last perceptions tried;
 When from her straw bed springing,
 "'Tis time!" she shrieked, and died!

That night a chariot pass'd her,
 While on the ground she lay,
 The daughters of her master
 An evening visit pay;
 Their tender hearts were sighing,
 As negro wrongs were told,
 While the white slave was dying,
 Who gained their father's gold.⁶⁴

Doubtless some of the upwards of three hundred members were moved to pity the condition of thousands of hapless youngsters who were mill workers by a recital replete with sentiments such as this.

Agitation for the passage of the bill was evidenced in 1831, 1832, and early 1833. Sadler, one of the foremost champions of the proposed Ten Hours Bill, was rejected by Leeds and Huddersfield, and momentarily the cause was without a staunch champion at its head. Oastler was in prison but far from silenced in the defense of the cause. It was a time of trepidation and caution. The Times for February 7th, 1833, related that Lord Ashley had taken over the renewal of the bill immediately upon the return of the Speaker from the Lords, and that notice was received with unusual and very hearty

64 Ibid., 309.

approbation from all parts of the House.

Early in the 1833 session, a Royal Commission of Inquiry was appointed to conduct investigations. More public pressure was brought to bear on Parliament, the measure passed the House but met with some opposition in the Lords. However, no substantial changes were made in the Bill of 1833. The operatives affected were children between the ages of nine and thirteen and young persons thirteen to eighteen years. Children were limited to a nine hour working day and could work forty-eight hours a week. Young persons were permitted to work sixty-nine hours weekly. Hours were to be from five-thirty in the morning until eight-thirty in the evening. The bill in its legal form appeared as follows:

enacted, That from and after the first day of January, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-four, it shall not be lawful for any person whatsoever, to employ in any factory or mill, except in mills for the manufacture of silk, any child who shall not have completed his, or her, ninth year. That, from and after the expiration of six months after the passing of this Act, it shall not be lawful for any person whatsoever, to employ, keep, or allow to remain, in any factory, or mill as aforesaid for a longer time than forty-eight hours in any one week, nor for a longer time than nine hours in any one day, except as herein provided, any child who shall not have completed his, or her eleventh year of age, or after the expiration of thirty months from the passing of this Act any child shall have completed his, or her, thirteenth year of age: provided, nevertheless that in mills for the manufacture of silk, children under the age of thirteen years shall be allowed to work ten hours in any one day.⁶⁵

65 Kydd, History of the Factory Movement, II, 82.

Factory inspectors were appointed by the government to superintend the enforcement of the Act, but Mr. Steward, one of the factory inspectors, declared the Act to be impractical and easy to evade. His implication was that the millowners' influence was still evident in parliamentary acts. The inspectors met with a great deal of opposition, particularly in the cotton mills, and employers were able, for a time, to dupe the inspectors by using the "false relay" system.⁶⁶ Under this evasion, children were sent from room to room and engaged in various occupations pertaining to the trade which made it nearly impossible to check the actual number of hours they worked. In the course of time, methods of inspection were standardized, and the factory owners were brought to the hard realization that the inspectors had to be accepted as permanent. The Act of 1850 was the most substantial step taken in the way of reform. The principal provisions of the act, in brief, were: 1) The employment of children under nine was forbidden. 2) The hours of labor for those between nine and thirteen were limited to eight hours a day. 3) The hours of labor for those under eighteen engaged in worsted, hemp, tow and linen spinning should not exceed twelve hours a day, and night work was forbidden them. The most significant feature of this act

⁶⁶ Dunlop, English Apprenticeship, 290.

was that relating to school attendance and the appointment of inspectors to enforce the law.⁶⁷

Children under this act were limited to forty-eight hours weekly. The passage of the Act of 1833 caused the millowners no little anxiety, and they determined to employ large numbers of women who did not come under the legislative acts. Due to the tremendous expansion of industry, however, the employment of children was still extensive, and the Parliamentary Report for the year 1833 estimated that out of 170,000 employees in the cotton mills there were still 70,000 children under eighteen.

In 1842, through the efforts of Lord Ashley who had refused a political appointment to continue the work of reform, a commission was appointed to investigate the conditions of child employment. Ashley and Mr. Charles Hindle indicated the ineffectiveness of the enforcement of the Factory Act of 1833 as early as 1836. They pointed out that in many instances the inspectors were millowners too, so the law could hardly be enforced. The net result of this illuminating report was the passage of the Act of 1844 which applied to children, young persons, and women. Under it, children were not allowed to work more than six and one-half hours a day and attendance at school was required for the other half-day as a condition of employment.⁶⁸

67 Willoughby, Child Labor, 19-20.

68 Ibid., 20.

It is a difficult problem to measure the vantage given to the children by this provision. True, it was an advance, but the half-time system was not a satisfactory solution. After the inception of the system one inspector had this to say about conditions prevailing in the schools attended by half-timers:

In one town I visited six large council schools, all of which contained an average of from one hundred to one hundred and fifty half-timers. Fifty per cent of the children at work, in the upper classes, were half-timers; in some schools even more. In one class I found forty-nine, out of fifty-six girls, half-timers -- only seven being present the whole day. In another the proportion was thirty-six out of fifty-five; in another fourteen out of twenty-seven; in another, twenty out of forty. The children are not all present at the same time, some being engaged in the morning shift, others in the afternoon; consequently continuity of teaching is only secured with difficulty. The teachers say the children lose more than fifty per cent of their education. When they come to school after the morning shift thirty-three per cent are in a semicomatose condition, quite unable to profit educationally from the lessons put before them, and more often than not they fall asleep in school during the afternoon. This is hardly to be wondered at when we remember that the children are almost entirely employed in the spinning rooms, and in a very hot and highly humid atmosphere. The monotony of the work, the noise, and the smell, all affect the children prejudicially and make them less responsive intellectually. Morally the effect is also undesirable. They become less inclined to discipline and rougher in manner.⁶⁹

The Act of 1844 was still the most important measure, in spite of its limitations, that had up to that time been adopted.

⁶⁹ United States Bureau of Labor Bulletin, No 80, Washington, D. C., 1909, 13-14.

The first few acts, though good in intention, had been in effect of little use, but the factory reformers in Parliament were using more and more evidence in their reports to substantiate their agitation for alleviation, even to the point of employing flamboyantly colored oratory. Again, as in the Acts of 1831 and 1833 the effect of verse and public oratory of melodramatic calibre began to make itself felt, and popular support for the factory reforms gained still more momentum.

The investigations of 1842 also showed that conditions were worse in small factories and still worse in workshops in which trades were carried on in a small way. In all trades and factories children were still employed while very young. London, it appeared, was the only exception, not through any good graces on the part of London employers, but simply because the supply was greater than the demand. In the provinces, it was reported, infants of four were still employed, despite legislation to the contrary in the calico trade, and in the hosiery trade Northampshire children sometimes began to work when five. At Northampshire and at Leicester the regular age of employment was seven. At Derby children of two years old, which almost seems unbelievable, were used in lace-making and it was quite usual to find employees of four, five and six years old. The conclusion of this section of

the parliamentary report indicated that children were generally employed as soon as they could be of any service.⁷⁰

The Illustrated London News (August 20, 1842) adopted a doleful castigating attitude toward the entire problem and decried the evils wrought on domestic life as a result of factory employment.

Children, by the amount of their wages, have become independent of their parents, girls have been sent into the mill before they have learnt the rudiments of domestic duty, . . . It must also be said that the atmosphere of the factory is unnatural, and consequently unhealthy; while the degree of heat tends to the premature development of the passions, and, as the least baneful consequence, to early, improper and improvident marriages. The charges against the factories of being the scenes of violence and cruelty to children, of extortion against the men, as destructive alike of life and morality may be considered as gross extravagances, or little better than falsehoods, but it is not the less true that neither their moral nor their physical atmosphere is favorable to the well-being of the work-people; that, with some honourable exceptions, the masters are disregarding of the comforts and improvements of those whom they can employ, and think exclusively of the wealth they can extract from their establishments. . . . As it is, the moral condition of the young and of the homes whence they came, are in many cases bad. When the mother is in the factory, the home must be in disorder. When parents subsist on the earnings of their children, as in many instances, the relations of domestic life are subverted; the weak labour, the strong are idle, idleness begets vice, vice is the parent of discontent, and this leads to the use of intoxicating drinks; the parent is, moreover, punished in the disobedience if not insolence which soon manifests itself on the part of children, who are well aware how much the family depends on their earnings.⁷¹

70 Dunlop, English Apprenticeship, 277.

71 The Illustrated London News, August 20, 1842, No. 15,

On March the 7th, 1843, the long desired governmental measure was introduced by Sir James Graham who proposed the reduction from eight to six and one-half hours and added that the six and one-half hours were to take place in the forenoon or in the afternoon but not in both. The bill was to include all children who worked in silk factories. The Act of 1844 also granted factory inspectors the power to appoint "certifying surgeons" who were to certify the age of children. It was also the first act to make provision for accident prevention. It prohibited "protected persons" (children and women) from cleaning shaftings and other transmission machinery while in motion and also from working between the fixed and moving parts of any self-acting machine.⁷²

In passing we might mention that the provisions of the Act of 1844 became applicable in 1845 to print works. The next legislative piece of importance was the "Ten Hours Act" of 1847. There had been agitation for at least twenty-five years prior to the passage of this bill for ten hour working days for young persons and women with Sadler the leading spirit behind it. A Committee of the House of Commons had been appointed to investigate the grounds of Sadler's demand for the Ten Hours Bill. From the mass of evidence they presented, we have selected one passage from the testimony of Jonathan Dowe, a mill hand:

72 Teleky, History of Factory and Mine Hygiene, 24.

Provided a child should be drowsy (there were plenty working at six years of age), the overlooker walks around the room with a stick in his hand, and he touches the child on the shoulder and says, "Come here!" In the corner of the room is an iron cistern; it is filled with water; he takes this boy, and holding him up by his legs, dips him overhead in the cistern, and sends him to his task for the remainder of the day; and that boy is to stand there dripping as he is at his work—he has no chance of drying himself.⁷³

Naturally, there was the usual amount of strong opposition in Parliament to the proposed measure from the ranks of the vested interests. The factory owners, among whom was John Bright, argued that if the manufacturers were left to themselves, they would do a great deal for their employees. His remarks in Commons are worthy of note, and he is credited with the following passage:

No one [the speaker said] would accuse him of a want of sympathy with the working classes, but this he would tell the House, that if they went on, at the bidding of the working classes, to legislate against the capitalists, they would find a very different feeling engendered among the latter toward the operatives, from that which they now exhibited. . . [In his own factory] they had a large infant school, together with a reading room and news room, and a school for adults, where the workmen attended after working hours. . . Not a few hundred pounds per annum were expended in promoting in this manner the interests of the workmen, and that, too, wholly independent of the acts of the legislature. This was the case at many another wealthy factories; but he would warn the House that if they now armed the workmen against the capitalists by fixing by law ten hours, or any other number of hours for the duration of labor, and thus interfered with the

⁷³ John Spargo, The Bitter Cry of Children, New York, 1906, 139.

established custom of the kingdom, he believed it would be impossible that the feeling which heretofore existed on the part of the manufacturers towards the operatives would continue, should the workmen think that by coming to that House they could fix the time of work and the amount of wages. . .

He would not detain the House farther; but believing, as he did in his heart, that the proposition was most injurious and destructive to the best interests of the country; believing that it was contrary to all principles of sound legislation, that it was a delusion practiced on the working classes, that it was advocated by those who had no knowledge of the economy of manufactures; believing that it was one of the worst measures passed in the shape of an act of the legislature, and that, if it were now made the law, the necessities of trade and the demands alike of the workmen and the masters would compel them to retrace the steps they had taken; believing this, he felt compelled to give the motion for the second reading of this bill his most strenuous opposition.⁷⁴

The passed Ten Hours Bill secured the reduction of the working time for children under thirteen to five hours per day and to ten hours for women and young persons between the ages of thirteen and eighteen. The law was gradually broadening its scope, and during the following years various acts were passed which extended the provisions of former acts in one way or another. The Acts of 1850 and 1853 pertained to textiles and specified certain hours during which the working day was to be observed. Non-textile factories and workshops were soon brought within the jurisdiction

⁷⁴ James Harvey Robinson, Readings in Modern European History, Boston, 1909, 285-286.

of the law. However, the reports of the Commission appointed in 1861 showed that the children employed in numerous industries at this date began work as young and worked for as long hours and under as unhealthy conditions as those whose labor was reported on in 1843. Unbelievably, in the straw plait schools children of three years of age were employed and worked all day. Many were just as young in the hosiery trade and often worked at night. It was also reported that the workrooms were dirty and ill-ventilated, while no precautions were taken on behalf of health and sanitation. If no dates had been affixed to the 1863 reports it would have been almost impossible to distinguish them from the reports of 1843.

The Factory Act of 1874 is worthy of mention because it raised the minimum age of employment for children to ten years. An effort to consolidate all of the preceding acts mentioned in one inclusive act was attempted in 1878. The official title of the act was "An Act to Consolidate and Amend the Law Relating to Factories and Workshops," and it included all previous legislation from 1802 to 1878, plus (with some minor changes) the provisions of the Public Health Act of 1875 and the Elementary Education Act of 1876. This act was prepared with care and stated that those under ten were not to be employed at all, and those under fourteen should be employed only half-time, either in the morning or in the afternoon, or on

alternate days. The hours of employment for young people were to be from six to six or seven to seven, of which two hours were to be devoted to meals, and on Saturdays all work was to cease at one-thirty. Adequate sanitary provisions and ample protection against accidents were to be guaranteed by the employer. The bill also created a suitable number of inspectors and assistants to insure the execution of the law and requested that medical certificates of fitness for employment be furnished for all under sixteen. Weekly certificates had to be obtained from the proper authorities by the employers showing the time required and spent in school attendance for every child in their employ.⁷⁵

The last piece of legislation which occurred at the turn of the century was the comprehensive Factory and Workshops Act of 1901 which had for its purpose the protection of young people employed in working places. The age of employment was raised to twelve years, and the act dealt with the conditions of employment of children, young persons, and women, particularly the hours in certain industries and establishments. Governmental control and supervision of industrial labor had been established, but only after a century of agitation, slow and even bitter acceptance, and much-needed reform. Parliamentary action, in spite of the laissez faire principle, finally resulted in

75 Willoughby, Child Labor, 22.

the prescription of a minimum age below which employment is illegal, regulation of periods of employment for those above the minimum age by means of fixing a daily minimum of hours of work and a minimum of meal hours and of weekly and annual holidays, the exclusion of young persons altogether from certain dangerous and unhealthy occupations, and advocacy that employment in all other classes of work should be rendered safe and as healthy as practicable in varying circumstances.⁷⁶

Not any of the established legislative reforms was easily achieved. The press, the pulpit, the platform and parliament were the instrumental forces which forced parliamentary action. Alden relates in Democratic England that

We are just beginning to reap the fruit of the many committees and inquiries which have brought into prominence the importance of the "child problem" and enforced the necessity for immediate action. How widesweeping is the change in public opinion can be discerned when we remember that little or no interest was taken in the life of the child one hundred years ago. At the time of the accession of Queen Victoria not one single act of Parliament represented the parental interest which the State ought to take in the welfare of the young. The child was a chattel; he had no rights and liberties. The most brutal cruelty and the most distressing ignorance were manifested in the treatment of both boys and girls, and every effort to bring about a change on the part of a few large-hearted reformers was met by unflinching opposition. The last thirty or forty years, however, has witnessed a great improvement both in theory and in practice. We have grown more humane and more thoughtful.

76 Whitehouse, Problems of Boy Life, 98.

We are no longer prepared--or at least not to the same extent,--to sacrifice all the future life of our country for some present gain. This marked change is, in a large measure, due to the early philanthropists and reformers like Shaftesbury, Oastler, Sadler, and Robert Owen; who first attacked the horrors and atrocities which marked the introduction of the factory system.⁷⁷

One hundred years of struggle and opposition, one hundred years of combined effort on the part of reformers eventually created the hard-won legislative measures which alleviated the heavy burden placed on England's children by her industrial lifeline. The promised adjustment which both manufacturers and laissez faire political economists held out as a happy hope never materialized; parliamentary legislation proved to be the only alternative in the solution of a problem, which, because of its enormity and importance, could not be worked out in an hour or a day. One hundred years were needed to give the children of England what was rightfully theirs,-- a chance for survival, an education, a childhood worthy of the name, and an opportunity to live a decent family life.

CHAPTER III

CONDITIONS OF THE CHIMNEY

SWEEPERS' TRADE

It would scarcely be a complete or balanced presentation of this survey of a century of child labor if we did not include a chapter on the employment of children as chimney-sweeps in both the urban and rural areas. The use of "sweeps" as they came to be popularly known, came into vogue in the eighteenth century as the use of coal for fuel became common. As early as 1788 a committee of gentlemen petitioned Parliament for remedial action after an investigation which they felt was suppressed rather than encouraged and publicized. The final result of the petition was an act, with no parliamentary machinery for its enforcement, requiring that a sweep be washed of his soot and dirt at least once a week and sent to church and that he be treated in other respects with as much humanity and care as the nature of the employment of a chimney-sweep would admit of. It was also true, parliamentary objections to the contrary, that mechanical devices were available even at this early date, and could be used in houses of all kinds except those with

complicated flues.⁷⁸

The Act was consistently evaded, and agitation began in 1816 for further measures to curtail the employment of children engaged as apprentices to master-sweeps. In 1816 a report was made to Parliament upon the employment of children in manufactures with a view to finding out whether legislation would be advisable. The chimney-sweeper's trade was also subject to investigation partly because the little climbing boy was an appealing picture which figured in the popular imagination and which seemed to embody the cruelty and degradation to which child workers were generally subjected for the purpose of earning a living. There is no doubt that the boys were treated with intentional cruelty and had to suffer many hardships under the perversity of their masters, but it was equally true that thousands of other children, less publicized, were enduring equally as much ill-treatment as the climbing boys. William Tooke's report to the House of Commons in 1817 related:

The 28th of Geo. III enacts, That no person shall employ any Boy, in the nature of an apprentice or servant, under the age of eight years; yet Your Committee have been informed, that infants of the early ages of four, five, and six years, have been employed, it being the practice for parents to sell their children to this trade, under-stating their age; besides, this clause is not considered by the Master Chimney Sweepers as prohibiting their employment of their own children, and instances have been adduced before

78 William T. Laprade, British History for American Students, New York, 1926, 594-595.

your Committee, that have satisfied them that such cases are by no means unfrequent.⁷⁹

The Committee Report also complained about the deformed spines, legs and arms of the climbing boys and the twenty and thirty pound burdens they were compelled to carry with them plus the soot from cleaned chimneys. Evidence of deformed knee and ankle joints were attributed to the position the children had to maintain in the chimney in order to support themselves. The arms were employed in scraping and sweeping down soot. A peculiar kind of disease, commonly known as Chimney-Sweeper's Cancer, was prevalent among the people engaged in the trade.

Further complaints lodged by the Committee ran thus:

But it is not only the early and hard labour, the spare diet, the wretched lodging, and harsh treatment, which is the lot of these children, but in general they are kept almost entirely destitute of education, and moral or religious instruction; they form a sort of class by themselves, and from their work being done so early in the day, they are turned into the streets to pass their time in idleness and depravity: thus they become an easy prey to those whose occupation it is to delude the ignorant and entrap the unwary; and if their constitution is strong enough to resist the diseases and deformities which are the consequences of their trade, and that they should grow so much in stature as no longer to be useful in it, they are cast upon the world without any means of obtaining a livelihood, with no habits of industry, or rather, what too frequently happens, with confirmed habits of idleness and vice.⁸⁰

79 William Tooke, ed., "A Copy of the Report Presented to the House of Commons," Pamphleteer, London, V. 10, 1817, 485.

80 Ibid., 487.

Statements in this same report give an estimate of about 200 Master Chimney-Sweepers who had, roughly, among them some 500 apprentices. Not more than twenty of the Master-Sweeps were reputable tradesmen in easy circumstances who appeared to conform to the provisions of the Act. Ninety were spoken of as inferior sweeps keeping three apprentices each and who neglected the health, morals and education of the children they employed. The remainder were a class of sweeps who had been journeymen and taken up the trade because they had no other means of support. Their practice was to pick up boys as they could, lodge them with themselves in huts, sheds or cellars in the outskirts of towns. The real miseries of the trade were principally to be found in this group. It was conclusively found that at Hadleigh, Barnet, Uxbridge and Windsor, girls had actually been employed in chimney-sweeping.

The Minutes of Evidence presented by the Committee referred to several cases in point which, even if slightly exaggerated by the Committee, are still shocking. William Moles and his wife Sarah were accused of murdering a six-year old boy, John Hewley, engaged as an apprentice. The child was forced up a chimney on the shoulders of a larger boy, and when his work was completed, violently pulled down by the leg and dashed against a marble hearth. As a consequence of this inhumane action, his leg was broken and he died a few hours

later. Evidently the judge at Old Bailey thought better of the matter, for Moles and his wife were not convicted, but he was guilty of another misdemeanor which netted him two years in prison. Six hours work in a six inch flue for a six-year old---a customary and evidently acceptable practice.

In 1817, 1818, and 1819, Henry Grey Bennet with the assistance of Wilberforce did not hesitate to make the condition public, and was able to persuade the House of Commons to pass remedial bills. The House of Lords, however, in which sat many owners of the more troublesome flues, refused to accept the measure and countered with arguments that the conditions complained of were exaggerated, that chimney-sweeps were necessary, and that if they were abolished, greater evils would result.

An act had been passed, as we mentioned before, under George III which provided that no persons should employ any boy in the trade under eight years of age, but this was violated, and children of four, five and six were freely employed as apprentices. Parents sold their children because of economic pressure, frequently lying about their ages. The children were often beaten before they went up the chimney, and the boy who followed the small child up the chimney often stuck pins into the feet of the small boy or lighted straw and applied it to the feet of the four or five-year old who

was squeezing his way up the narrow chimney blocked with soot. If the children stayed at the trade too long, Chimney-Sweeper's Cancer resulted. In general, the lot of the chimney-sweep was one of early and hard labor, spare diet, wretched lodging, and harsh treatment. They were kept almost entirely destitute of education and received no moral or religious instruction. The Religious Tract Society, in its publication entitled The Young Folk of the Factory evidently made some attempts to instruct apprentices in virtue. An anecdote is told of

. . . a little chimney-sweeper, who was sent to sweep the chimney of a lady's dressing room—a lady of large fortune and title. The servant who showed him into the room afterwards left it. The boy, supposing himself unobserved, ventured to take a look at the fine things around him. This was a dangerous liberty:—the sin of covetousness often enters at the eye. . . The poor boy was dazzled and confounded at the brilliant treasures he beheld, but nothing took his attention so much as a beautiful gold watch set with diamonds. He looked, and looked again, and thought what a delightful thing it would be to possess this watch; and that, as nobody was in the room he might take it without being missed. He went towards it, and, with a trembling hand, seized upon it; but, before he put it in his pocket, his conscience smote him. He repeated those two verses of a hymn which he had learned at a Sunday school; and having done so, replaced the watch and proceeded with his business. The verses were "Almighty God, thy piercing eye," etc. He had thought himself unobserved by human eyes, but he was mistaken. The lady was in the next room, where she could see and hear all that passed, and she kindly resolved to take the poor boy under her protection, and give him a good education. She accordingly applied to his master, and got him released from his employ. She then placed him at school, and afterwards took him into her own service; but finding that he not only discovered great moral worth and fervent

piety, but also superior talents and capacity for learning and that he had a strong desire for the ministry, she placed him at college, to pursue his studies with a view to the sacred work; and I believe he is at the present time a much-respected and eminently useful clergyman.⁸¹

The disturbing factor here is that the Religious Tract Society believed in child labor as a near-adjunct of religious belief. "Early to work" might be a paraphrase particularly applicable to their mode of thinking and instruction. The approval of any system of child labor by a religious body seems to suggest that religion had become the tool of the economic interests of the country. No protest was raised by any organized religious body, no defense of child laborers was made by the Church of England.

In an effort to alleviate the wretched conditions of the chimney-sweep apprentices, the Society for the Superseding of Climbing-Boys was formed. The endeavors of this philanthropic group to expose the evils of child labor in this occupation resulted in the publication of reports such as the one here quoted:

One, out of many proofs in the support of this opinion, may be drawn from the history of John Castles, convicted at Old Bailey. . . He had been taken from Bethnal-green work-house, and placed with a chimney-sweeper of the name of Mantz, in Whitechapel; then with Smith, alias Godman, on Saint-Peter's-hill; then with Fletcher, at Bethnal-green; then with Fossett, in Brick-lane; then with Smith again; then with Petrie, in the Old Bailey; and then with Smith again. The poor child's mother, died about twelve years ago; he had no friends capable of supporting him, and when he became larger than the chimnies he had to climb, he was thrown, like every other boy in that trade, upon

81 The Young Folks of the Factory, London, 1840, 132-133.

the wide world, without any means of support. The boy really appears to have made every possible effort to obtain an honest living, but he failed in each attempt, and after enduring severe hardships, and then remaining three days and nights without food, he joined himself to a company of housebreakers, and gave them the benefit of his previous training. As might be expected, the least guilty was first secured, and Castles was sentenced to transportation.⁸²

Another case which was used to convince Parliament that the office of chimney-sweep ought to be done away with was that of the murdered apprentice, Michael Hurley. The York assizes charged George Gridley with the wilful murder of Michael Hurley, an orphan who was apprenticed to Ann Haigh, a chimney-sweeper at Leeds. Mistress Haigh said that Michael was a good boy and worked willingly enough, but ran away from the employment often. She usually dispatched George Gridley to look for him. On the occasion of his last and final disappearance, Gridley recovered the boy eight miles from home, and beat and abused him on the return journey. Michael died shortly after as a result of mistreatment, and enough evidence was suppressed at the coroner's inquest to justify his verdict of death by starvation. The strange circumstances of the death came to Lord Harewood's attention and the body was disinterred. Mr. Hay, a surgeon procured for the disinterment, declared that the death was caused by ill treatment acting on a frame enfeebled by disease,

⁸² Twentieth Report of the Society for Superseding the Necessity of Climbing Boys, London, 1803, 4-5.

excessive fatigue, and want of nourishment. A verdict of manslaughter was brought in and since the penal code did not proportion the punishment to the crime, Gridley merely received a twelve-month imprisonment in the House of Correction which he appealed.⁸³

Public opinion, always a valuable factor in the promotion of reform, was created and shaped by public meetings and demonstrations up and down the country in all the large cities and towns after the exposition of the report of the Committee of 1817. On Thursday, June 5th, 1817, Lord Milton presented a petition from the "respectable inhabitants of Sheffield" which asked for means of abolishing the practice of sweeping chimnies by means of climbing boys. Increased agitation brought pressure for parliamentary action. On Wednesday, June 25th, 1817, parliamentarians discussed the violations of the eight-year employment age, and related that this provision had been violated with impunity; mastersweeps were using children of four and six in the trade.⁸⁴

It was the unanimous opinion (June 25th) that no regulation could be depended on, and suggestions were made for the gradual abolition of the trade. Machines had been constructed and were in

83 Ibid., 5-6.

84 Hansard, The Parliamentary Debates, vol. XXXVI, April 28 to July 12, 1817, 1155-1157.

operation which would sweep three-fourths of England's chimnies in a perfectly satisfactory fashion.

A bill proposed in 1817 in Commons raised the apprenticeship age to fourteen and proposed that no young person be allowed to work at chimney-sweeping beyond the age of twenty-one, because of the baneful consequences of engaging in the trade. Mr. Wilberforce, who seconded the motion, read a letter from a clergyman of a considerable country town, which stated that two children had stuck fast in chimnies and suffocated within the course of the past three months in his locality.⁸⁵ The bill failed, probably because of the provision which called for the abolition of climbing-boys.

The following year (Monday, February 9th, 1818), Mr. Bennet proposed a transcript of the Bill of 1817. Hansard records this pertinent passage:

He [Mr. Bennet]* was happy to say that since last year the desire to abolish this odious practice had been expressed at public meetings at all the great towns throughout the country; those meetings unanimously adopting resolutions that the employment of climbing boys ought not to be any longer tolerated, especially as a mechanical instrument was found efficient for the purpose.⁸⁶

85 Ibid.

* Brackets ours

86 Hansard, The Parliamentary Debates, vol. XXXVII, January 27 to April 13, 1818, 216-217.

Lord Milton's objection to the proposed bill was that it was too hasty and consequently, he advocated placing a heavy tax on those who employed climbing boys. He added words of commendation for those who used machinery. Mr. Bennet countered Lord Milton's objection by stating that five children had lost their lives during the past year and that Englishmen who complained of small chimnies were those who could well afford to have them altered. Milton called for a more mature consideration of the bill and it was promptly tabled.

The reform party in its desire to carry the legislation it had nurtured and cherished presented the blackest side of the case, and through the publication and popularization of true-life stories such as we have related concerning John Hewley and Michael Hurley, acquainted an influential section of the public with the deplorable conditions of the chimney-sweepers' apprentices. As a consequence of their agitation for reform, parliamentary action was taken. The abuses of this trade were smaller in scope, affecting some five hundred children, whereas, by 1839, according to Willoughby's statistics, 192,887 children under eighteen were employed in English factories.⁸⁷ By mid-century the climbing boy was a wistful,

Willoughby, Child Labor, 20.

appealing figure of the early decades of the century; a reminder of wretched abuse and abject poverty personified by a six-year old dragging twenty pounds of equipment and soot about on a deformed, welted body.

CHAPTER IV

COAL MINING ABUSES AND SUBSEQUENT LEGISLATION

We have examined rather lengthily the conditions and legislation relative to the textile and allied industries, and rather briefly the abuses prevalent in the chimney sweepers' trade, but there remains one branch of child labor which presents an even worse, if that is possible, picture of the English working children of the nineteenth century. The moral atmosphere was bad in the factories and the physical and mental hardships almost unbearable at times, but conditions were far more degrading in the English mines. According to the Report of 1842 on child labor, it was estimated that fully one-third of those employed in the coal mines were children under eighteen, and of these, more than half were under thirteen. The report, which consisted of some two thousand pages, was devoted chiefly to work in the coal mines. Hours in the mines for women and children ranged from fourteen to sixteen daily, and the work was physically difficult. One of the investigators for the House of Commons told his colleagues: "A

woman told me the other day that often when in harness her shoulders were so lacerated that the blood oozed through her garments at the side of her leathern belt."⁸⁸

The day's work often included the scraping out of a seam some eighteen inches deep, and it was found that children were particularly adaptable to this kind of work. Children were taken into the mines as early as four and six years of age. The usual age for entering the mines was eight or nine. A great deal of the suffering was entailed by the narrowness of the cuttings and the primitive method of transporting the coal. The children, generally naked, crawled on their hands and knees, harnessed by an iron chain and band around the waist, by which they dragged or pushed heavily loaded cars of coal through the narrow underground passageways.⁸⁹ A report on the Joppa colliery by an inspector revealed the shocking conditions in the underground pits. He related the following abuses:

Descending the pit a few weeks since, in the neighborhood of Tranent, I never was more shocked at the degradation of a human being, while the toils and suffering which this labor reflects are unequalled. Dragging like horses in their hands and knees through seams in the sharp rocks, which barely admit them, the limbs of these poor creatures

⁸⁸ Hansard, The Parliamentary Debates, vol. LXIX, May 9 to June 15, 1843, 466.

⁸⁹ Willoughby, Child Labor, 17.

are subject to the severest bruises and cuts while harnessed to their heavy pads, which they pull to exhaustion over the tramways, sometimes many inches deep in water.⁹⁰

Committees had been appointed by the House of Commons in the year 1800 to inquire into the state of the coal trade and the reports were finally published in 1829. The Lords appointed a select committee in 1829, and again in 1836 to inquire into the coal trade primarily to see if conditions were as bad as the Commons reports claimed. It remained for Lord Ashley to bring in a bill which became law in 1842. The bill prohibited the employment below ground of women and also of girls and boys below the age of ten years.⁹¹ It also gave the Secretary of State the right to appoint inspectors who would visit and actually investigate conditions in the mines. The first appointed inspector was Tremenheire. Even though he did much, there is no evidence that he ever made any routine inspection underground, and apparently it was not expected of him. The inspectors proved to be in most cases merely scientific assistants to the coroners.⁹²

In May, 1842, Southwood Smith, Thomas Tooke, R.J. Saunders and Leonard Horner, all factory inspectors, published a report on

⁹⁰ Hansard, The Parliamentary Debates, vol. LXIX, May 9 to June 15, 1843, 466-467.

⁹¹ Ludwig Teleky, History of Factory and Mine Hygiene, New York, 1948, 117.

⁹² Ibid., 224.

young persons in mines which was officially labelled "First Report of the Children's Employment Commission." Children of seven or eight, the inspectors concluded, were universally employed in the mines. Their investigations disclosed an instance of a three-year old lugging coal lumps daily for a livelihood. Many children were employed as trappers which entailed operating ventilating doors on which the safety of the mine depended. The usual sixteen hour working day was spent crouching in solitude in a small dark hole.

Those who drew trucks were "harnessed like dogs in a go-cart"⁹³ and crawled on all fours down passages which proved in some instances to be only eighteen inches high. Other children manipulated the pumps, standing ankle deep in water for twelve working hours.

It is easy to imagine the physical condition of women who began to work prematurely. By the age of thirty the mine-women were old and infirm cripples. Cruel stories of mine atrocities were delivered by witnesses before the Commission of 1842. One witness described how he had seen another boy beaten with a pickaxe. Lord Ashley referred, in a speech in Commons, to another lad whose master was habitually given to beating him with a stick through which a

93 Bryant, English Saga, 51-52.

nail was driven. Upon examination it was discovered that the child's loins and back were beaten to a jelly, his arm was broken, and his head covered with the marks of old wounds.⁹⁴

Even more pitiful was the lack of religious instruction and moral training exhibited by mine children. Ignorance of even the barest moral essentials and the commonest religious beliefs was rife. Spargo, in The Bitter Cry of the Children, records an almost unbelievable incident related by Robert Owen. One day Owen paid a visit to an English coal mine and had occasion to speak with a twelve-year old boy. He asked him, quite simply, if he knew God. The boy stared vacantly at Owen. "God?" he said, "God? No, I don't. He must work in some other mine."⁹⁵ Obviously, religion and Wales were antithetical, or at least had never been introduced.

Factory inspection had opened the way for mine inspection, and the Coal Mines Regulation Act of 1850 made provision for more adequate inspection of the mines.

It remained for Lord Ashley to follow up on the passage of the Bill of 1842 with requests for further legislation in behalf of the colliers. He begged the attention of the right honorable Secretary of State for the Home Department to consider a letter from

94 Ibid.

95 Spargo, Bitter Cry of the Children, 165.

Thomas Barber, a member of the Halifax Union, requesting some form of alleviation for the children engaged in mining. Barber also enclosed a copy of the Halifax Guardian which reported this case in its columns:

It is this week our painful duty to record one of the most revolting cases of barbarous treatment that it ever fell to our lot to notice. The case affords another illustration of the cruelties practiced upon children doomed to slave labor in a coal mine, and we beg distinctly to observe, that we have understated rather than overstated the treatment of the wretch whose name we shall shortly introduce.⁹⁶

The Halifax Guardian went on to relate how James Whiteley, a poor orphan boy about seventeen years of age, had been apprenticed to Joseph Whiteley, a collier residing at Blackley, near Elland, about seven years previously as a hurrier. At the time of his induction as an apprentice he was about nine and soon became the object of most severe and harsh punishment. The labor he had to do was the vilest drudgery and when his limbs failed to do their duty, a huge strap or a thick piece of wood was applied with vigor to his person. Six o'clock was the usual hour at which he was sent into the pit and it was six o'clock, or sometimes eight or nine o'clock in the evening when he emerged from the pit. His only subsistence was a muffin or some other edible plus the un-

96 Hansard, The Parliamentary Debates, vol. LXVI, 1343-1346.

palatable water in the pit.⁹⁷

It appeared that the severe floggings which Whiteley received at the hands of his master caused him to run away. Unfortunately, he was caught and returned to his master who beat him so cruelly that his back became one mass of sores and he could not lie in bed. Large pieces of flesh were torn away from his knee-cap by the use of the buckle-end of his strap. The boy was locked up in a cellar with nothing to eat and made to walk back and forth in the cellar with a heavy bag of iron suspended from his neck.

When the master left the house, Whiteley almost miraculously escaped. He traveled through the woods, but had to hide on several occasions when the master's searching party nearly caught up with him; he finally found safety along with food and shelter at the home of a kind old woman. He was able to reach the constable who heard his case and removed him to the workhouse. His body was examined and one part of it presented the appearance of raw diseased meat rather than that of human flesh and skin.⁹⁸

The difficulties and abuses exposed in the Report of 1842 were manifold, and it seems quite evident that law did not reach to

97 Ibid.

98 Ibid.

the depths of the coal mines. The children were treated like brutes and lived with no regard to morals, religion, education, or health. Since the work gave the children no training, there were no chances of employment later. They were not employed because the trade was expanding, but simply because their labor was cheap.⁹⁹

The complacency of the mine owners is evident from the account given in the House of Commons during 1843 by Mr. Cummings Bruce, who related that he had spoken to a number of mine owners who were of the opinion that those females above the age of eighteen, married or widows, should be permitted, if it so pleased them, to continue to work in the collieries, because they had been brought up in that employment and were not capable of any other. He also related for the benefit of Commons that the conduct of the mine workers was superior to most classes of the population. To substantiate his case with an example, he spoke about a pit-worker, Helen Weir by name, so that he might convince the members of the lower House that mine work was not unhealthy, as many of them had claimed. Helen had worked for four years at the Elgin collieries and for three years in a factory. The factory dust had made her hoarse and the long hours made her legs swell; she returned to the collieries and there regained her health. As a final gesture, Bruce quoted from a letter he had received from a subcommissioner: "I heard of no complaints from the children of overfatigue, or of

⁹⁹ Dunlop, English Apprenticeship, 268.

being oppressed by the workmen for whom they draw, who are usually the father, elder brother, or nearest relation, nor do medical men attribute any injury to drawing."¹⁰⁰

This was clearly an effort to whitewash the mine owners and blanket the reports and investigations which had been conducted chiefly in Commons since 1800. The supporters of mine reform, led by Lord Ashley, counter-attacked after Mr. Bruce's memorable speech with further evidence proving conclusively that conditions were not all that Mr. Bruce and his subcommissioner colleagues believed and stated. Regarding the morality of children in mines, the reformers related:

With some rare exceptions, few of the children who work in the collieries are taught sewing or other domestic work either. Those who go into the mines acquire habits of tippling; it is not uncommon to see children of twelve drunk. Lying, stealing, cruelty, and all sorts of moral evils abound in the lives of the uneducated miners.¹⁰¹

Many of the children had no mental outlook beyond the little world they lived in. Some of the children were questioned and their replies indicate the horrible lack of knowledge which prevailed among them. One thought that the world might be about one hundred miles long. A fourteen to sixteen hour work-day had

¹⁰⁰ Hansard, The Parliamentary Debates, vol. LXIX, 429-437.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 461.

succeeded in dwarfing their intellects and wearing out their little bodies in order that the mine operators might gain a little or a larger profit for themselves. The striking evil was the injustice done to the children and the complacent attitude of the owners who affirmed that it was the duty of the lower orders to work and work hard, and to train their children to work equally as hard.

Other regulation acts were passed in 1855, 1860, 1872, 1890-1891, 1894, 1905, 1910, and 1911. The Act of 1890-1891 concerning hygiene and safety in mines prohibited the underground employment of children under the age of twelve. In addition to the Mines Regulation Acts, various Factory and Workshop Acts which affect such parts of the surface arrangement of the mines as coke ovens have been applied, and the Education Acts enforce certain conditions bearing on the education of children. Penalties are imposed for employing children in contravention of those acts.

These reforms of the nineteenth century were carried on only after continuous pressure and agitation had been brought to bear on the law-making body of the English people. Full evidence of the conditions of child labor were accessible to the Commons, but evidences and reasons were not enough to stir them to activity. Effective laws were not passed until the outcry of the extremists had awakened the emotions of the legislature. To a considerable extent, the

reforms were sentimental, but the amelioration of conditions for large numbers of children was effected. Although the reforms dealt only with the obvious and intolerable physical and moral evils, and affected only certain classes of employment, the good accomplished in behalf of the children outweighs the consideration that the ultimate in child labor legislation was not accomplished.

A whole century of experience proved the necessity of legislation for the child worker, and exposed the delusiveness of "free competition" and individual bargaining for labor. The children were helpless in the labor market, hunger and poverty had conquered the prejudices of their parents, and it became the duty of the State to enact legislation to save the energies of the young for better things, rather than allow them to be ruthlessly exploited.

It was the pressure of public opinion and the agitation for reform in Commons which finally brought results in the form of the Factory and Workshop Acts, the Mines Regulations Acts, and the Education Acts. Since the passage of the Consolidation Act of 1901 numerous additional acts have been passed; social legislation has not been static. The constant conflict between the destructive forces of untrammled industry, sacrificing the children to its dominant end, production, and the protective intervention of society, staying those forces in the interests of humanity, has produced the highly developed system of factory legislation relating

to children which England now possesses, based on over a century of experience and reform agitation.

APPENDIX I

YEAR OF PASSAGE AND MAIN PROVISIONS AFFECTING HOURS OF WORK
OF FACTORY ACTS OF GREAT BRITAIN*

YEAR	INDUSTRIES	OPERATIVES AFFECTED	DETAILS
1802	cotton	apprentices	Twelve hour day, between 6 a.m. and 9 p.m.; night work regulated
1819	cotton	children	Minimum age nine years; children nine to sixteen years limited to twelve hours a day
1825	cotton	children	Saturday's work limited to nine hours, before 4:30; weekly hours 69; work day from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m.
1831	cotton	children 9 to 13; and young persons 13 to 18 years	Prohibited night work for employees under 21; children and young persons limited to 12 hours daily and 69 a week
1833	textiles	children 9 to 13; and young persons 13 to 18 years	Children limited to 9 hour day, 48 per week; young persons remain 69 weekly

YEAR	INDUSTRIES	OPERATIVES AFFECTED	DETAILS
1844	textiles	children, young persons, women	Half-time system for children; 6½ hour day or ten hours for three alternate days and women to work same hours as young persons
1845	print works	children, young persons, women	Above details extended to print works
1847	textiles	young persons and women	"Ten Hours Act" 11 hours daily and 63 weekly from July 1, 1847 10 hours daily and 58 weekly from July 1, 1848
1850	textiles	young persons and women	Hours 10½ daily, 60 weekly, between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. or 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. and to 2 p.m. on Saturday
1853	textiles	children	Extension of act of 1850
1860	bleaching and dye works	children 8 to 13; young persons 13 to 18 years; women	Except bleaching in open air; 12 hour day between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. and to 4:30 p.m. on Saturdays

YEAR	INDUSTRIES	OPERATIVES AFFECTED	DETAILS
1861	hosiery	children 8 to 13; young persons 13 to 18; women	Extension of acts of 1850 except youths 16 to 18 may work 9 hours between 4 a.m. and 10 p.m.
1864	fustian cut	children, young persons, women	Extension of all previous acts applied to textiles
1867	pottery-making, workshops, factories	children, young persons, women	Extended acts to any premises constituting one trade establishment employing 50 or more in manufacturing
1870	print, and bleach and dye works	children and young persons	Open-air work regulated
1871	brick and tile works	children and young persons	Children under 10 and females under 16 prohibited
1874	textiles	children 10 to 13 years; young persons 13 to 18 years; women	Employment of children under 10 forbidden; children have hours as before but not to be employed Saturdays if working over 5 hours any day of the week; hours 56½ weekly; after Jan. 1, 1876, minimum full time age 14 years, unless evidences of proficiency in school

YEAR	INDUSTRIES	OPERATIVES AFFECTED	DETAILS
1878	textiles	children, young persons, women	Children 6½ hours daily or 10 hours for three alternate days, between 6 a.m. or 7 a.m. and 1 p.m. or between 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. or 7 p.m. Saturday's work to end at 1 p.m.
1878	non-textile	children, young persons and women	Children same as in textile mills, but to end Saturdays 2 p.m.; young persons and women 10½ hours, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., or 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.; exceptions; end Saturdays 2 p.m.
1878	domestic workers	children and young persons	Children as in non-textile factories; young persons as in workshops; women not regulated
1891	domestic workers	children only	Minimum age for half-timers raised from 10 to 11 years
1895	factories and workshops	children, young persons, women	Young persons overtime prohibited; women's overtime limited to 2 hours

YEAR	INDUSTRIES	OPERATIVES AFFECTED	DETAILS
1901	factories, workshops	children, young persons, women	<p>a day, 3 days a week, 30 days a year, with exceptions; regulation extended to laundries</p> <p>No children under 12 years to be employed; many detailed provisions giving hours of employ- ment in particular industries and establish- ments; the period of employment in textile factories reduced 1 hour Saturdays</p>

*This table was adapted from the United States Bureau of Labor Bulletin, No. 80, a 1907 publication.

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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Sister Mary Christopher McNaney, O.S.F. has been read and approved by three members of the Department of History.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

Feb. 1, 1955
Date

Paul S. Lietz
Signature of Adviser