tricate texture, is very bad for the eyes, especially when, as is usually the case, the work is continued fourteen to sixteen hours. In the least unfavourable case, aggravation of near-sightedness follows; in the worst case, which is frequent enough, incurable blindness from amaurosis. But, apart from that, the children, in consequence of sitting perpetually bent up, become feeble, narrow-chested, and scrofulous from bad digestion. Disordered functions of the uterus are almost universal among the girls, and curvature of the spine also, so that "all the runners may be recognised from their gait." The same consequences for the eyes and the whole constitution are produced by the embroidery of lace. Medical witnesses are unanimously of the opinion that the health of all children employed in the production of lace suffers seriously, that they are pale, weak, delicate, undersized, and much less able than other children to resist disease. The affections from which they usually suffer are general debility, frequent fainting, pains in the head, sides, back, and hips, palpitation of the heart, nausea, vomiting and want of appetite, curvature of the spine, scrofula, and consumption. The health of the female lacemakers especially, is constantly and deeply undermined; complaints are universal of anemia, difficult childbirth, and miscarriage. The same subordinate official of the Children's Employment Commission reports further that the children are very often ill-clothed and ragged, and receive insufficient food, usually only bread and tea, often no meat for months together. As to their moral condition, he reports:

"All the inhabitants of Nottingham, the police, the clergy, the manufacturers, the working-people, and the parents of the children are all unanimously of opinion that the present system of labour is a most fruitful source of immorality. The threaders, chiefly boys, and the winders, usually girls, are called for in the factory at the same time; and as their parents cannot know how long they are wanted there, they have the finest opportunity to form improper connections and remain together after the close of the work. This has contributed, in no small degree, to the immoral-
has it so crushed the workers. The application of engraved cylinders driven by steam-power, and the discovery of a method of printing four to six colours at once with such cylinders, has as completely superseded hand-work as did the application of machinery to the spinning and weaving of cotton, and these new arrangements in the printing-works have superseded the hand-workers much more than was the case in the production of the fabrics. One man, with the assistance of one child, now does with a machine the work done formerly by 200 block printers; a single machine yields 28 yards of printed cloth per minute. The calico printers are in a very bad way in consequence; the shires of Lancaster, Derby, and Chester produced (according to a petition of the printers to the House of Commons), in the year 1842, 11,000,000 pieces of printed cotton goods: of these, 100,000 were printed by hand exclusively, 900,000 in part with machinery and in part by hand, and 10,000,000 by machinery alone, with four to six colours. As the machinery is chiefly new and undergoes constant improvement, the number of hand-printers is far too great for the available quantity of work, and many of them are therefore starving; the petition puts the number at one-quarter of the whole, while the rest are employed but one or two, in the best case three days in the week, and are ill-paid. Leach* asserts of one print-work (Deeply Dale, near Bury, in Lancashire), that the hand-printers did not earn on an average more than five shillings, though he knows that the machine-printers were pretty well paid. The print-works are thus wholly affiliated with the factory system, but without being subject to the legislative restrictions placed upon it. They produce an article subject to fashion, and have therefore no regular work. If they have small orders, they work half time; if they make a hit with a pattern, and business is brisk, they work twelve hours, perhaps all night. In the neighbourhood of my home, near Manchester, there was a print-work that was often lighted when I returned late at night; and I have heard that the children were obliged at times to work so long there, that they would try to catch a moment’s rest and sleep on the stone steps


and in the corners of the lobby. I have no legal proof of the truth of the statement, or I should name the firm. The Report of the Children’s Employment Commission is very cursory upon this subject, stating merely that in England, at least, the children are mostly pretty well clothed and fed (relatively, according to the wages of the parents), that they receive no education whatsoever, and are morally on a low plane. It is only necessary to remember that these children are subject to the factory system, and then, referring the reader to what has already been said of that, we can pass on.

Of the remaining workers employed in the manufacture of clothing stuffs little remains to be said; the bleachers’ work is very unwholesome, obliging them to breathe chlorine, a gas injurious to the lungs. The work of the dyers is in many cases very healthful, since it requires the exertion of the whole body; how these workers are paid is little known, and this is ground enough for the inference that they do not receive less than the average wages, otherwise they would make complaint. The fustian cutters, who, in consequence of the large consumption of cotton velvet, are comparatively numerous, being estimated at from 8,000 to 4,000, have suffered very severely, indirectly, from the influence of the factory system. The goods formerly woven with hand-looms, were not perfectly uniform, and required a practiced hand in cutting the single rows of threads. Since power-looms have been used, the rows run regularly; each thread of the weft is exactly parallel with the preceding one, and cutting is no longer an art. The workers thrown out of employment by the introduction of machinery turn to fustian cutting, and force down wages by their competition; the manufacturers discovered that they could employ women and children, and the wages sank to the rate paid them, while hundreds of men were thrown out of employment. The manufacturers found that they could get the work done in the factory itself more cheaply than in the cutters’ workroom, for which they indirectly paid the rent. Since this discovery, the low upper-storey cutters’ rooms stand empty in many a cottage, or are let for dwellings, while the cutter has lost his
freedom of choice of his working-hours, and is brought under the
dominion of the factory bell. A cutter of perhaps forty-five years
of age told me that he could remember a time when he had re-
ceived 8d. a yard for work, for which he now received 1d.; true,
he can cut the more regular texture more quickly than the old,
but he can by no means do twice as much in an hour as formerly,
so that his wages have sunk to less than a quarter of what they
were. Leach gives a list of wages paid in 1827 and in 1843 for
various goods, from which it appears that articles paid in 1827 at
the rates of 4d., 2½d., 2½d., and 1d. per yard, were paid in 1843
at the rate of 1½d., 1d., ¾d., and ¾d. per yard, cutters' wages.
The average weekly wage, according to Leach, was as follows:
1827, £1 6s. 6d.; £1 2s. 6d.; £1; £1 6s. 6d.; and for the same
goods in 1843, 10s. 6d.; 7s. 6d.; 6s. 6d.; 10s.; while there are
hundreds of workers who cannot find employment even at these
last named rates. Of the hand weavers of the cotton industry we
have already spoken; the other woven fabrics are almost ex-
clusively produced on hand-looms. Here most of the workers
have suffered as the weavers have done from the crowding in of
competitors displaced by machinery, and are, moreover, subject
like the factory operatives to a severe fine system for bad work.
Take, for instance, the silk weavers. Mr. Brocklehurst, one of
the largest silk manufacturers in all England, laid before a com-
mmittee of members of Parliament lists taken from his books, from
which it appears that for goods for which he paid wages in 1821 at
the rate of 80s., 14s., 3½a., 2½a., 1½a., 10s., he paid in 1830 but 3½a.,
7½a., 2½a., 2 a., 1½a., while in this case no improvement in the
machinery has taken place. But what Mr. Brocklehurst does
may very well be taken as a standard for all. From the same
lists it appears that the average weekly wage of his weavers, after
all deductions, was, in 1821, 16½s., and, in 1881, but 6½s. Since
that time wages have fallen still further. Goods which brought
in 4½d. weavers' wages in 1831, bring in but 2½d. in 1843 (single
sammets), and a great number of weavers in the country can get
work only when they undertake these goods at 1½d.-2d. Moreover,

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

After the textile fabrics, by far the most important products of English industry are the metal-wares. This trade has its headquarters at Birmingham, where the finer metal goods of all sorts are produced, at Sheffield for cutlery, and in Staffordshire, especially at Wolverhampton, where the coarser articles, locks, nails, etc., are manufactured. In describing the position of the workers employed in these trades, let us begin with Birmingham. The disposition of the work has retained in Birmingham, as in most places where metals are wrought, something of the old handicraft character; the small employers are still to be found, who work with their apprentices in the shop at home, or when they need steam-power, in great factory buildings which are divided into little shops, each rented to a small employer, and supplied with a shaft moved by the engine, and furnishing motive power for the machinery. Leon Faucher, author of a series of articles in the Revue des Deux Mondes, which at least betray study, and are better than what has hitherto been written upon the subject by Englishmen or Germans, characterises this relation in contrast with the manufacture of Lancashire as "Démocratie industrielle," and observes that it produces no very favourable results for master or men. This observation is perfectly correct, for the many small employers cannot well subsist on the profit divided amongst them, determined by competition, a profit under other circumstances absorbed by a single manufacturer. The controlling tendency of capital holds them down. For one who grows rich ten are ruined, and a hundred placed at a

greater disadvantage than ever, by the pressure of the one upstart who can afford to sell more cheaply than they. And in the cases where they have to compete from the beginning against great capitalists, it is self-evident that they can only toil along with the greatest difficulty. The apprentices are, as we shall see, quite as badly off under the small employers as under the manufacturers, with the single difference that they, in turn, may become small employers, and so attain a certain independence—that is to say, they are at best less directly exploited by the bourgeoisie than under the factory system. Thus these small employers are neither genuine proletarians, since they live in part upon the work of their apprentices, nor genuine bourgeoisie, since their principal means of support is their own work. This peculiar midway position of the Birmingham iron-workers is to blame for their having so rarely joined wholly and unreservedly in the English labour movements. Birmingham is a politically radical, but not a Chartist, town. There are, however, numerous larger factories belonging to capitalists; and in these the factory system reigns supreme. The division of labour, which is here carried out to the last detail (in the needle industry, for example), and the use of steam-power, admit of the employment of a great multitude of women and children, and we find here precisely the same features reappearing which the Factories' Report presented. The work of women up to the hour of confinement, incapacity as housekeepers, neglect of home and children, indifference, actual dislike to family life, and demoralisation; further, the crowding out of men from employment, the constant improvement of machinery, early emancipation of children, husbands supported by their wives and children, etc. etc. The children are described as half-starved and ragged, the half of them are said not to know what it is to have enough to eat, many of them get nothing to eat before the midday meal, or even live the whole day upon a pennyworth of bread for a midday meal—there were actually cases in which children received no food from eight in the morning until seven at night. Their clothing is very often scarcely

1 Children's Employment Commission's Report.
sufficient to cover their nakedness, many are barefoot even in winter. Hence they are all small and weak for their age, and rarely develop with any degree of vigour. And when we reflect that with these insufficient means of reproducing the physical forces, hard and protracted work in close rooms is required of them, we cannot wonder that there are few adults in Birmingham fit for military service. "The working men," says a recruiting surgeon, "are small, delicate, and of very slight physical power; many of them deformed, too, in the chest or spinal column." According to the assertion of a recruiting sergeant, the people of Birmingham are smaller than those anywhere else, being usually 5 feet 4 to 5 inches tall; out of 613 recruits, but 238 were found fit for service. As to education, a series of depositions and specimens taken from the metal districts have already been given, to which the reader is referred. It appears further, from the Children's Employment Commission's Report, that in Birmingham more than half the children between five and fifteen years attend no school whatsoever, that those who do are constantly changing, so that it is impossible to give them any training of an enduring kind, and that they are all withdrawn from school very early and set to work. The report makes it clear what sort of teachers are employed. One teacher, in answer to the question whether she gave moral instruction, said, No, for threepence a week school fees that was too much to require, but that she took a great deal of trouble to instil good principles into the children. (And she made a decided slip in her English in saying it.) In the schools the commissioner found constant noise and disorder. The moral state of the children is in the highest degree deplorable. Half of all the criminals are children under fifteen, and in a single year ninety ten-years-old offenders, among them forty-four serious criminal cases, were sentenced. Unbridled sexual intercourse seems, according to the opinion of the commissioner, almost universal, and that at a very early age.

The iron district of Staffordshire the state of things is still worse. For the coarse wares made here neither much division of

\[\text{ labour (with certain exceptions) nor steam-power or machinery can be applied. In Wolverhampton, Wille
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\[\text{ and the small masters work alone, or with one or more apprentices, who serve them until reaching the twenty-first year. The small em
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\[\text{ See p. 112. 4 Grainger Report and Evidence.}

\[\text{ ply from calves killed too young, and pork from swine smothered durin
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\[\text{ wreathing, and such food is furnished not by small employers only, but by large manufacturers, who employ from thirty to forty apprentices. The custom seems to be universal in Wolverhampton, and its natural consequence is frequent bowel complaints and other diseases. Moreover, the children usually do not get enough to eat, and have rarely other clothing than their working rags, for which reason, if for no other, they cannot go to Sunday school. The dwellings are bad and filthy, often so much so that they give rise to disease; and in spite of the not materially unhealthy work, the children are puny, weak, and, in many cases, severely crippled. In Wille
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\[\text{ as in Wolverhampton, numberless cases were found of retarded puberty among girls, (for girls, too, work at the forges,) as well as among boys, extending even to the nineteenth year. In Sedgeley and its surrounding districts, where nails form almost the sole product, the nailers live and work in the most wretched stable-like huts, which for filth can scarcely be equalled. Girls and boys work from the tenth or twelfth year, and are accounted fully skilled only when they make a thousand nails a day. For twelve hundred nails the pay is 5d. Every nail receives twelve blows, and since the hammer weighs 1\frac{1}{2} pounds, the nailer must}
lift 18,000 pounds to earn this miserable pay. With this hard work and insufficient food, the children inevitably develop ill-formed, undersized frames, and the commissioners' depositions confirm this. As to the state of education in this district, data have already been furnished in the foregoing chapters. It is upon an incredibly low plane; half the children do not even go to Sunday school, and the other half go irregularly; very few, in comparison with the other districts, can read, and in the matter of writing the case is much worse. Naturally, for between the seventh and tenth years, just when they are beginning to get some good out of going to school, they are set to work, and the Sunday school teachers, smiths or miners, frequently cannot read, and write their names with difficulty. The prevailing morals correspond with these means of education. In Willenhall, Commissioner Horne asserts, and supplies ample proofs of his assertion, that there exists absolutely no moral sense among the workers. In general, he found that the children neither recognised duties to their parents nor felt any affection for them. They were so little capable of thinking of what they said, so stupid, so hopelessly stupid, that they often asserted that they were well treated, were coming out famously, when they were forced to work twelve to fourteen hours, were clad in rags, did not get enough to eat, and were beaten so that they felt it several days afterwards. They knew nothing of a different kind of life than that in which they toil from morning until they are allowed to stop at night, and did not even understand the question never heard before, whether they were tired.  

In Sheffield wages are better, and the external state of the workers also. On the other hand, certain branches of work are to be noticed here, because of their extraordinarily injurious influence upon health. Certain operations require the constant pressure of tools against the chest, and engender consumption in many cases; others, file-cutting among them, retard the general development of the body and produce digestive disorders; bone-cutting for knife handles brings with it headache, bilioussness, and among

The remaining branches of industry.

girls, of whom many are employed, anemia. By far the most unwholesome work is the grinding of knife-blades and forks, which, especially when done with a dry stone, entails certain early death. The unwholesomeness of this work lies in part in the bent posture, in which chest and stomach are cramped; but especially in the quantity of sharp-edged metal dust particles freed in the cutting, which fill the atmosphere, and are necessarily inhaled. The dry grinders' average life is hardly thirty-five years, the wet grinders' rarely exceeds forty-five. Dr. Knight, in Sheffield, says:  

"I can convey some idea of the injuriousness of this occupation only by asserting that the hardest drinkers among the grinders are the longest lived among them, because they are longest and oftentimes absent from their work. There are, in all, some 2,500 grinders in Sheffield. About 150 (80 men and 70 boys) are fork grinders; these die between the twenty-eighth and thirty-second years of age. The razor grinders, who grind wet as well as dry, die between forty and forty-five years, and the table cutlery grinders, who grind wet, die between the fortieth and fiftieth year."

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

"They usually begin their work with the fourteenth year, and, if they have good constitutions, rarely notice any symptoms before the twentieth year. Then the symptoms of their peculiar disease appear. They suffer from shortness of breath at the slightest effort in going up hill or up stairs, they habitually raise the shoulders to relieve the permanent and increasing want of breath; they bend forward, and seem, in general, to feel most comfortable in the crouching position in which they work. Their complexion becomes dirty yellow, their features express anxiety, they complain of pressure upon the chest. Their voices become rough and hoarse, they cough loudly, and the sound is as if air were driven through a wooden tube. From time to time they expectorate considerable quantities of dust, either mixed with phlegm or in balls or cylindrical masses, with a thin coating of mucus. Spitting blood, inability to lie down, night sweat, colliquative diarrhoea, unusual loss of flesh, and all the usual symptoms of consumption."

1 Horne Report and Evidence.

1 Dr. Knight, Sheffield.
of the lungs finally carry them off, after they have lingered months, or even years, unfit to support themselves or those dependent upon them. I must add that all attempts which have hitherto been made to prevent grinders' asthma, or to cure it, have wholly failed."

All this Knight wrote ten years ago; since then the number of grinders and the violence of the disease have increased, though attempts have been made to prevent it by covered grindstones and carrying off the dust by artificial draught. These methods have been at least partially successful, but the grinders do not desire their adoption, and have even destroyed the contrivance here and there, in the belief that more workers may be attracted to the business and wages thus reduced; they are for a short life and a merry one. Dr. Knight has often told grinders who came to him with the first symptoms of asthma that a return to grinding means certain death, but with no avail. He who is once a grinder falls into despair, as though he had sold himself to the devil. Education in Sheffield is upon a very low plane; a clergyman, who had occupied himself largely with the statistics of education, was of the opinion that of 16,500 children of the working-class who are in a position to attend school, scarcely 6,500 can read. This comes of the fact that the children are taken from school in the seventh, and, at the very latest, in the twelfth year, and that the teachers are good for nothing; one was a convicted thief who found no other way of supporting himself after being released from jail than teaching school! Immorality among young people seems to be more prevalent in Sheffield than anywhere else. It is hard to tell which town ought to have the prize, and in reading the report one believes of each one that this certainly deserves it! The younger generation spend the whole of Sunday lying in the street tossing coins or fighting dogs, go regularly to the gin palaces, where they sit with their sweethearts until late at night, when they take walks in solitary couples. In an ale-house which the commissioner visited, there sat forty to fifty young people of both sexes, nearly all under seventeen years of age, and each lad beside his lass. Here and there cards were played, at other places dancing was going on, and everywhere drinking. Among the company were openly avowed professional prostitutes. No wonder, then, that, as all the witnesses testify, early, unbridled sexual intercourse, youthful prostitution, beginning with persons of fourteen to fifteen years, is extraordinarily frequent in Sheffield. Crimes of a savage and desperate sort are of common occurrence; one year before the commissioner's visit, a band, consisting chiefly of young persons, was arrested when about to set fire to the town, being fully equipped with lances and inflammable substances. We shall see later that the labour movement in Sheffield has this same savage character.1

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

North of the iron district of Staffordshire lies an industrial region to which we shall now turn our attention, the Potteries, whose headquarters are in the borough of Stoke, embracing Hanley, Burslem, Lane End, Lane Delph, Etruria, Colmore, Longport, Tunstall, and Golden Hill, containing together 60,000 inhabitants. The Children's Employment Commission reports upon this subject that in some branches of this industry, in the production of stoneware, the children have light employment in warm, airy rooms; in

1 Symonds Report and Evidence.
others, on the contrary, hard, wearing labour is required, while they receive neither sufficient food nor good clothing. Many children complain: "Don't get enough to eat, get mostly potatoes with salt, never meat, never bread, don't go to school, haven't got no clothes." "Haven't got nothin' to eat to-day for dinner, don't never have dinner at home, get mostly potatoes and salt, sometimes bread." "These is all the clothes I have, no Sunday suit at home." Among the children whose work is especially injurious are the mould-runners, who have to carry the moulded article with the form to the drying-room, and afterwards bring back the empty form, when the article is properly dried. Thus they must go to and fro the whole day, carrying burdens heavy in proportion to their age, while the high temperature in which they have to do this increases very considerably the exhaustiveness of the work. These children, with scarcely a single exception, are lean, pale, feeble, stunted; nearly all suffer from stomach troubles, nausea, want of appetite, and many of them die of consumption. Almost as delicate are the boys called "jiggers," from the "jigger" wheel which they turn. But by far the most injurious is the work of those who dip the finished article into a fluid containing great quantities of lead, and often of arsenic, or have to take the freshly-dipped article up with the hand. The hands and clothing of these workers, adults and children, are always wet with this fluid, the skin softens and falls off under the constant contact with rough objects, so that the fingers often bleed, and are constantly in a state most favourable for the absorption of this dangerous substance. The consequence is violent pain, and serious disease of the stomach and intestines, obstinate constipation, colic, sometimes consumption, and, most common of all, epilepsy among children. Among men, partial paralysis of the hand, meningitis, opisthotonus, and paralysis of whole limbs are ordinary phenomena. One witness relates that two children who worked with him died of convulsions at their work; another who had helped with the dipping two years while a boy, relates that he had violent pains in the bowels at first, then convulsions, in consequence of which he was confined to his bed two months, since when the attacks of convulsions have increased in frequency, are now daily, accompanied often by ten to twenty epileptic fits, his right arm is paralysed, and the physicians tell him that he can never regain the use of his limbs. In one factory were found in the dipping-house four men, all epileptic and afflicted with severe colic, and eleven boys, several of whom were already epileptic. In short, this frightful disease follows this occupation universally; and that, too, to the greater pecuniary profit of the bourgeoisie! In the rooms in which the stoneware is secured, the atmosphere is filled with pulverised flint, the breathing of which is as injurious as that of the steel dust among the Sheffield grinders. The workers lose breath, cannot lie down, suffer from sore throat and violent coughing, and come to have so feeble a voice that they can scarcely be heard. They, too, all die of consumption. In the Potteries district, the schools are said to be comparatively numerous, and to offer the children opportunities for instruction; but as the latter are so early set to work for twelve hours and often more per day, they are not in a position to avail themselves of the schools, so that three-fourths of the children examined by the commissioner could neither read nor write, while the whole district is plunged in the deepest ignorance. Children who have attended Sunday school for years could not tell one letter from another, and the moral and religious education, as well as the intellectual, is on a very low plane.

In the manufacture of glass, too, work occurs which seems little injurious to men, but cannot be endured by children. The hard labour, the irregularity of the hours, the frequent night-work, and especially the great heat of the working place (100 to 180 Fahrenheit), engender in children general debility and disease, stunted growth, and especially affections of the eye, bowel complaint, and rheumatic and bronchial affections. Many of the children are pale, have red eyes, often blind for weeks at a time, suffer from violent nausea, vomiting, coughs, colds, and rheumatism. When the glass is withdrawn from the fire, the children must often go into such heat that the boards on which they stand catch

Scriven Report and Evidence.
fire under their feet. The glassblowers usually die young of debility and chest affections.¹

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

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

It is a curious fact that the production of precisely those articles which serve the personal adornment of the ladies of the bourgeoisie involves the saddest consequences for the health of the workers. We have already seen this in the case of the lacemakers, and come now to the dressmaking establishments of London for further proof. They employ a mass of young girls—there are said to be 15,000 of them in all—who sleep and eat on the premises, come usually from the country, and are therefore absolutely the slaves of their employers. During the fashionable season, which lasts some four months, working-hours, even in the best establishments, are fifteen, and, in very pressing cases, eighteen a day; but in most shops work goes on at these times without any set regulation, so that the girls never have more than six, often not more than three or four, sometimes, indeed, not more than two hours in the twenty-four, for rest and sleep, working nineteen to twenty hours, if not the whole night through, as frequently happens! The only limit set to their work is the absolute physical inability to hold the needle another minute. Cases have occurred in which these helpless creatures did not undress during nine consecutive days and nights, and could only rest a moment or two here and there upon a mattress, where food was served them ready cut up in order to require the least possible time for swallowing. In short, these unfortunate girls are kept by means of the moral whip of the modern slave-driver, the threat of discharge, to such long and unbroken toil as no strong man, much less a delicate girl of fourteen to twenty years, can endure. In addition to this, the foul air of the work-room and sleeping places, the bent posture, the often bad and indigestible food, all...

¹ Leitchild Report, p. 2, II., p. 18, 19; Children’s Employment Commission. Report, p. 4, 7, 8. 45; Employment Commission, p. 79, etc.
those causes, combined with almost total exclusion from fresh air, entail the saddest consequences for the health of the girls. Excruciation, exhaustion, debility, loss of appetite, pains in the shoulders, back, and hips, but especially headache, begin very soon; then follow curvatures of the spine, high, deformed shoulders, leanness, swollen, weeping, and smarting eyes, which soon become short-sighted; coughs, narrow chests, and shortness of breath, and all manner of disorders in the development of the female organism. In many cases the eyes suffer so severely that incurable blindness follows; but if the sight remains strong enough to make continued work possible, consumption usually soon ends the sad life of these milliners and dressmakers. Even those who leave this work at an early age retain permanently injured health, a broken constitution; and, when married, bring feeble and sickly children into the world. All the medical men interrogated by the commissioner agreed that no method of life could be invented better calculated to destroy health and induce early death.

With the same cruelty, though somewhat more indirectly, the rest of the needle-women of London are exploited. The girls employed in stay-making have a hard, wearing occupation, trying to the eyes. And what wages do they get? I do not know; but this I know, that the middle-man who has to give security for the material delivered, and who distributes the work among the needle-women, receives 1½d. per piece. From this he deducts his own pay, at least ¼d., so that 1d. at most reaches the pocket of the girl. The girls who sew necessities must bind themselves to work sixteen hours a day, and receive 4½s. a week. But the shirtmakers' lot is the worst. They receive for an ordinary shirt 1¼d., formerly 2d.-3d.; but since the workhouse of St. Pancras, which is administered by a Radical board of guardians, began to undertake work at 1⅔d., the poor women outside have been compelled to do the same. For fine, fancy shirts, which can be made in one day of eighteen hours, 6d. is paid. The weekly wage of these sewing-women according to this and according to testimony

1 See Weekly Dispatch, March 19th, 1844.

from many sides, including both needle-women and employers, is 2s. 6d. to 3s. for most strained work continued far into the night. And what crowns this shameful barbarism is the fact that the women must give a money deposit for a part of the materials entrusted to them, which they naturally cannot do unless they pawn a part of them (as the employers very well know), redeeming them at a loss; or if they cannot redeem the materials, they must appear before a Justice of the Peace, as happened a sewing-woman in November, 1843. A poor girl who got into this strait and did not know what to do next, drowned herself in a canal in 1844. These women usually live in little garret rooms in the utmost distress, where as many crowd together as the space can possibly admit, and where, in winter, the animal warmth of the workers is the only heat obtainable. Here they sit bent over their work, sewing from four or five in the morning until midnight, destroying their health in a year or two and ending in an early grave, without being able to obtain the poorest necessities of life meanwhile. And below them roll the brilliant equipages of the upper bourgeoisie, and perhaps ten steps away some pitiable dandy loses more money in one evening at faro than they can earn in a year.

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

1 Thomas Hood, the most talented of all the English humorists now living, and, like all humorists, full of human feeling, but wanting in mental energy, published at the beginning of 1844 a beautiful poem, "The Song of the Shirt," which drew sympathetic but unavailing tears from the eyes of the daughters of the bourgeoisie. Originally published in Punch, it made the round of all the papers. As discussions of the condition of the sewing-women filled all the papers at the time, special extracts are needless.
LABOUR MOVEMENTS.

It must be admitted, even if I had not proved it so often in detail, that the English workers cannot feel happy in this condition; that theirs is not a state in which a man or a whole class of men can think, feel, and live as human beings. The workers must therefore strive to escape from this brutalising condition, to secure for themselves a better, more human position; and this they cannot do without attacking the interest of the bourgeoisie which consists in exploiting them. But the bourgeoisie defends its interests with all the power placed at its disposal by wealth and the might of the State. In proportion as the working-man determines to alter the present state of things, the bourgeoisie becomes his avowed enemy.

Moreover, the working-man is made to feel at every moment that the bourgeoisie treats him as a chattel, as its property, and for this reason, if for no other, he must come forward as its enemy. I have shown in a hundred ways in the foregoing pages, and could have shown in a hundred others, that, in our present society, he can save his manhood only in hatred and rebellion against the bourgeoisie. And he can protest with most violent passion against the tyranny of the property class, thanks to his education, or rather want of education, and to the abundance of hot Irish blood that flows in the veins of the English working-class. The English working-man is no Englishman nowadays; no calculating money-grabber like his wealthy neighbour. He possesses more fully developed feelings, his native northern coldness is overborne by the unrestrained development of his passions and their control over him. The cultivation of the understanding which so greatly strengthens the selfish tendency of the English bourgeoisie, which has made selfishness his predominant trait and concentrated all his emotional power upon the single point of money-greed, is wanting in the working-man, whose passions are therefore strong and mighty as those of the foreigner. English nationality is annihilated in the working-man.

Since, as we have seen, no single field for the exercise of his manhood is left him, save his opposition to the whole conditions of his life, it is natural that exactly in this opposition he should be most manly, noblest, most worthy of sympathy. We shall see that all the energy, all the activity of the working-men is directed to this point, and that even their attempts to attain general education all stand in direct connection with this. True, we shall have single acts of violence and even of brutality to report, but it must always be kept in mind that the social war is avowedly raging in England; and that, whereas it is in the interest of the bourgeoisie to conduct this war hypocritically, under the disguise of peace and even of philanthropy, the only help for the working-men consists in laying bare the true state of things and destroying this hypocrisy; that the most violent attacks of the workers upon the bourgeoisie and its servants are only the open, undisguised expression of that which the bourgeoisie perpetrates secretly, treacherously against the workers.

The revolt of the workers began soon after the first industrial development, and has passed through several phases. The investigation of their importance in the history of the English people I must reserve for separate treatment, limiting myself meanwhile to such bare facts as serve to characterise the condition of the English proletariat.

The earliest, crudest, and least fruitful form of this rebellion was that of crime. The working-man lived in poverty and want, and saw that others were better off than he. It was not clear to his mind why he, who did more for society than the rich idler, should be the one to suffer under these conditions. Want conquered his inherited respect for the sacredness of property, and he stole. We have seen how crime increased with the extension of manufacture; how the yearly number of arrests bore a constant relation to the number of bales of cotton annually consumed.
The workers soon realised that crime did not help matters. The criminal could protest against the existing order of society only singly, as one individual; the whole might of society was brought to bear upon each criminal, and crushed him with its immense superiority. Besides, theft was the most primitive form of protest, and for this reason, if for no other, it never became the universal expression of the public opinion of the working-men, however much they might approve of it in silence. As a class, they first manifested opposition to the bourgeoisie when they resisted the introduction of machinery at the very beginning of the industrial period. The first inventors, Arkwright and others, were persecuted in this way and their machines destroyed. Later, there took place a number of revolts against machinery, in which the occurrences were almost precisely the same as those of the printers' disturbances in Bohemia in 1844; factories were demolished and machinery destroyed.

This form of opposition also was isolated, restricted to certain localities, and directed against one feature only of our present social arrangements. When the momentary end was attained, the whole weight of social power fell upon the unprotected evil-doers and punished them to its heart's content, while the machinery was introduced none the less. A new form of opposition had to be found.

At this point help came in the shape of a law enacted by the old, unformed, oligarchic-Tory parliament, a law which never could have passed the House of Commons later, when the Reform Bill had legally sanctioned the distinction between bourgeoisie and proletariat, and made the bourgeoisie the ruling class. This was enacted in 1824, and repealed all laws by which coalitions between working-men for labour purposes had hitherto been forbidden. The working-men obtained a right previously restricted to the aristocracy and bourgeoisie, the right of free association. Secret coalitions had, it is true, previously existed, but could never achieve great results. In Glasgow, as Symonds 1 relates, a general strike of weavers had taken place in 1812, which was brought about by

1 "Arts and Artisans," p. 137, et seq.
and advantageous, the various trades of single districts united in a federation and held delegate conventions at set times. The attempt has been made in single cases to unite the workers of one branch over all England in one great Union; and several times (in 1830 for the first time) to form one universal trades association for the whole United Kingdom, with a separate organization for each trade. These associations, however, never held together long, and were seldom realized even for the moment; since an exceptionally universal excitement is necessary to make such a federation possible and effective.

The means usually employed by these Unions for attaining their ends are the following: If one or more employers refuse to pay the wage specified by the Union, a deputation is sent or a petition forwarded (the working-men, you see, know how to recognise the absolute power of the lord of the factory in his little State); if this proves unavailing, the Union commands the employees to stop work, and all hands go home. This strike is either partial when one or several, or general when all employers in the trade refuse to regulate wages according to the proposals of the Union. So far go the lawful means of the Union, assuming the strike to take effect after the expiration of the legal notice, which is not always the case. But these lawful means are very weak when there are workers outside the Union, or when members separate from it for the sake of the momentary advantage offered by the bourgeoisie. Especially in the case of partial strikes can the manufacturer readily secure recruits from these black sheep (who are known as kmbsticks), and render fruitless the efforts of the united workers. Kmbsticks are usually threatened, insulted, beaten, or otherwise maltreated by the members of the Union; intimidated, in short, in every way. Prosecution follows, and as the law-abiding bourgeoisie has the power in its own hands, the force of the Union is broken almost every time by the first unlawful act, the first judicial procedure against its members.

The history of these Unions is a long series of defeats of the working-men, interrupted by a few isolated victories. All these efforts naturally cannot alter the economic law according to which wages are determined by the relation between supply and demand in the labour market. Hence the Unions remain powerless against all great forces which influence this relation. In a commercial crisis the Union itself must reduce wages or dissolve wholly; and in a time of considerable increase in the demand for labour, it cannot fix the rate of wages higher than would be reached spontaneously by the competition of the capitalists among themselves.

But in dealing with minor, single influences they are powerful. If the employer had no concentrated, collective opposition to expect, he would in his own interest gradually reduce wages to a lower and lower point; indeed, the battle of competition which he has to wage against his fellow-manufacturers would force him to do so, and wages would soon reach the minimum. But this competition of the manufacturers among themselves is, under average conditions, somewhat restricted by the opposition of the working-men.

Every manufacturer knows that the consequence of a reduction not justified by conditions to which his competitors also are subjected, would be a strike, which would most certainly injure him, because his capital would be idle as long as the strike lasted, and his machinery would be rusting, whereas it is very doubtful whether he could, in such a case, enforce his reduction. Then he has the certainty that if he should succeed, his competitors would follow him, reducing the price of the goods so produced, and thus depriving him of the benefit of his policy. Then, too, the Unions often bring about a more rapid increase of wages after a crisis than would otherwise follow. For the manufacturer's interest is to delay raising wages until forced by competition, but now the working-men demand an increased wage as soon as the market improves, and they can carry their point by reason of the smaller supply of workers at his command under such circumstances. But, for resistance to more considerable forces which influence the labour market, the Unions are powerless. In such cases hunger gradually drives the strikers to resume work on any terms, and when once a few have begun, the force of the Union is broken, because these few kmbsticks, with the reserve supplies of goods in the market, enable the bourgeoisie to overcome
the worst effects of the interruption of business. The funds of the Union are soon exhausted by the great numbers requiring relief, the credit which the shopkeepers give at high interest is withdrawn after a time, and want compels the working-man to place himself once more under the yoke of the bourgeoisie. But strikes are disastrous...destructions, while the workers feel in every reduction imposed by the state of trade a deterioration of their condition, against which they must defend themselves as far as in them lies.

It will be asked, "Why, then, do the workers strike in such cases, when the uselessness of such measures is so evident?"

Simply because they must protest against every reduction, even if dictated by necessity; because they feel bound to proclaim that they, as human beings, shall not be made to bow to social circumstances, but social conditions ought to yield to them as human beings; because silence on their part would be a recognition of these social conditions, an admission of the right of the bourgeoisie to exploit the workers in good times and let them starve in bad ones. Against this the working-men must rebel so long as they have not lost all human feeling, and that they protest in this way and no other, comes of their being practical English people, who express themselves in action, and do not, like German theorists, go to sleep as soon as their protest is properly registered and placed ad acta, there to sleep as quietly as the protestants themselves.

The active resistance of the English working-men has its effect in holding the money greed of the bourgeoisie within certain limits, and keeping alive the opposition of the workers to the social and political omnipotence of the bourgeoisie, while it compels the admission that something more is needed than Trades Unions and strikes to break the power of the ruling class. But what gives these Unions and the strikes arising from them their real importance is this, that they are the first attempt of the workers to abolish competition. They imply the recognition of the fact that the supremacy of the bourgeoisie is based wholly upon the competition of the workers among themselves; i.e., upon their want of cohesion. And precisely because the Unions direct themselves against the vital nerve of the present social order, however one-sidedly, in however narrow a way, are they so dangerous to this social order. The working-men cannot attack the bourgeoisie, and with it the whole existing order of society, at any sover point than this. If the competition of the workers among themselves is destroyed, if all determine not to be further exploited by the bourgeoisie, the rule of property is at an end. Wages depend upon the relation of demand to supply, upon the accidental state of the labour market, simply because the workers have hitherto been content to be treated as chattels, to be bought and sold. The moment the workers resolve to be bought and sold no longer, when, in the determination of the value of labour, they take the part of men possessed of a will as well as of working-power, at that moment the whole Political Economy of to-day is at an end.

The laws determining the rate of wages would, indeed, come into force again in the long run, if the working-men did not go beyond this step of abolishing competition among themselves. But they must go beyond that unless they are prepared to recede again and to allow competition among themselves to reappear. Thus once advanced so far, necessity compels them to go further; to abolish not only one kind of competition, but competition itself altogether, and that they will do.

The workers are coming to perceive more clearly every day how competition affects them; they see far more clearly than the bourgeoisie that competition of the capitalists among themselves press upon the workers too, by bringing on commercial crises, and that this kind of competition, too, must be abolished. They will soon learn how they have to go about it.

That these Unions contribute greatly to nourish the bitter hatred of the workers against the property-holding class need hardly be said. From them proceed, therefore, with or without the connivance of the leading members, in times of unusual excitement, individual actions which can be explained only by hatred wrought to the pitch of despair, by a wild passion over-
whelming all restraints. Of this sort are the attacks with vitriol mentioned in the foregoing pages, and a series of others, of which I shall cite several. In 1831, during a violent labour movement, young Ashton, a manufacturer in Hyde, near Manchester, was shot one evening when crossing a field, and no trace of the assassin discovered. There is no doubt that this was a deed of vengeance of the working-men. Incendiaryisms and attempted explosions are very common. On Friday, September 29th, 1843, an attempt was made to blow up the saw-works of Padgin, in Howard Street, Sheffield. A closed iron tube filled with powder was the means employed, and the damage was considerable. On the following day, a similar attempt was made in Hibsden's knife and file works at Shales Moor, near Sheffield. Mr. Hibsden had made himself obnoxious by an active participation in bourgeois movements, by low wages, the exclusive employment of knobsticks, and the exploitation of the Poor Law for his own benefit. He had reported, during the crisis of 1842, such operatives as refused to accept reduced wages, as persons who could find work but would not take it, and were, therefore, not deserving of relief, so compelling the acceptance of a reduction. Considerable damage was inflicted by the explosion, and all the working-men who came to view it regretted only that the whole concern was not blown into the air.” On Friday, October 6th, 1844, an attempt to set fire to the factory of Ainsworth and Crompton, at Boleyn, did no damage; it was the third or fourth attempt in the same factory within a very short time. In the meeting of the Town Council of Sheffield, on Wednesday, January 10th, 1844, the Commissioner of Police exhibited a cast-iron machine, made for the express purpose of producing an explosion, and found filled with four pounds of powder, and a fuse which had been lighted but had not taken effect, in the works of Mr. Kitchen, Earl Street, Sheffield. On Sunday, January 26th, 1844, an explosion caused by a package of powder took place in the sawmill of Bentley & White, at Bury, in Lancashire, and produced considerable damage. On Thursday, February 1st, 1844, the Soho Wheel Works, in Sheffield, were set on fire and burnt up.

Here are six such cases in four months, all of which have their sole origin in the embitterment of the working-men against the employers. What sort of a social state it must be in which such things are possible I need hardly say. These facts are proof enough that in England, even in good business years, such as 1843, the social war is avowed and openly carried on, and still the English bourgeoisie does not stop to reflect! But the case which speaks most loudly is that of the Glasgow Things,2 which came up before the Assizes from the 3rd to the 11th of January, 1838. It appears from the proceedings that the Cotton-Spinners' Union, which existed here from the year 1816, possessed rare organisation and power. The members were bound by an oath to adhere to the decision of the majority, and had during every turnout a secret committee which was unknown to the mass of the members, and controlled the funds of the Union absolutely. This committee fixed a price upon the heads of knobsticks and obnoxious manufacturers and upon incendiarisms in mills. A mill was thus set on fire in which female knobsticks were employed in spinning in the place of men; a Mrs. McPherson, mother of one of these girls, was murdered, and both murderers sent to America at the expense of the association. As early as 1820, a knobstick named McQuarry was shot at and wounded, for which deed the doctor received twenty pounds from the Union, but was discovered and transported for life. Finally, in 1827, in May, disturbances occurred in consequence of a turnout in the oatbank and Mile End factories, in which perhaps a dozen knobsticks were maltreated. In July, of the same year, the disturbances still continued, and a certain Smith, a knobstick, was so maltreated that he died. The committee was now arrested, an investigation begun, and the leading members found guilty of participation in conspiracies, maltreatment of knobsticks, and incendiarism in the mill of James and Francois Wood, and they were transported for seven years. What do our good Germans say to this story?2

1 So called from the East Indian tribe, whose only trade is the murder of all the strangers who fall into its hands.
2 "What kind of wild justice must it be in the hearts of these men that
The property-holding class, and especially the manufacturing portion of it which comes into direct contact with the working-men, declaims with the greatest violence against these Unions, and is constantly trying to prove their uselessness to the working-men upon grounds which are economically perfectly correct, but for that very reason partially mistaken, and for the working-man's understanding totally without effect. The very zeal of the bourgeoisie shows that it is not disinterested in the matter; and apart from the indirect loss involved in a turn-out, the state of the case is such that whatever goes into the pockets of the manufacturers comes of necessity out of those of the worker. So that even if the working-men did not know that the Unions hold the emulation of their masters in the reduction of wages, at least in a measure, in check, they would still stand by the Unions, simply to the injury of their enemies, the manufacturers. In war the injury of one party is the benefit of the other, and since the working-men are on a war-footing towards their employers, they do merely what the great potentates do when they get into a quarrel. Beyond all other bourgeois is our friend Dr. Ure, the most furious enemy of the Unions. He foams with indignation at the "secret tribunals" of the cotton-spinners, the most powerful section of the workers, tribunals which boast their ability to paralyse every disobedient manufacturer,¹ "and so bring ruin on the man who had given them profitable employment for many a year." He speaks of a time² "when the inventive head and the sustaining heart of trade were held in bondage by the unruly lower members." A pity that the English working-men will not prompts them, with cold deliberation, in conclave assembled, to doom their brother workman, as the deserter of his order and his order's cause, to die a traitor's and a deserter's death, have him executed, in default of any public judge and hangman, then by a secret one: like your old Chivalry Reamgarists and Secret Tribunal, suddenly revived in this strange guise; suddenly rising once more on the astonished eye, dressed not now in mail shirts, but in fustian jackets, meeting not in Westphalian forests, but in the paved Gallowgate of Glasgow! Such a temper must be widespread virulent among the many when, even in the worst cases, it can take such form in the few."—Carlyle. "Charism," p. 40.

¹ Dr. Ure, "Philosophy of Manufacture," p. 239.
² Ibid., p. 232.

let themselves be pacified so easily with thy fable as the Roman Plebs, thou modern Menenius Agrippa! Finally, he relates the following: At one time the coarse mule-spinners had misused their power beyond all endurance. High wages, instead of awakening thankfulness towards the manufacturers and leading to intellectual improvement (in harmless study of sciences useful to the bourgeoisie, of course), in many cases produced pride and supplied funds for supporting rebellious spirits in strikes, with which a number of manufacturers were visited one after the other in a purely arbitrary manner. During an unhappy disturbance of this sort in Hyde, Dukinfield, and the surrounding neighbourhood, the manufacturers of the district, anxious lest they should be driven from the market by the French, Belgians, and Americans, addressed themselves to the machine-works of Sharp, Roberts & Co., and requested Mr. Sharp to turn his inventive mind to the construction of an automatic mule in order "to emancipate the trade from galling slavery and impending ruin."¹

"He produced in the course of a few months a machine apparently instinct with the thought, feeling, and tact of the experienced workman—which even in its infancy displayed a new principle of regulation, ready in its mature state to fulfill the functions of a finished spinner. Thus the Iron Man, as the operatives fitly call it, sprung out of the hands of our modern Prometheus at the bidding of Minerva—a creation destined to restore order among the industrious classes, and to confirm to Great Britain the empire of art. The news of this Herculian prodigy spread dismay through the Union, and even long before it left its cradle, so to speak, it strangled the Hydra of misrule."²

Ure proves further that the invention of the machine, with which four and five colours are printed at once, was a result of the disturbances among the calico printers; that the refractoriness of the yarn-dressers in the power-loom weaving mills gave rise to a new and perfected machine for warp-dressing, and mentions several other such cases. A few pages earlier the same Ure gives

¹ Dr. Ure, "Philosophy of Manufacture," p. 367.
² Ibid., p. 368, et seq.
himself great deal of trouble to prove in detail that machinery is beneficial to the workers! But Ure is not the only one; in the Factory Report, Mr. Ashworth, the manufacturer, and many another, lose no opportunity to express their wrath against the Unions. These wise bourgeois, like certain governments, trace every movement which they do not understand, to the influence of ill-intentioned agitators, demagogues, traitors, spouting idiots, and ill-balanced youth. They declare that the paid agents of the Unions are interested in the agitation because they live upon it, as though the necessity for this payment were not forced upon them by the bourgeois, who will give such men no employment!

The incredible frequency of these strikes proves best of all to what extent the social war has broken out all over England. No week passes, scarcely a day, indeed, in which there is not a strike in some direction, now against a reduction, then against a refusal to raise the rate of wages, again by reason of the employment of knuckleheads or the continuance of abuses, sometimes against new machinery, or for a hundred other reasons. These strikes, at first skirmishes, sometimes result in weighty struggles; they decide nothing, it is true, but they are the strongest proof that the decisive battle between bourgeoisie and proletariat is approaching. They are the military school of the working-men in which they prepare themselves for the great struggle which cannot be avoided; they are the pronunciamentos of single branches of industry that these too have joined the labour movement. And when one examines a year's file of the *Northern Star*, the only sheet which reports all the movements of the proletariat, one finds that all the proletarians of the towns and of country manufacture have united in associations, and have protested from time to time, by means of a general strike, against the supremacy of the bourgeoisie. And as schools of war, the Unions are unexcelled. In them is developed the peculiar courage of the English. It is said on the Continent that the English, and especially the working-men, are cowardly, that they cannot carry out a revolution because, unlike the French, they do not riot at intervals, because they apparently accept the bourgeois *régime* so quietly. This is a complete mistake. The English working-men are second to none in courage; they are quite as restless as the French, but they fight differently. The French, who are by nature political, struggle against social evils with political weapons; the English, for whom politics exist only as a matter of interest, solely in the interest of bourgeois society, fight, not against the Government, but directly against the bourgeoisie; and for the time, this can be done only in a peaceful manner. Stagnation in business, and the want consequent upon it, engendered the revolt at Lyons, in 1834, in favour of the Republic; in 1842, at Manchester, a similar cause gave rise to a universal tumult for the Charter and higher wages. That courage is required for a tumult, often indeed much loftier courage, much bolder, firmer determination than for an insurrection, is self-evident. It is, in truth, no trifle for a working-man who knows want from experience, to face it with wife and children, to endure hunger and wretchedness for months together, and stand firm and unshaken through it all. What is death, what the galleys which awaited the French revolutionist, in comparison with gradual starvation, with the daily sight of a starving family, with the certainty of future revenge on the part of the bourgeoisie, all of which the English working-man chooses in preference to subjection under the yoke of the property-holding class? We shall meet later an example of this obstinate, unconquerable courage of men who surrender to force only when all resistance would be aimless and meaningless. And precisely in this quiet perseverance, in this lasting determination which undergoes a hundred tests every day, the English working-man develops that side of his character which commands most respect. People who endure so much to bend one single bourgeois will be able to break the power of the whole bourgeoisie.

But apart from that, the English working-man has proved his courage often enough. That the turnouts of 1842 had no further results came from the fact that the men were in part forced into it by the bourgeoisie, in part neither clear nor united as to its object. But aside from this, they have shown their courage often enough when the matter in question was a specific social one.
Not to mention the Welsh Insurrection of 1839, a complete battle was waged in Manchester in May, 1848, during my residence there. Paulin & Henfrey, a brick firm, had increased the size of the bricks without raising wages, and sold the bricks, of course, at a higher price. The workers, to whom higher wages were refused, struck work, and the Brickmakers’ Union declared war upon the firm. The firm, meanwhile, succeeded with great difficulty in securing hands from the neighbourhood, and among the knuckle-sticks, against whom in the beginning intimidation was used, the proprietors set twelve men to guard the yard, all ex-soldiers and policemen, armed with guns. When intimidation proved unavailing, the brick-yard, which lay scarcely a hundred paces from an infantry barracks, was stormed at ten o’clock one night by a crowd of brickmakers, who advanced in military order, the first ranks armed with guns. They forced their way in, fired upon the watchmen as soon as they saw them, stamped out the wet bricks spread out to dry, tore down the piled-up rows of those already dry, demolished everything which came in their way, pressed into a building, where they destroyed the furniture and maltreated the wife of the overseer who was living there. The watchmen, meanwhile, had placed themselves behind a hedge, whence they could fire safely and without interruption. The assailants stood before a burning brick-kiln, which threw a bright light upon them, so that every ball of their enemies struck home, while every one of their own shots missed its mark. Nevertheless, the firing lasted half-an-hour, until the ammunition was exhausted, and the object of the visit—the destruction of all the destructible objects in the yard—was attained. Then the military approached, and the brickmakers withdrew to Eccles, three miles from Manchester. A short time before reaching Eccles they held roll-call, and each man was called according to his number in the section when they separated, only to fall the more certainly into the hands of the police, who were approaching from all sides. The number of the wounded must have been very considerable, but those only could be counted who were arrested. One of these had received three bullets (in the thigh, the calf, and the shoulder), and had travelled in spite of them more than four miles on foot. These people have proved that they, too, possess revolutionary courage, and do not shun a rain of bullets. And when an unarmed multitude, without a precise aim common to them all, are held in check in a shut-off market-place, whose outlets are guarded by a couple of policemen and dragoons, as happened in 1842, this by no means proves a want of courage. On the contrary, the multitude would have stirred quite as little if the servants of public (i.e., of the bourgeois) order had not been present. Where the working-people have a specific end in view, they show courage enough; as, for instance, in the attack upon Birley’s mill, which had later to be protected by artillery.

In this connection, a word or two as to the respect for the law in England. True, the law is sacred to the bourgeois, for its own composition, enacted with his consent, and for his benefit and protection. He knows that, even if an individual law should injure him, the whole fabric protects his interests; and more than all, the sanctity of the law, the sanctity of order as established by the active will of one part of society, and the passive acceptance of the other, is the strongest support of his social position. Because the English bourgeois finds himself reproduced in his law, as he does in his God, the policeman’s truncheon which, in a certain measure, is his own club, las for him a wonderfully soothing power. But for the working-man quite otherwise! The working-man knows too well, has learned from too oft-repeated experience, that the law is a rod which the bourgeois has prepared for him; and when he is not compelled to do so, he never appeals to the law. It is ridiculous to assert that the English working-man fears the police, when every week in Manchester policemen are beaten, and last year an attempt was made to storm a station-house secured by iron doors and shutters. The power of the police in the tumult of 1842 lay, as I have already said, in the want of a clearly defined object on the part of the working-men themselves.

Since the working-men do not respect the law, but simply submit to its power when they cannot change it, it is most natural that
they should at least propose alterations in it, that they should wish to put a proletarian law in the place of the legal fabric of the bourgeoisie. This proposed law is the People's Charter, which in form is purely political, and demands a democratic basis for the House of Commons. Chartism is the compact form of their opposition to the bourgeoisie. In the Unions and turnouts opposition always remained isolated: it was single working-men or sections who fought a single bourgeois. If the fight became general, this was scarcely by the intention of the working-men; or, when it did happen intentionally, Chartist was at the bottom of it. But in Chartism it is the whole working-class which arises against the bourgeoisie, and attacks, first of all, the political power, the legislative rampart with which the bourgeoisie has surrounded itself. Chartism has proceeded from the Democratic party which arose between 1780 and 1790 with and in the proletariat, gained strength during the French Revolution, and came forth after the peace as the Radical party. It had its headquarters then in Birmingham and Manchester, and later in London; exerted the Reform Bill from the Oligarchs of the old Parliament by a union with the Liberal bourgeoisie, and has steadily consolidated itself, since then, as a more and more pronounced working-men's party in opposition to the bourgeoisie. In 1835 a committee of the General Working-men's Association of London, with William Lovett at its head, drew up the People's Charter, whose six points are as follows: (1) Universal suffrage for every man who is of age, sane and unconvicted of crime; (2) Annual Parliaments; (3) Payment of members of Parliament, to enable poor men to stand for election; (4) Voting by ballot to prevent bribery and intimidation by the bourgeoisie; (5) Equal electoral districts to secure equal representation; and (6) Abolition of the even now merely nominal property qualification of £300 in land for candidates in order to make every voter eligible. These six points, which are all limited to the reconstitution of the House of Commons, harmless as they seem, are sufficient to overthrow the whole English Constitution, Queen and Lords included. The so-called monarchical and aristocratic elements of the Constitution can maintain themselves only because the bourgeoisie has an interest in the continuance of their sham existence; and more than a sham existence neither possesses to-day. But as soon as real public opinion in its totality backs the House of Commons, as soon as the House of Commons incorporates the will, not of the bourgeoisie alone, but of the whole nation, it will absorb the whole power so completely that the last halo must fall from the head of the monarch and the aristocracy. The English working-man respects neither Lords nor Queen. The bourgeoisie, while in reality allowing them but little influence, yet offers to them personally a sham worship. The English Chartist is politically a republican, though he rarely or never mentions the word, while he sympathises with the republican parties of all countries, and calls himself in preference a democrat. But he is more than a mere republican, his democracy is not simply political.

Chartism was from the beginning in 1835 chiefly a movement among the working-men, though not yet sharply separated from the bourgeoisie. The Radicalism of the workers went hand in hand with the Radicalism of the bourgeoisie; the Charter was the shibboleth of both. They held their National Convention every year in common, seeming to be one party. The lower middle-class was just then in a very belligerent and violent state of mind in consequence of the disappointment over the Reform Bill and of the bad business years of 1837-1839, and viewed the boisterous Chartist agitation with a very favourable eye. Of the vehemence of this agitation no one in Germany has any idea. The people were called upon to arm themselves, were frequently urged to revolt; pikes were got ready, as in the French Revolution, and in 1838, one Stephens, a Methodist parson, said to the assembled working-people of Manchester:

"You have no need to fear the power of Government, the soldiers, bayonets, and cannon that are at the disposal of your oppressors; you have a weapon that is far mightier than all these, a weapon against which bayonets and cannon are powerless, and a child of ten years can wield it. You have only to take a couple of matches and a bundle of straw dipped in pitch, and I will see
what the Government and its hundreds of thousands of soldiers will do against this one weapon if it is used boldly."

As early as that year the peculiarly social character of the working-man’s Chartism manifested itself. The same Stephens said, in a meeting of 200,000 men on Kersall Moor, the Moss Side of Manchester:

"Chartism, my friends, is no political movement, where the main point is your getting the ballot. Chartism is a knife and fork question: the Charter means a good house, good food and drink, prosperity, and short working-hours."

The movements against the new Poor Law and for the Ten Hours’ Bill were already in the closest relation to Chartism. In all the meetings of that time the Tory Castler was active, and hundreds of petitions for improvements of the social condition of the workers were circulated along with the national petition for the People’s Charter adopted in Birmingham. In 1839 the agitation continued as vigorously as ever, and when it began to relax somewhat at the end of the year, Bussey, Taylor, and Frost hastened to call forth risings simultaneously in the North of England, in Yorkshire, and Wales. Frost’s plan being betrayed, he was obliged to open hostilities prematurely. Those in the North heard of the failure of his attempt in time to withdraw. Two months later, in January, 1840, several so-called spy outbreaks took place in Sheffield and Bradford, in Yorkshire, and the excitement gradually subsided. Meanwhile the bourgeoisie turned its attention to more practical projects, more profitable for itself, namely the Corn Laws. The Anti-Corn Law Association was formed in Manchester, and the consequence was a relaxation of the tie between the Radical bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The working-men soon perceived that for them the abolition of the Corn Laws could be of little use, while very advantageous to the bourgeoisie; and they could therefore not be won for the project.

The crisis of 1842 came on. Agitation was once more as vigorous as in 1839. But this time the rich manufacturing bourgeoisie, which was suffering severely under this particular crisis, took part in it. The Anti-Corn Law League, as it was now called, assumed a decidedly revolutionary tone. Its journals and agitators used undisguisedly revolutionary language, one very good reason for which was the fact that the Conservative party had been in power since 1841. As the Chartists had previously done, these bourgeois leaders called upon the people to rebel; and the working-men who had most to suffer from the crisis were not inactive, as the year’s national petition for the charter with its three and a half million signatures proves. In short, if the two Radical parties had been somewhat estranged, they allied themselves once more. At a meeting of Liberals and Chartists held in Manchester, February 15th, 1842, a petition urging the repeal of the Corn Laws and the adoption of the Charter was drawn up. The next day it was adopted by both parties. The spring and summer passed amidst violent agitation and increasing distress. The bourgeoisie was determined to carry the repeal of the Corn Laws with the help of the crisis, the want which it entailed, and the general excitement. At this time, the Conservatives being in power, the Liberal bourgeoisie half abandoned their law-abiding habits; they wished to bring about a revolution with the help of the workers. The working-men were to take the chestnuts from the fire to save the bourgeoisie from burning their own fingers. The old idea of a "holy month," a general strike, broached in 1839 by the Chartists, was revived. This time, however, it was not the working-men who wished to quit work, but the manufacturers who wished to close their mills and send the operatives into the country parishes upon the property of the aristocracy, thus forcing the Tory Parliament and the Tory Ministry to repeal the Corn Laws. A revolt would naturally have followed, but the bourgeoisie stood safely in the background and could await the result without compromising itself if the worst came to the worst. At the end of July business began to improve; it was high time. In order not to lose the opportunity, three firms in Staleybridge reduced wages in spite of
the improvement. Whether they did so of their own motion or in agreement with other manufacturers, especially those of the League, I do not know. Two withdrew after a time, but the third, William Bailey & Brothers, stood firm, and told the objecting operatives that "if this did not please them, they had better go and play a bit." This contemptuous answer the hands received with cheers. They left the mill, paraded through the town, and called upon all their fellows to quit work. In a few hours every mill stood idle, and the operatives marched to Mottram Moor to hold a meeting. This was on August 5th. August 8th they proceeded to Ashton and Hyde five thousand strong, closed all the mills and coal-pits, and held meetings, in which, however, the question discussed was not, as the bourgeoisie had hoped, the repeal of the Corn Laws, but, "a fair day's wages for a fair day's work." August 9th they proceeded to Manchester, unresisted by the authorities (all Liberals), and closed the mills; on the 11th they were in Stockport, where they met with the first resistance as they were storming the workhouse, the favourite child of the bourgeoisie. On the same day there was a general strike and disturbance in Bolton, to which the authorities here, too, made no resistance. Soon the uprising spread throughout the whole manufacturing district, and all employments, except harvesting and the production of food, came to a standstill. But the rebellious operatives were quiet. They were driven into this revolt without wishing it. The manufacturers, with the single exception of the Tory Buxley, in Manchester, had, contrary to their custom, not opposed it. The thing had begun without the working-men's having any distinct end in view, for which reason they were all united in the determination not to be shot at for the benefit of the Corn Law repealing bourgeoisie. For the rest, some wanted to carry the Charter, others who thought this premature wished merely to secure the wages rate of 1840. On this point the whole insurrection was wrecked. If it had been from the beginning an intentional, determined working-men's insurrection, it would surely have carried its point; but these crowds who had been driven into the streets by their masters, against their own will, and with no definite purpose, could do nothing. Meanwhile the bourgeoisie, which had not moved a finger to carry the alliance of February 15th into effect, soon perceived that the working-men did not propose to become its tools, and that the illogical manner in which it had abandoned its law-abiding standpoint threatened danger. It therefore resumed its law-abiding attitude, and placed itself upon the side of Government as against the working-men.

It swore in trusty retainers as special constables (the German merchants in Manchester took part in this ceremony, and marched in an entirely superfluous manner through the city with their cigars in their mouths and thick truncheons in their hands). It gave the command to fire upon the crowd in Preston, so that the unintentional revolt of the people stood all at once face to face, not only with the whole military power of the Government, but with the whole property-holding class as well. The working-men, who had no special aim, separated gradually, and the insurrection came to an end without evil results. Later, the bourgeoisie was guilty of one shameful act after another, tried to whitewash itself by expressing a horror of popular violence by no means consistent with its own revolutionary language of the spring; laid the blame of insurrection upon Chartist instigators, whereas it had itself done more than all of them together to bring about the uprising; and resumed its old attitude of sanctifying the name of the law with a shamelessness perfectly unequalled. The Chartists, who were all but innocent of bringing about this uprising, who simply did what the bourgeoisie meant to do when they made the most of their opportunity, were prosecuted and convicted, while the bourgeoisie escaped without loss, and had, besides, sold off its old stock of goods with advantage during the pause in work.

The fruit of the uprising was the decisive separation of the proletariat from the bourgeoisie. The Chartists had not hitherto concealed their determination to carry the Charter at all costs, even that of a revolution; the bourgeoisie, which now perceived, all at once, the danger with which any violent change threatened...
its position, refused to hear anything further of physical force, and
proposed to attain its end by moral force, as though this were any-
thing else than the direct or indirect threat of physical force.
This was one point of dissension, though even this was removed
later by the assertion of the Chartists (who are at least as worthy
of being believed as the bourgeois) that they, too, refrained from
appealing to physical force. The second point of dissension and
the main one, which brought Chartism to light in its purity, was
the repeal of the Corn Laws. In this the bourgeoisie was directly
interested, the proletariat not. The Chartists therefore divided
into two parties whose political programmes agreed literally, but
which were nevertheless thoroughly different and incapable of union.
At the Birmingham National Convention, in January, 1843,
Sturge, the representative of the Radical bourgeoisie, proposed
that the name of the Charter be omitted from the rules of the
Chartist Association, nominally because this name had become
connected with recollections of violence during the insurrection,
a connection, by the way, which had existed for years, and against
which Mr. Sturge had hitherto advanced no objection. The work-
ing-men refused to drop the name, and when Mr. Sturge was
outrived, that worthy Quaker suddenly became loyal, betook himself
out of the hall, and founded a "Complete Suffrage Association"
within the Radical bourgeoisie. So repugnant had these recollec-
tions become to the Jacobinical bourgeoisie, that he altered even the
name Universal Suffrage into the ridiculous title, Complete Suffrage.
The working-men laughed at him and quietly went their way.

From this moment Chartism was purely a working-man's cause
firmed from all bourgeois elements. The "Complete" journals,
the Weekly Dispatch, Weekly Chronicle, Examiner, etc., fell gradu-
ally into the sleepy tone of the other Liberal sheets, espoused the
cause of Free Trade, attacked the Ten Hours' Bill and all exclusively
working-men's demands, and let their Radicalism as a whole fall
rather into the background. The Radical bourgeoisie joined
hands with the Liberals against the working-men in every collision,
and in general made the Corn Law question, which for the English
is the Free Trade question, their main business. They thereby

fell under the dominion of the Liberal bourgeoisie, and now play a
most pitiful rôle.

The Chartist working-men, on the contrary, espoused with
redoubled zeal all the struggles of the proletariat against the
bourgeoisie. Free competition has caused the workers suffering
enough to be hated by them; its apostles, the bourgeoisie, are
their declared enemies. The working-man has only disadvan-
tages to await from the complete freedom of competition. The
demands hitherto made by him, the Ten Hours' Bill, protection of
the workers against the capitalist, good wages, a guaranteed
position, repeal of the new Poor Law, all of the things which
belong to Chartism quite as essentially as the "Six Points," are
directly opposed to free competition and Free Trade. No wonder,
then, that the working-men will not hear of Free Trade and the
repeal of the Corn Laws (a fact incomprehensible to the whole
English bourgeoisie), and while at least wholly indifferent to the
Corn Law question, are most deeply embittered against its advo-
cates. This question is precisely the point at which the proletariat
separates from the bourgeoisie, Chartism from Radicalism; and the
bourgeoisie understanding cannot comprehend this, because it can-
ot comprehend the proletariat.

Therein lies the difference between Chartist democracy and all
previous political bourgeois democracy. Chartism is of an essen-
tially social nature, a class movement. The "Six Points" which
for the Radical bourgeoisie are the beginning and end of the matter,
which are meant, at the utmost, to call forth certain further re-
forms of the Constitution, are for the proletarian a mere means to
further ends. "Political power our means, social happiness our
end," is now the clearly formulated war-cry of the Chartists.
The "knife and fork question" of the preacher Stephens was a
truth for a part of the Chartists only, in 1838; it is a truth for
all of them in 1845. There is no longer a mere politician among
the Chartists, and even though their Socialism is very little de-
veloped, though their chief remedy for poverty has hitherto
consisted in the land-allocmnet system, which was superseded.3

3 See Introduction.
by the introduction of manufacture, though their chief practical
propositions are apparently of a reactionary nature, yet these very
measures involve the alternative that they must either succumb
to the power of competition once more and restore the old state
of things, or they must themselves entirely overcome competition
and abolish it. On the other hand, the present indefinite state of
Chartism, the separation from the purely political party, involves
that precisely the characteristic feature, its social aspect, will have
to be further developed. The approach to Socialism cannot fail,
especially when the next crisis directs the working-men by force
of sheer want to social instead of political remedies. And a crisis
must follow the present active state of industry and commerce in
1847 at the latest, and probably in 1846; one, too, which will far
exceed in extent and violence all former crises. The working-men
will carry their Charter, naturally; but meanwhile they will learn
to see clearly with regard to many points which they can make
by means of it and of which they now know very little.

Meanwhile the socialist agitation also goes forward. English
Socialism comes under our consideration so far only as it affects
the working-class. The English Socialists demand the gradual
introduction of possession in common in home colonies embracing
two to three thousand persons who shall carry on both agriculture
and manufacture and enjoy equal rights and equal education.
They demand greater facility of obtaining divorce, the establish-
ment of a rational government, with complete freedom of conscience
and the abolition of punishment, the same to be replaced by a
rational treatment of the offender. These are their practical
measures, their theoretical principles do not concern us here.
English Socialism arose with Owen, a manufacturer, and proceeds
therefore with great consideration toward the bourgeoisie and
great injustice toward the proletariat in its methods, although it
culminates in demanding the abolition of the class antagonism be-
tween bourgeoisie and proletariat.

The Socialists are thoroughly tame and peaceable, accept our
existing order, but as it is, so far as to reject all other methods but
that of winning public opinion. Yet they are so dogmatic that
success by this method is for them, and for their principles as at
present formulated, utterly hopeless. While bemoaning the de-
morisation of the lower classes, they are blind to the element of
progress in this dissolution of the old social order, and refuse to
acknowledge that the corruption wrought by private interests and
hypocrisy in the property-holding class is much greater. They
acknowledge no historic development, and wish to place the nation
in a state of Communism at once, overnight, not by the unavoid-
able march of its political development up to the point at which
this transition becomes both possible and necessary. They under-
stand, it is true, why the working-man is resentful against the
bourgeois, but regard as unfruitful this class hatred, which is, after
all, the only moral incentive by which the worker can be brought
nearer the goal. They preach instead, a philanthropy and universal
love far more unfruitful for the present state of England. They
acknowledge only a psychological development, a development of
man in the abstract, out of all relation to the Past, whereas the
whole world rests upon that Past, the individual man included.
Hence they are too abstract, too metaphysical, and accomplish
little. They are recruited in part from the working-class, of
which they have enlisted but a very small fraction representing,
however, its most educated and solid elements. In its present
form, Socialism can never become the common creed of the work-
ing-class; it must condense to return for a moment to the
Chartist standpoint. But the true proletarian Socialism having
passed through Chartism, purified of its bourgeoisie elements,
assuming the form which it has already reached in the minds of
many Socialists and Chartist leaders (who are nearly all Socialists),
must, within a short time, play a weighty part in the history of
the development of the English people. English Socialism, the
basis of which is much more ample than that of the French, is
behind it in theoretical development, will have to recede for a
moment to the French standpoint in order to proceed beyond it
later. Meanwhile the French, too, will develop further. English
Socialism affords the most pronounced expression of the prevail-
ing absence of religion among the working-men, an expression so
pronounced indeed that the mass of the working-men, being unconsciously and merely practically irreligious, often draw back before it. But here, too, necessity will force the working-men to abandon the remnants of a belief which, as they will more and more clearly perceive, serves only to make them weak and resigned to their fate, obedient and faithful to the vampire property-holding class.

Hence it is evident that the working-men's movement is divided into two sections, the Chartists and the Socialists. The Chartists are theoretically the more backward, the less developed, but they are genuine proletarians all over, the representatives of their class. The Socialists are more far-seeing, propose practical remedies against distress, but, proceeding originally from the bourgeoisie, are for this reason unable to amalgamate completely with the working-class. The union of Socialism with Chartism, the reproduction of French Communism in an English manner, will be the next step, and has already begun. Then only, when this has been achieved, will the working-class be the true intellectual leader of England. Meanwhile, political and social development will proceed, and will foster this new party, this new departure of Chartistism.

These different sections of working-men, often united, often separated, Trades Unionists, Chartists, and Socialists, have founded on their own hook numbers of schools and reading-rooms for the advancement of education. Every Socialist, and almost every Chartist institution, has such a place, and so too have many trades. Here the children receive a purely proletarian education, free from all the influences of the bourgeoisie; and, in the reading-rooms, proletarian journals and books alone, or almost alone, are to be found. These arrangements are very dangerous for the bourgeoisie, which has succeeded in withdrawing several such institutes, "Mechanics' Institutes," from proletarian influences, and making them organs for the dissemination of the sciences useful to the bourgeoisie. Here the natural sciences are now taught, which may draw the working-men away from the opposition to the bourgeoisie, and perhaps in their hands the means of making inventions which bring in money for the bourgeoisie; while for the working-man the acquaintance with the natural sciences is utterly useless now when it too often happens that he never gets the slightest glimpse of Nature in his large town with his long working-hours. Here Political Economy is preached, whose idol is free competition, and whose sum and substance for the working-man is this, that he cannot do anything more rational than resign himself to starvation. Here all education is tame, flabby, subservient to the ruling politics and religion, so that for the working-man it is merely a constant sermon upon quiet obedience, passivity, and resignation to his fate.

The mass of working-men naturally have nothing to do with these institutes, and betake themselves to the proletarian reading-rooms and to the discussion of matters which directly concern their own interests, whereupon the self-sufficient bourgeoisie says its Dixi et Sultavi, and turns with contempt from a class which "prefers the angry ranting of ill-meaning demagogues to the advantages of solid education." That, however, the working-men appreciate solid education when they can get it unmixed with the interested coat of the bourgeoisie, the frequent lectures upon scientific, aesthetic, and economic subjects prove which are delivered especially in the Socialist institutes, and very well attended. I have often heard working-men, whose fustian jackets scarcely held together, speak upon geological, astronomical, and other subjects, with more knowledge than most "cultivated" bourgeois in Germany possess. And in how great a measure the English proletariat has succeeded in attaining independent education is shown especially by the fact that the epoch-making products of modern philosophical, political, and poetical literature are read by working-men almost exclusively. The bourgeoisie, enslaved by social conditions and the prejudices involved in them, trembles, blesses, and crosses himself before everything which really paves the way for progress; the proletariat has open eyes for it, and studies it with pleasure and success. In this respect the Socialists, especially, have done wonders for the education of the proletariat. They have translated the French materialists,
Condition of the Working-Class.

THE MINING PROLETARIAT.

The production of raw materials and fuel for a manufacture so colossal as that of England requires a considerable number of workers. But of all the materials needed for its industries (except wool, which belongs to the agricultural districts), England produces only the minerals: the metals and the coal. While Cornwall possesses rich copper, tin, zinc, and lead mines, Staffordshire, Wales, and other districts yield great quantities of iron, and almost the whole North and West of England, central Scotland, and certain districts of Ireland, produce a superabundance of coal. ¹

In the Cornish mines about 19,000 men, and 11,000 women and children are employed, in part above and in part below ground. Within the mines below ground, men and boys above twelve years old are employed almost exclusively. The condition

¹ According to the census of 1841, the number of working-men employed in mines in Great Britain, without Ireland, was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Miners</th>
<th>Men over 20 Years</th>
<th>Men under 20 Years</th>
<th>Women over 20 Years</th>
<th>Women under 20 Years</th>
<th>Together</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coal mines</td>
<td>48,428</td>
<td>22,475</td>
<td>1,469</td>
<td>1,468</td>
<td>112,438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copper mines</td>
<td>8,865</td>
<td>3,258</td>
<td>1,209</td>
<td>1,209</td>
<td>15,473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>9,427</td>
<td>1,932</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11,819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron</td>
<td>7,793</td>
<td>2,672</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10,918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tin</td>
<td>4,602</td>
<td>1,469</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6,610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various, mineral not specified</td>
<td>24,182</td>
<td>6,591</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>31,616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>157,308</td>
<td>48,454</td>
<td>3,102</td>
<td>3,331</td>
<td>168,725</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the coal and iron mines are usually worked by the same people, a part of the miners attributed to the coal mines, and a very considerable part of those mentioned under the last heading, are to be attributed to the iron mines.
of these workers seems, according to the Children's Employment Commission's Reports, to be comparatively endurable, materially, and the English often enough boast of their strong, bold miners, who follow the veins of mineral below the bottom of the very sea. But in the matter of the health of these workers, this same Children's Employment Commission's Report judges differently. It shows in Dr. Barham's intelligent report how the inhalation of an atmosphere containing little oxygen, and mixed with dust and the smoke of blasting powder, such as prevails in the mines, seriously affects the lungs, disturbs the action of the heart, and diminishes the activity of the digestive organs; that wearing toil, and especially the climbing up and down of ladders, upon which even vigorous young men have to spend in some mines more than an hour a day, and which precedes and follows daily work, contributes greatly to the development of these evils, so that men who begin this work in early youth are far from reaching the stature of women who work above ground; that many die young of galloping consumption, and most miners at middle age of slow consumption; that they age prematurely and become unfit for work between the thirty-fifth and forty-fifth years; that many are attacked by acute inflammations of the respiratory organs when exposed to the sudden change from the warm air of the shaft (after climbing the ladder in profuse perspiration), to the cold wind above ground; and that those acute inflammations are very frequently fatal. Work above ground, breaking and sorting the ore, is done by girls and children, and is described as very wholesome, being done in the open air.

In the North of England, on the borders of Northumberland and Durham, are the extensive lead mines of Alston Moor. The reports from this district agree almost wholly with those from Cornwall. Here, too, there are complaints of want of oxygen, excessive dust, powder smoke, carbonic acid gas, and sulphur, in the atmosphere of the workings. In consequence, the miners here, as in Cornwall, are small of stature, and nearly all suffer

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1 Also found in the Children's Employment Commission's Report: Commissioner Mitchell's Report.
could not endure it a moment. What must it be through a hot summer night, with fifty-six occupants! And this is not the stench of an American slave ship, it is the dwelling of free-born Britons!

Let us turn now to the most important branch of British mining, the iron and coal mines, which the Children's Employment Commission treats in common, and with all the detail which the importance of the subject demands. Nearly the whole of the first part of this report is devoted to the condition of the workers employed in these mines. After the detailed description which I have furnished of the state of the industrial workers, I shall, however, be able to be as brief in dealing with this subject as the scope of the present work requires.

In the coal and iron mines which are worked in pretty much the same way, children of four, five, and seven years are employed. They are set to transporting the ore or coal loosened by the miner from its place to the horse-path or the main shaft, and to opening and shutting the doors (which separate the divisions of the mine and regulate its ventilation) for the passage of workers and material. For watching the doors the smallest children are usually employed, who thus pass twelve hours daily, in the dark, alone, sitting usually in damp passages without even having work enough to save them from the stupefying, brutalising tedium of doing nothing. The transport of coal and iron-stone, on the other hand, is very hard labour, the stuff being shovelled in large tubs, without wheels, over the uneven floor of the mine; often over moist clay, or through water, and frequently up steep inclines and through paths so low-roofed that the workers are forced to creep on hands and knees. For this more wearing labour, therefore, older children and half-grown girls are employed. One man or two boys per tub are employed, according to circumstances; and, if two boys, one pushes and the other pulls. The loosening of the ore or coal, which is done by men or strong youths of sixteen years or more, is also very weary work. The usual working-day is eleven to twelve hours, often longer; in Scotland it reaches fourteen hours, and double time is frequent, when all the employees are at work below ground twenty-four, and even thirty-six hours at a stretch. Set times for meals are almost unknown, so that these people eat when hunger and time permit.

The standard of living of the miners is in general described as fairly good and their wages high in comparison with those of the agricultural labourers surrounding them (who, however, live at starvation rates), except in certain parts of Scotland and in the Irish mines, where great misery prevails. We shall have occasion to return later to this statement, which, by the way, is merely relative, implying comparison to the poorest class in all England. Meanwhile, we shall consider the evils which arise from the present method of mining, and the reader may judge whether any pay in money can indemnify the miner for such suffering.

The children and young people who are employed in transporting coal and iron-stone all complain of being over-tired. Even in the most recklessly conducted industrial establishments there is no such universal and exaggerated overwork. The whole report proves this, with a number of examples on every page. It is constantly happening that children throw themselves down on the stone hearth or the floor as soon as they reach home, fall asleep at once without being able to take a bite of food, and have to be washed and put to bed while asleep; it even happens that they lie down on the way home, and are found by their parents late at night asleep on the road. It seems to be a universal practice among these children to spend Sunday in bed to recover in some degree from the over-exertion of the week. Church and school are visited by but few, and even of these the teachers complain of their great sleepiness and the want of all eagerness to learn. The same thing is true of the elder girls and women. They are overworked in the most brutal manner. This weariness, which is almost always carried to a most painful pitch, cannot fail to affect the constitution. The first result of such over-exertion is the diversion of vitality to the one-sided development of the muscles, so that those especially of the arms, legs, and back, of the shoulders and chest, which are chiefly called into activity in pushing and pulling, attain an uncommonly vigorous
development, while all the rest of the body suffers and is atrophied from want of nourishment. More than all else the stature suffers, being stunted and retarded; nearly all miners are short, except those of Leicestershire and Warwickshire, who work under exceptionally favourable conditions. Further, among boys as well as girls, puberty is retarded, among the former often until the eighteenth year; indeed, a nineteen years old boy appeared before Commissioner Symonds, showing no evidence beyond that of the teeth, that he was more than eleven or twelve years old. This prolongation of the period of childhood is at bottom nothing more than a sign of checked development, which does not fail to bear fruit in later years. Distortions of the legs, knees bent inwards and feet bent outwards, deformities of the spinal column and other malformations, appear the more readily in constitutions thus weakened, in consequence of the almost universally constrained position during work; and they are so frequent that in Yorkshire and Lancashire, as in Northumberland and Durham, the assertion is made by many witnesses, not only by physicians, that a miner may be recognised by his shape among a hundred other persons. The women seem to suffer especially from this work, and are seldom, if ever, as straight as other women. There is testimony here, too, to the fact that deformities of the pelvis and consequent difficult, even fatal, childbearing arise from the work of women in the mines. But apart from these local deformities, the coal miners suffer from a number of special afections easily explained by the nature of the work. Diseases of the digestive organs are first in order; want of appetite, pains in the stomach, nausea, and vomiting, are most frequent, with violent thirst, which can be quenched only with the dirty, lukewarm water of the mine; the digestion is check'd and all the other afections are thus invited. Diseases of the heart, especially hypertrophy, inflammation of the heart and pericardium, contraction of the auriculo-ventricular communications and the entrance of the corte are also mentioned repeatedly as diseases of the miners, and are readily explained by overwork; and the same is true of the almost universal rupture which is a direct consequence of protracted over-exertion. In part from the same cause and in part from the bad, dust-filled atmosphere mixed with carbonic acid and hydrocyanic gas, which might so readily be avoided, there arise numerous painful and dangerous afections of the lungs, especially asthma, which in some districts appears in the fortieth, in others in the thirtieth year in most of the miners, and makes them unfit for work in a short time. Among those employed in wet workings the oppression in the chest naturally appears much earlier; in some districts of Scotland between the twentieth and thirtieth years, during which time the affected lungs are especially susceptible to inflammations and diseases of a feverish nature. The peculiar disease of workers of this sort is "black spittle," which arises from the saturation of the whole lung with coal particles, and manifests itself in general debility, headache, oppression of the chest, and thick, black mucous expectoration. In some districts this disease appears in a mild form; in others, on the contrary, it is wholly incurable, especially in Scotland. Here, besides the symptoms just mentioned, which appear in an intensified form, short, wheezing, breathing, rapid pulse (exceeding 100 per minute), and abrupt coughing, with increasing leanness and debility, speedily make the patient unfit for work. Every case of this disease ends fatally. Dr. Mackellar, in Fife, East Lothian, testifies that in all the coal mines which are properly ventilated this disease is unknown, while it frequently happens that miners who go from well to ill-ventilated mines are seized by it. The profit-grind of mine owners which prevents the use of ventilators is therefore responsible for the fact that this working-men's disease exists at all. Rheumatism, too, is, with the exception of the Warwick and Leicestershire workers, a universal disease of the coal miners, and arises especially from the frequently damp working-places. The consequence of all these diseases is that, in all districts without exception, the coal miners age early and become unfit for work soon after the fortieth year, though this is different in different places. A coal miner who can follow his calling after the 45th or 50th year is a very great rarity indeed. It is universally recognized that such workers enter upon old age at forty. This applies to those who loosen the coal from
the bed; the loaders, who have constantly to lift heavy blocks of coal into the tubs, age with the twenty-eighth or thirtieth year, so that it is proverbial in the coal mining districts that the loaders are old before they are young. That this premature old age is followed by the early death of the colliers is a matter of course, and a man who reaches sixty is a great exception among them. Even in South Staffordshire, where the mines are comparatively wholesome, few men reach their fifty-first year. Along with this early superannuation of the workers we naturally find, just as in the case of the mills, frequent lack of employment of the elder men, who are often supported by very young children. If we sum up briefly the results of the work in coal mines, we find, as Dr. Southwood Smith, one of the commissioners, does, that through prolonged childhood on the one hand and premature age on the other, that period of life in which the human being is in full possession of his powers, the period of manhood, is greatly shortened, while the length of life in general is below the average. This, too, on the debit side of the bourgeoisie's reckoning!

All this deals only with the average of the English coal mines. But there are many in which the state of things is much worse, those, namely, in which thin seams of coal are worked. The coal would be too expensive if a part of the adjacent sand and clay were removed; so the mine owners permit only the seams to be worked; whereby the passages which elsewhere are four or five feet high and more are here kept so low that to stand upright in them is not to be thought of. The working-man lies on his side and loosens the coal with his pick; resting upon his elbow as a pivot, whence follow inflammations of the joint, and in cases where he is forced to kneel, of the knee also. The women and children who have to transport the coal crawl upon their hands and knees, fastened to the tub by a harness and chain (which frequently passes between the legs), while a man behind pushes with hands and head. The pushing with the head engenders local irritations, painful swellings, and ulcers. In many cases, too, the shafts are wet, so that these workers have to crawl through dirty or salt water several inches deep, being thus exposed to a special irritation of the skin.

It can be readily imagined how greatly the diseases already peculiar to the miners are fostered by this especially frightful, slavish toil.

But these are not all the evils which descend upon the head of the coal miner. In the whole British Empire there is no occupation in which a man may meet his end in so many diverse ways as in this one. The coal mine is the scene of a multitude of the most terrifying calamities, and these come directly from the selfishness of the bourgeoisie. The hydrocarbon gas which develops so freely in these mines, forms, when combined with atmospheric air, an explosive which takes fire upon coming into contact with a flame, and kills every one within its reach. Such explosions take place, in one mine or another, nearly every day; on September 28th, 1844, one killed 96 men in Harwell Colliery, Durham. The carbonic acid gas, which also develops in great quantities, accumulates in the deeper parts of the mine, frequently reaching the height of a man, and suffocates every one who gets into it. The doors which separate the sections of the mines are meant to prevent the propagation of explosions and the movement of the gases; but since they are entrusted to small children, who often fall asleep or neglect them, this means of prevention is illusory. A proper ventilation of the mines by means of fresh air-shafts could almost entirely remove the injurious effects of both these gases. But for this purpose the bourgeoisie has no money to spare, preferring to command the working-men to use the Davy lamp, which is wholly useless because of its dull light, and is, therefore, usually replaced by a candle. If an explosion occurs, the recklessness of the miner is blamed, though the bourgeoisie might have made the explosion well-nigh impossible by supplying good ventilation. Further, every few days the roof of a working falls in, and buries or mangles the workers employed in it. It is the interest of the bourgeoisie to have the seams worked out as completely as possible, and hence the accidents of this sort. Then, too, the ropes by which the men descend into the mines are often rotten, and break, so that the unfortunate fall, and are crushed. All these accidents, and I have no room for special cases, carry off
yearly, according to the *Mining Journal*, some fourteen hundred human beings. The *Manchester Guardian* reports at least two or three accidents every week for Lancashire alone. In nearly all mining districts the people composing the coroner's juries are, in almost all cases, dependent upon the mine owners, and where this is not the case, immemorial custom insures that the verdict shall be: "Accidental Death." Besides, the jury takes very little interest in the state of the mine, because it does not understand anything about the matter. But the Children's Employment Commission does not hesitate to make the mine owners directly responsible for the greater number of these cases.

As to the education and morals of the mining population, they are, according to the Children's Employment Commission, pretty good in Cornwall, and excellent in Ashtead Moor; in the coal districts, in general, they are, on the contrary, reported as on an excessively low plane. The workers live in the country in neglected regions, and if they do their weary work, no human being outside the police force troubles himself about them. Hence, and from the tender age at which children are put to work, it follows that their mental education is wholly neglected. The day schools are not within their reach, the evening and Sunday schools mere sham, the teachers worthless. Hence, few can read and still fewer write. The only point upon which their eyes are as yet open is the fact that their wages are far too low for their hateful and dangerous work. To church they go seldom or never; all the clergy complain of their irreligion as beyond comparison. As a matter of fact, their ignorance of religious and of secular things, alike, is such that the ignorance of the factory operatives, shown in numerous examples in the foregoing pages, is trifling in comparison with it. The categories of religion are known to them only from the terms of their oaths. Their morality is destroyed by their work itself. That the overwork of all miners must engender drunkenness is self-evident. As to their sexual relations, men, women, and children work in the mines, in many cases, wholly naked, and in most cases, nearly so, by reason of the prevailing heat, and the consequences in the dark, lonely mines may be imagined. The number of illegitimate children is here disproportionately large, and indicates what goes on among the half-savage population below ground; but proves too, that the illegimate intercourses of the sexes has not here, as in the great cities, sunk to the level of prostitution. The labour of women entails the same consequences as in the factories, dissolves the family, and makes the mother totally incapable of household work.

When the Children's Employment Commission's Report was laid before Parliament, Lord Ashley hastened to bring in a bill wholly forbidding the work of women in the mines, and greatly limiting that of children. The bill was adopted, but has remained a dead letter in most districts, because no mine inspectors were appointed to watch over its being carried into effect. The evasion of the law is very easy in the country districts in which the mines are situated; and no one need be surprised that the Miners' Union laid before the Home Secretary an official notice, last year, that in the Duke of Hamilton's coal mines in Scotland, more than sixty women were at work; or that the *Manchester Guardian* reported that a girl perished in an explosion in a mine near Wigan, and no one troubled himself further about the fact that an infringement of the law was thus revealed. In single cases the employment of women may have been discontinued, but in general the old state of things remains as before.

These are, however, not all the afflictions known to the coal miners. The bourgeoisie, not content with ruining the health of these people, keeping them in danger of sudden loss of life, robbing them of all opportunity for education, plundering them in other directions in the most shameless manner. The truck system is here the rule, not the exception, and is carried on in the most direct and undisguised manner. The cottage system, likewise, is universal, and here almost a necessity; but it is used here, too, for the better plundering of the workers. To these means of oppression must be added all sorts of direct cheating. While coal is sold by weight, the worker's wages are reckoned chiefly by measure; and when his tub is not perfectly full he receives no pay whatever, while he gets not a farthing for over-measure. If
there is more than a specified quantity of dust in the tub, a
matter which depends much less upon the miner than upon the
nature of the seam, he not only loses his whole wage but is fined
besides. The fine system in general is so highly perfected in the
coal mines, that a poor devil who has worked the whole week and
comes for his wages, sometimes learns from the overseer, who fines
at discretion and without summoning the workers, that he not
only has no wages but must pay so and so much in fines extra!
The overseer has, in general, absolute power over wages; he notes
the work done, and can please himself as to what he pays the
worker, who is forced to take his word. In some mines, where
the pay is according to weight, false decimal scales are used,
whose weights are not subject to the inspection of the authorities;
in one coal mine there was actually a regulation that any work-
man who intended to complain of the falseness of the scales must
give notice to the overseer three weeks in advance! In many dis-
tricts, especially in the North of England, it is customary to en-
geage the workers by the year; they pledge themselves to work
for no other employer during that time, but the mine owner by
no means pledges himself to give them work, so that they are
often without it for months together, and if they seek elsewhere,
they are sent to the treadmill for six weeks for breach of contract.
In other contracts, work to the amount of 26s. every 14 days, is
promised the miners, but not furnished; in others still, the em-
ployers advance the miners small sums to be worked out after-
wards, thus binding the debtors to themselves. In the North,
the custom is general of keeping the payment of wages one week
behindhand, chainring the miners in this way to their work. And
to complete the slavery of these enthralled workers, nearly all the
Justices of the Peace in the coal districts are mine owners them-
selves, or relatives or friends of mine owners, and possess almost
unlimited power in these poor, uncivilised regions where there are
few newspapers, these few in the service of the ruling class, and
but little other agitation. It is almost beyond conception how
these poor coal miners have been plundered and tyrannised over
by Justices of the Peace acting as judges in their own cause.

So it went on for a long time. The workers did not know any
better than that they were there for the purpose of being swindled
out of their very lives. But gradually, even among them, and
especially in the factory districts, where contact with the more
intelligent operatives could not fail of its effect, there arose
a spirit of opposition to the shameless oppression of the "coal kings."
The men began to form Unions and strike from time to time. In
civilized districts they joined the Chartists body and soul. The
great coal district of the North of England, shut off from all in-
dustrial intercourse, remained backward until, after many efforts,
partly of the Chartists and partly of the more intelligent miners
themselves, a general spirit of opposition arose in 1843. Such
a movement seized the workers of Northumberland and Durham
that they placed themselves at the forefront of a general Union of
coal miners throughout the kingdom, and appointed W. P. Roberts,
a Chartist solicitor, of Bristol, their "Attorney General," he having
distinguished himself in earlier Chartist trials. The Union soon
spread over a great majority of the districts; agents were ap-
pointed in all directions, who held meetings everywhere and
secured new members; at the first conference of delegates, in
Manchester, in 1844, there were 60,000 members represented, and
at Glasgow, six months later, at the second conference, 100,000.
Here all the affairs of the coal miners were discussed and deci-
dions as to the greater strikes arrived at. Several journals were
founded, especially the Miners Advocate, at Newcastle-upon-Tyne,
for defending the rights of the miners. On March 31st, 1844, the
contracts of all the miners of Northumberland and Durham ex-
pired. Roberts was empowered to draw up a new agreement, in
which the men demanded: (1) Payment by weight instead of
measure; (2) Determination of weight by means of ordinary
scales subject to the public inspectors; (3) Half-yearly renewal
of contracts; (4) Abolition of the fines system and payment
according to work actually done; (5) The employers to guarantee
to miners in their exclusive service at least four days' work per
week, or wages for the same. This agreement was submitted to
the "coal kings," and a deputation appointed to negotiate with
them; they answered, however, that for them the Union did not exist, that they had to deal with single workmen only, and should never recognise the Union. They also submitted an agreement of their own which ignored all the foregoing points, and was, naturally, refused by the miners. War was thus declared. On March 31st, 1844, 40,000 miners laid down their picks, and every mine in the county stood empty. The funds of the Union were so considerable that for several months a weekly contribution of 2s. 6d. could be assured to each family. While the miners were thus putting the patience of their masters to the test, Roberts organised with incomparable perseverance both strike and agitation, arranged for the holding of meetings, traversed England from one end to the other, preached peaceful and legal agitation, and carried on a crusade against the despotic Justices of the Peace and truck masters, such as had never been known in England. This he had begun at the beginning of the year. Wherever a miner had been condemned by a Justice of the Peace, he obtained a habeas corpus from the Court of Queen's bench, brought his client to London, and always secured an acquittal. Thus, January 13th, Judge Williams of Queen's bench acquitted three miners condemned by the Justices of the Peace of Bilston, South Staffordshire; the offence of these people was that they refused to work in a place which threatened to cave in, and had actually caved in before their return! On an earlier occasion, Judge Patteson had acquitted six working men; so that the name Roberts began to be a terror to the mine owners. In Preston four of his clients were in jail. In the first week of January he proceeded thither to investigate the case on the spot, but found, when he arrived, the condemned all released before the expiration of the sentence. In Manchester there were seven in jail; Roberts obtained a habeas corpus and acquittal for all from Judge Wightman. In Prescott nine coal miners were in jail, accused of creating a disturbance in St. Helen's, South Lancashire, and awaiting trial; when Roberts arrived upon the spot, they were released at once. All this took place in the first half of February. In April, Roberts released a miner from jail in Derby, four in Wakefield, and four in Leicester. So it went on for a time until these Dogberries came to have some respect for the miners. The truck system shared the same fate. One after another Roberts brought the disreputable mine owners before the courts, and compelled the reluctant Justices of the Peace to condemn them; such dread of this "lightning" "Attorney General" who seemed to be everywhere at once spread among them, that at Belper, for instance, upon Roberts' arrival, a truck firm published the following notice:

"NOTICE!"

"PENTRICH COAL MINE."

"The Messrs. Haslam think it necessary, in order to prevent all mistakes, to announce that all persons employed in their colliery will receive their wages wholly in cash, and may expend them when and as they choose to do. If they purchase goods in the shops of Messrs. Haslam they will receive them at wholesale prices, but they are not expected to make their purchases there, and work and wages will be continued as usual whether purchases are made in these shops or elsewhere."

This triumph aroused the greatest jubilation throughout the English working-class, and brought the Union a mass of new members. Meanwhile the strike in the North was proceeding. Not a hand stirred, and Newcastle, the chief coal port, was so stripped of its commodity that coal had to be brought from the Scotch coast, in spite of the proverb. At first, while the Union's funds held out, all went well, but towards summer the struggle became much more painful for the miners. The greatest want prevailed among them; they had no money, for the contributions of the workers of all branches of industry in England availed little among the vast number of strikers, who were forced to borrow from the small shopkeepers at a heavy loss. The whole press, with the single exception of the few proletarian journals, was against them; the bourgeoisie, even the few among them who might have had enough sense of justice to support the miners, learnt from the corrupt Liberal and Conservative sheets only lies about
them. A deputation of twelve miners who went to London received a sum from the proletariat there, but this, too, availed little among the mass who needed support. Yet, in spite of all this, the miners remained steadfast, and what is even more significant, were quiet and peaceable in the face of all the hostilities and provocation of the mine owners and their faithful servants. No act of revenge was carried out, nor a renegade was maltreated, nor one single theft committed. Thus the strike had continued well on towards four months, and the mine owners still had no prospect of getting the upper hand. One way was, however, still open to them. They remembered the cottage system; it occurred to them that the houses of the rebellious spirits were their property. In July, notice to quit was served the workers, and, in a week, the whole forty thousand were put out of doors. This measure was carried out with revolting cruelty. The sick, the feeble, old men and little children, even women in childbirth, were mercilessly turned from their beds and cast into the roadside ditches. One agent dragged by the hair from her bed, and into the street, a woman in the pangs of childbirth. Soldiers and police in crowds were present, ready to fire at the first symptom of resistance, on the slightest hint of the Justices of the Peace, who had brought about the whole brutal procedure. This, too, the working-men endured without resistance. The hope had been that the men would use violence; they were spurred on with all force to infringements of the laws, to furnish an excuse for making an end of the strike by the intervention of the military. The homeless miners, remembering the warnings of their Attorney General, remained unmoved, set up their household goods upon the moors or the harvested fields, and held out. Some, who had no other place, encamped on the roadsides and in ditches, others upon land belonging to other people, wherupon they were prosecuted, and, having caused "damage of the value of a halfpenny," were fined a pound, and, being unable to pay it, worked it out on the treadmill. Thus they lived eight weeks and more of the wet fog-end of last summer under the open sky with their families, with no further shelter for themselves and their little ones than the calico curtains of their beds; with no other help than the scanty allowances of their Union and the fast shrinking credit with the small dealers. Hereupon Lord Londonderry, who owns considerable mines in Durham, threatened the small traders in "his" town of Sedgefield with his most high displeasure if they should continue to give credit to "his" rebellious workers. This "noble" lord made himself the first clown of the movement in consequence of the ridiculous, pompous, ungrammatical jukas addressed to the workers, which he published from time to time, with no other result than the remission of the nation. When none of their efforts produced any effect, the mine owners imported, at great expense, hands from Ireland and such remote parts of Wales as have as yet no labour movement. And when the competition of workers against workers was thus restored, the strength of the strikers collapsed. The mine owners obliged them to renounce the Union, abandon Roberts, and accept the conditions laid down by the employers. Thus ended at the close of September the great five months' battle of the coal miners against the mine owners, a battle fought on the part of the oppressed with an endurance, courage, intelligence, and coolness which demands the highest admiration. What a degree of true human culture, of enthusiasm and strength of character, such a battle implies on the part of men who, as we have seen in the Children's Employment Commission's Report, were described as late as 1846, as being thoroughly brutal and wanting in moral sense! But how hard, too, must have been the pressure which brought these forty thousand colliers to rise as one man and to fight out the battle like an army not only well-disciplined but enthusiastic, an army possessed of one single determination, with the greatest coolness and composure, to a point beyond which further resistance would have been madness. And what a battle! Not against visible, mortal enemies, but against hunger, want, misery, and homelessness, against their own passions provoked to madness by the brutality of wealth. If they had revolted with violence, they, the unarmed and defenceless, would have been shot down, and a day or two would have decided the victory of the owners. This law-abiding reserve was no fear of the constable's
staff, it was the result of deliberation, the best proof of the intelligence and self-control of the working-men.

Thus were the working-men forced once more, in spite of their unexampled endurance, to succumb to the might of capital. But the fight had not been in vain. First of all, this nineteen weeks' strike had torn the miners of the North of England forever from the intellectual death in which they had hitherto lain; they have left their sleep, are alert to defend their interests, and have entered the movement of civilisation, and especially the movement of the workers. The strike, which first brought to light the whole cruelty of the owners, has established the opposition of the workers here, forever, and made at least two-thirds of them Chartists; and the acquisition of thirty thousand such determined, experienced men is certainly of great value to the Chartists. Then, too, the endurance and law-abiding which characterised the whole strike, coupled with the active agitation which accompanied it, has fixed public attention upon the miners. On the occasion of the debate upon the export duty on coal, Thomas Duncome, the only decidedly Chartist member of the House of Commons, brought up the condition of the coal miners, had their petition read, and by his speech forced the bourgeois journals to publish, at least in their reports of Parliamentary proceedings, a correct statement of the case. Immediately after the strike, occurred the explosion at Haswell; Roberts went to London, demanded an audience with Peel, insisted as representative of the miners upon a thorough investigation of the case, and succeeded in having the first geological and chemical notabilities of England, Professors Lyell and Faraday, commissioned to visit the spot. As several other explosions followed in quick succession, and Roberts again laid the details before the Prime Minister, the latter promised to propose the necessary measures for the protection of the workers, if possible, in the next session of Parliament, i.e., the present one of 1845. All this would not have been accomplished if these workers had not, by means of the strike, proved themselves freedom-loving men worthy of all respect, and if they had not engaged Roberts as their counsel.

Scarcely had it become known that the coal miners of the North had been forced to renounce the Union and discharge Roberts, when the miners of Lancashire formed a Union of some ten thousand men, and guaranteed their Attorney General a salary of £1200 a year. In the autumn of last year they collected more than £700, rather more than £200 of which they expended upon salaries and judicial expenses, and the rest chiefly in support of men out of work, either through want of employment or through dissensions with their employers. Thus the working-men are constantly coming to see more clearly that, united, they too are a respectable power, and can, in the last extremity, defy even the might of the bourgeoisie. And this insight, the gain of all labour movements, has been won for all the miners of England by the Union and the strike of 1844. In a very short time the difference of intelligence and energy which now exists in favour of the factory operatives will have vanished, and the miners of the kingdom will be able to stand abreast of them in every respect. Thus one piece of standing ground after another is undermined beneath the feet of the bourgeoisie; and how long will it be before their whole social and political edifice collapses with the basis upon which it rests?1

But the bourgeoisie will not take warning. The resistance of the miners does but embitter it the more. Instead of appreciating this forward step in the general movement of the workers, the property-holding class saw in it only a source of rage against a class of people who are fools enough to declare themselves no longer submissive to the treatment they had hitherto received. It saw in the just demands of the non-possessing workers only impertinent discontent, mad rebellion against "Divine and human order;" and, in the best case, a success (to be resisted by the bourgeoisie with all its might) won by "ill-intentioned demagogues who live by agitation and are too lazy to work." It sought, of course, without success, to represent to the workers that Roberts and the Union's agents, whom the Union very naturally had to

1 The coal miners have at this moment, 1886, six of their body sitting in the House of Commons.
THE AGRICULTURAL PROLETARIAT.

We have seen in the introduction how, simultaneously with the small bourgeoisie and the modest independence of the former workers, the small peasantry also was ruined when the former Union of industrial and agricultural work was dissolved, the abandoned fields thrown together into large farms, and the small peasants superseded by the overwhelming competition of the large farmers. Instead of being landowners or leaseholders, as they had been hitherto, they were now obliged to hire themselves as labourers to the large farmers or the landlords. For a time this position was endurable, though a deterioration in comparison with their former one. The extension of industry kept pace with the increase of population until the progress of manufacture began to assume a slower pace, and the perpetual improvement of machinery made it impossible for manufacture to absorb the whole surplus of the agricultural population. From this time forward, the distress which had hitherto existed only in the manufacturing districts, and then only at times, appeared in the agricultural districts too. The twenty-five years' struggle with France came to an end at about the same time; the diminished production at the various seats of the wars, the shutting off of imports, and the necessity of providing for the British army in Spain, had given English agriculture an artificial prosperity, and had besides withdrawn to the army vast numbers of workers from their ordinary occupations. This check upon the import trade, the opportunity for exportation, and the military demand for workers, now suddenly came to an end; and the necessary consequence was what the English call agricultural distress. The farmers had to sell their corn at low prices, and could, therefore, pay only low wages. In 1815, in order to keep up prices, the Corn Laws were passed, prohibiting
the importation of corn so long as the price of wheat continued less than 80 shillings per quarter. These naturally ineffectual laws were several times modified, but did not succeed in ameliorating the distress in the agricultural districts. All that they did was to change the disease, which, under free competition from abroad, would have assumed an acute form, culminating in a series of crises, into a chronic one which bore heavily but uniformly upon the farm labourers.

For a time after the rise of the agricultural proletariat, the patriarchal relation between master and man, which was being destroyed for manufacture, developed here the same relation of the farmer to his hands which still exists almost everywhere in Germany. So long as this lasted, the poverty of the farm hands was less conspicuous; they shared the fate of the farmer, and were discharged only in cases of the direst necessity. But now all this is changed. The farm hands have become day labourers almost everywhere, are employed only when needed by the farmers, and, therefore, often have no work for weeks together, especially in winter. In the patriarchal time, the hands and their families lived on the farm, and their children grew up there, the farmer trying to find occupation on the spot for the oncoming generation; day labourers, then, were the exception, not the rule. Thus there was, on every farm, a larger number of hands than were strictly necessary. It became, therefore, the interest of the farmers to dissolve this relation, drive the farm hand from the farm, and transform him into a day labourer. This took place pretty generally towards the year 1830, and the consequence was that the hitherto latent over-population was set free, the rate of wages forced down, and the poor-rate enormously increased. From this time the agricultural districts became the headquarters of permanent, as the manufacturing districts had long been of periodic, pauperism; and the modification of the Poor Law was the first measure which the State was obliged to apply to the daily increasing impoverishment of the country parishes. Moreover, the constant extension of farming on a large scale, the introduction of threshing and other machines, and the employment of women and children (which is now so general that its effects have recently been investigated by a special official commission), threw a large number of men out of employment. It is manifest, therefore, that here, too, the system of industrial production has made its entrance, by means of farming on a large scale, by the abolition of the patriarchal relation, which is of the greatest importance just here, by the introduction of machinery, steam, and the labour of women and children. In so doing, it has swept the last and most stationary portion of working humanity into the revolutionary movement. But the longer agriculture had remained stationary, the heavier now became the burden upon the worker, the more violently broke forth the results of the disorganisation of the old social fabric. The "over-population" came to light all at once, and could not, as in the manufacturing districts, be absorbed by the needs of an increasing production. New factories could always be built, if there were consumers for their products, but new land could not be created. The cultivation of waste common land was too daring a speculation for the bad times following the conclusion of peace. The necessary consequence was that the competition of the workers among each other reached the highest point of intensity, and wages fell to the minimum. So long as the old Poor Law existed, the workers received relief from the rates; wages naturally fell still lower, because the farmers forced the largest possible number of labourers to claim relief. The higher poor-rate, necessitated by the surplus population, was only increased by this measure, and the new Poor Law, of which we shall have more to say later, was now enacted as a remedy. But this did not improve matters. Wages did not rise, the surplus population could not be got rid of, and the cruelty of the new law did but serve to embitter the people to the utmost. Even the poor-rate, which diminished at first after the passage of the new law, attained its old height after a few years. Its only effect was that whereas previously three to four million half paupers had existed, a million of total paupers now appeared, and the rest, still half paupers, merely went without relief. The poverty in the agricultural districts has increased every year. The people
live in the greatest want, whole families must struggle along with 6, 7, or 8 shillings a week, and at times have nothing. Let us hear a description of this population given by a Liberal member of Parliament as early as 1830. 1

"An English agricultural labourer and an English pauper, these words are synonymous. His father was a pauper and his mother's milk contained no nourishment. From his earliest childhood he had bad food, and only half enough to still his hunger; and even yet he undergoes the pangs of unsatisfied hunger almost all the time that he is not asleep. He is half clad, and has not more fire than barely suffices to cook his scanty meal. And so cold and damp are always at home with him, and leave him only in fine weather. He is married, but he knows nothing of the joys of the husband and father. His wife and children, hungry, rarely warm, often ill and helpless, always careless and helpless like himself, are naturally grasping, selfish, and troublesome, and, to use his own expression, he hates the sight of them, and enters his cot only because it offers him a trifle more shelter from rain and wind than a hedge. He must support his family, though he cannot do so, whence come beggary, deceit of all sorts, ending in fully developed craftiness. If he were so inclined, he yet has not the courage, which makes of the more energetic of his class wholesale poachers and smugglers. But he pilfers when occasion offers, and teaches his children to lie and steal. His abrupt and submissive demeanour towards his wealthy neighbours shows that they treat him roughly and with suspicion; hence he fears and hates them, but he never will injure them by force. He is deprived through and through, too far gone to possess even the strength of despair. His wretched existence is brief, rheumatism and asthma bring him to the workhouse, where he will draw his last breath without a single pleasant recollection, and will make room for another luck-
less wretch to live and die as he has done." 1

Our author adds that besides this class of agricultural labourers, there is still another, somewhat more energetic and better endowed physically, mentally, and morally; those, namely, who live as

1 E. G. Wakefield, M.P. "Swing Unmasked; or, The Cause of Rural Incendiarism," London, 1831. Pamphlet. The foregoing extracts may be found pp. 9-13, the passages dealing in the original with the then still existing Old Poor Law being here omitted.

wretchedly, but were not born to this condition. These he represents as better in their family life, but smugglers and poachers who get into frequent bloody conflicts with the gamekeepers and revenue officers of the coast, become more embittered against society during the prison life which they often undergo, and so stand averse of the first class in their hatred of the propertyholders. "And," he says, in closing, "this whole class is called, by courtesy, the bold peasantry of England."

Down to the present time, this description applies to the greater portion of the agricultural labourers of England. In June, 1844, the Times sent a correspondent into the agricultural districts to report upon the condition of this class, and the report which he furnished agreed wholly with the foregoing. In certain districts wages were not more than six shillings a week; not more, that is, that in many districts in Germany, while the prices of all the necessaries of life are at least twice as high. What sort of life these people lead may be imagined; their food scanty and bad, their clothing ragged, their dwellings cramped and desolate, small, wretched huts, with no comforts whatsoever; and, for young people, lodging-houses, where men and women are scarcely separated, and illegitimate intercourse thus provoked. One or two days without work in the course of a month must inevitably plunge such people into the direst want. Moreover, they cannot combine to raise wages, because they are scattered, and if one alone refuses to work for low wages, there are dozens out of work, or supported by the rates, who are thankful for the most trifling offer, while to him who declines work, every other form of relief than the hated workhouse is refused by the Poor Law guardians as to a lazy vagabond; for the guardians are the very farmers from whom or from whose neighbours and acquaintances alone he can get work. And not from one or two special districts of England do such reports come. On the contrary, the distress is general, equally great in the North and South, the East and West. The condition of the labourers in Suffolk and Norfolk corresponds with that of Devonshire, Hampshire, and Sussex. Wages are as low in Dorsetshire and Oxfordshire as in Kent and Surrey, Buckinghamshire and Cambridgeshire.
One especially barbaric cruelty against the working-class is embodied in the Game Laws, which are more stringent than in any other country, while the game is plentiful beyond all conception. The English peasant, who, according to the old English custom and tradition, sees in poaching only a natural and noble expression of courage and daring, is stimulated still further by the contrast between his own poverty and the *car tel est notre plaisir* of the lord, who preserves thousands of hares and game birds for his private enjoyment. The labourer lays snares, or shoots here and there a piece of game. It does not injure the landlord as a matter of fact, for he has a vast superfluity, and it brings the poacher a meal for himself and his starving family. But if he is caught he goes to jail, and for a second offence receives at the least seven years' transportation. From the severity of these laws arise the frequent bloody conflicts with the gamekeepers, which lead to a number of murders every year. Hence the post of gamekeeper is not only dangerous, but of ill-repute and despised. Last year, in two cases, gamekeepers shot themselves rather than continue their work. Such is the moderate price at which the landed aristocracy purchases the noble sport of shooting; but what does it matter to the lords of the soil? Whether one or two more or less of the "surplus" live or die matters nothing, and even if in consequence of the Game Laws half the surplus population could be put out of the way, it would be all the better for the other half—according to the philanthropy of the English landlords.

Although the conditions of life in the country, the isolated dwellings, the stability of the surroundings and occupations, and consequently of the thoughts, are decidedly unfavourable to all development, yet poverty and want bear their fruits even here. The manufacturing and mining proletariat emerged early from the first stage of resistance to our social order, the direct rebellion of the individual by the perpetration of crime; but the peasants are still in this stage at the present time. Their favourite method of social warfare is incendiarism. In the winter which followed the Revolution of July, in 1830-31, these incendiaries first became general. Disturbances had taken place, and the whole region of Sussex and the adjacent counties has been brought into a state of excitement in October, in consequence of an increase of the coast-guard (which made smuggling much more difficult and "ruined the coast"—in the words of a farmer), changes in the Poor Law, low wages, and the introduction of machinery. In the winter the farmers' hay and corn-stacks were burnt in the fields, and the very barns and stables under their windows. Nearly every night a couple of such fires blazed up, and spread terror among the farmers and landlords. The offenders were rarely discovered, and the workers attributed the incendiarism to a mythical person whom they named "Swing." Men puzzled their brains to discover who this Swing could be and whence this rage among the poor of the country districts. Of the great motive power, Want, Oppression, only a single person here and there thought, and certainly no one in the agricultural districts. Since that year the incendiaries have been repeated every winter, with each recurring unemployed season of the agricultural labourers. In the winter of 1843-44, they were once more extraordinarily frequent. There lies before me a series of numbers of the *Northern Star* of that time, each one of which contains a report of several incendiarisms, stating in each case its authority. The numbers wanting in the following list I have not at hand; but they, too, doubtless contain a number of cases. Moreover, such a sheet cannot possibly ascertain all the cases which occur. November 25th, 1843, two cases; several earlier ones are discussed. December 16th, in Bedfordshire, general excitement for a fortnight past in consequence of frequent incendiarisms, of which several take place every night. Two great farmhouses burnt down within the last few days; in Cambridgeshire four great farmhouses, Hertfordshire one, and besides these, fifteen other incendiaries in different districts. December 30th, in Norfolk one, Suffolks two, Essex two, Cheshire one, Lancashire one, Derby, Lincoln, and the South twelve. January 6th, 1844, in all ten. January 13th, seven. January 20th, four incendiarisms. From this time forward, three or four incendiaries per week are reported, and not as formerly until the
spring only, but far into July and August. And that crimes of
this sort are expected to increase in the approaching hard season
of 1844-45, the English papers already indicate.

What do my readers think of such a state of things in the quiet,
Idyllic country districts of England? Is this social war, or is it
not? Is it a natural state of things which can last? Yet here
the landlords and farmers are as dull and stupefied, as blind to
everything which does not directly put money into their pockets,
as the manufacturers and the bourgeoisie in general in the manu-
facturing districts. If the latter promise their employees salvation
through the repeal of the Corn Laws, the landlords and a
great part of the farmers promise theirs Heaven upon earth from
the maintenance of the same laws. But in neither case do the
property-holders succeed in winning the workers to the support
of their pot hobby. Like the operatives, the agricultural labourers
are thoroughly indifferent to the repeal or non-repeal of the Corn
Laws. Yet the question is an important one for both. That is
to say—by the repeal of the Corn Laws, free competition, the
present social economy is carried to its extreme point; all further
development within the present order comes to an end, and the
only possible step further is a radical transformation of the social
order.1 For the agricultural labourers the question has, further,
the following important bearing: Free importation of corn in-
volves (how, I cannot explain here) the emancipation of the
farmers from the landlords, their transformation into Liberals.
Towards this consummation the Anti-Corn Law League has
already largely contributed, and this is its only real service.
When the farmers become Liberals, i.e., conscious bourgeois, the
agricultural labourers will inevitably become Chartists and Social-
ists; the first change involves the second. And that a new
movement is already beginning among the agricultural labourers
is proved by a meeting which Earl Radnor, a Liberal landlord,
caus[ed] to be held in October, 1844, near Highworth, where his

1 This has been literally fulfilled. After a period of unparalleled ex-
tension of trade, Free Trade has landed England in a crisis, which began in
1873, and is still increasing in energy in 1889.

estates lie, to pass resolutions against the Corn Laws. At this
meeting, the labourers, perfectly indifferent as to these laws,
demanded something wholly different, namely small holdings,
at low rent, for themselves, telling Earl Radnor all sorts of bitter
truths to his face. Thus the movement of the working-class is
finding its way into the remote, stationary, mentally dead agricul-
tural districts; and, thanks to the general distress, will soon be
as firmly rooted and energetic as in the manufacturing districts.1

As to the religious state of the agricultural labourers, they are,
it is true, more pious than the manufacturing operatives; but
they, too, are greatly at odds with the Church—for in these dis-
tricts members of the Established Church almost exclusively are to
be found. A correspondent of the Morning Chronicle, who, over the
signature, "One who has whistled at the plough," reports his tour
through the agricultural districts, relates, among other things, the
following conversation with some labourers after service: "I
asked one of these people whether the preacher of the day was
their own clergyman. "Yes, blast him! He is our own parson,
and begs the whole time. He's been always a-begging as long as
I've known him." (The sermon had been upon a mission to the
heathen.) "And as long as I've known him too," added another;
"and I never knew a parson but what was begging for this or the
other." "Yes," said a woman, who had just come out of the
curch, "and look how wages are going down, and see the rich
vagabongs with whom the parsons eat and drink and hunt. So
help me God, we are more fit to starve in the workhouse than pay
the parsons as go among the heathen." "And why," said another,
"don't they send the parsons as drones every day in Salisbury
Cathedral, for nobody but the bare stones? Why don't they go
among the heathen?" "They don't go," said the old man whom
I had first asked, "because they are rich, they have all the land
they need, they want the money in order to get rid of the poor
parsons. I know what they want. I know them too long for
that." "But, good friends," I asked, "you surely do not always

1 The agricultural labourers have now a Trade's Union; their most en-
ergetic representative, Joseph Arch, was elected M.P. in 1883.
come out of the church with such bitter feelings towards the preacher? Why do you go at all?" "What for do we go?" said the woman. "We must, if we do not want to lose everything, work and all, we must." I learned later that they had certain little privileges of fire-wood and potato land (which they paid for!) on condition of going to church." After describing their poverty and ignorance, the correspondent closes by saying: "And now I boldly assert that the condition of these people, their poverty, their hatred of the church, their external submission and inward bitterness against the ecclesiastical dignitaries, is the rule among the country parishes of England, and its opposite is the exception."

If the peasantry of England shows the consequences which a numerous agricultural proletariat in connection with large farming involves for the country districts, Wales illustrates the ruin of the small holders. If the English country parishes reproduce the antagonism between capitalist and proletarian, the state of the Welsh peasantry corresponds to the progressive ruin of the small bourgeoisie in the towns. In Wales are to be found, almost exclusively, small holders, who cannot with like profit sell their products as cheaply as the larger, more favourably situated English farmers, with whom, however, they are obliged to compete. Moreover, in some places the quality of the land admits of the raising of live stock only, which is but slightly profitable. Then, too, these Welsh farmers, by reason of their separate nationality, which they retain pertinaciously, are much more stationary than the English farmers. But the competition among themselves and with their English neighbours (and the increased mortgages upon their land consequent upon this) has reduced them to such a state that they can scarcely live at all; and because they have not recognised the true cause of their wretched condition, they attribute it to all sorts of small causes, such as high tolls, etc., which do check the development of agriculture and commerce, but are taken into account as standing charges by every one who takes a holding, and are therefore really ultimately paid by the landlord. Here, too, the new Poor Law is cordially hated by the tenants, who hover in perpetual danger of coming under its sway. In 1843, the famous "Rebecca" disturbances broke out among the Welsh peasantry; the men dressed in women's clothing, blackened their faces, and fell in armed crowds upon the toll-gates, destroyed them amidst great rejoicing and firing of guns, demolished the toll-keepers' houses, wrote threatening letters in the name of the imaginary "Rebecca," and once went so far as to storm the workhouse of Carmarthen. Later, when the militia was called out and the police strengthened, the peasants drew them off with wonderful skill upon false scents, demolished toll-gates at one point while the militia, lured by false signal bugles, was marching in some opposite direction; and betook themselves finally, when the police was too thoroughly reinforced, to single insenioriatis and attempts at murder. As usual, these greater crimes were the end of the movement. Many withdrew from disapproval, others from fear, and peace was restored of itself. The Government appointed a commission to investigate the affair and its causes, and there was an end of the matter. The poverty of the peasantry continues, however, and will one day, since it cannot under existing circumstances grow less, but must go on intensifying, produce more serious manifestations than these humorous Rebecca masquerades.

If England illustrates the results of the system of farming on a large scale and Wales on a small one, Ireland exhibits the consequences of overdividing the soil. The great mass of the population of Ireland consists of small tenants who occupy a sorry but without partitions, and a potato patch just large enough to supply them most scantily with potatoes through the winter. In consequence of the great competition which prevails among these small tenants, the rent has reached an unheard-of height, double, triple, and quadruple that paid in England. For every agricultural labourer seeks to become a tenant-farmer, and though the division of land has gone so far, there still remain numbers of labourers in competition for plots. Although in Great Britain 32,000,000 acres of land are cultivated, and in Ireland but 14,000,000; although Great Britain produces agricultural products to the value of £150,000,000, and Ireland of but £36,000,000,
there are in Ireland 75,000 agricultural proletarians more than in the neighbouring island.\(^1\) How great the competition for land in Ireland must be is evident from this extraordinary disproportion, especially when one reflects that the labourers in Great Britain are living in the utmost distress. The consequence of this competition is that it is impossible for the tenants to live much better than the labourers, by reason of the high rents paid. The Irish people is thus held in crushing poverty, from which it cannot free itself under our present social conditions. These people live in the most wretched clay huts, scarcely good enough for cattle, pens, have scant food all winter long, or, as the report above quoted expresses it, they have potatoes half enough thirty weeks in the year, and the rest of the year nothing. When the time comes in the spring at which this provision reaches its end, or can no longer be used because of its sprouting, wife and children go forth to beg and tramp the country with their kettle in their hands. Meanwhile the husband, after planting potatoes for the next year, goes in search of work either in Ireland or England, and returns at the potato harvest to his family. This is the condition in which nine-tenths of the Irish country folks live. They are poor as church mice, wear the most wretched rags, and stand upon the lowest plane of intelligence possible in a half-civilised country. According to the report quoted, there are, in a population of 8½ millions, 585,000 heads of families in a state of total destitution; and according to other authorities, cited by Sheriff Alison,\(^2\) there are in Ireland 2,300,000 persons who could not live without public or private assistance—or 27 per cent. of the whole population paupers.

The cause of this poverty lies in the existing social conditions, especially in competition here found in the form of the subdivision of the soil. Much effort has been spent in finding other causes. It has been asserted that the relation of the tenant to the landlord who lets his estate in large lots to tenants, who again have their sub-tenants, and sub-sub-tenants, in turn, so that often ten middle-

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1 Report of the Poor Law Commission upon Ireland.

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men come between the landlord and the actual cultivator—it has been asserted that the shameful law which gives the landlord the right of expropriating the cultivator who may have paid his rent duly, if the first tenant fails to pay the landlord, that this law is to blame for all this poverty. But all this determines only the form in which the poverty manifests itself. Make the small tenant a landowner himself and what follows? The majority could not live upon their holdings even if they had no rent to pay, and any slight improvement which might take place would be lost again in a few years in consequence of the rapid increase of population. The children would then live to grow up under the improved conditions who now die in consequence of poverty in early childhood. From another side comes the assertion that the shameless oppression inflicted by the English is the cause of the trouble. It is the cause of the somewhat earlier appearance of this poverty, but not of the poverty itself. Or the blame is laid on the Protestant Church forced upon a Catholic nation; but divide among the Irish what the Church takes from them, and it does not reach six shillings a head. Besides, tithes are a tax upon landed property, not upon the tenant, though he may nominally pay them; now, since the Conmutation Bill of 1838, the landlord pays the tithes directly and recons so much higher rent, so that the tenant is none the better off. And in the same way a hundred other causes of this poverty are brought forward, all proving as little as these. This poverty is the result of our social conditions; apart from these, causes may be found for the manner in which it manifests itself, but not for the fact of its existence. That poverty manifests itself in Ireland thus and not otherwise, is owing to the character of the people, and to their historical development. The Irish are a people related in their whole character to the Latin nations, to the French, and especially to the Italians. The bad features of their character we have already had depicted by Carlyle. Let us now hear an Irishman, who at least comes nearer to the truth than Carlyle, with his prejudice in favour of the Teutonic character:\(^1\)

"They are restless, yet indolent, clever and indiscreet, stormy, impatient, and improvident; brave by instinct, generous without much reflection, quick to revenge and forgive insults, to make and to renounce friendships, gifted with genius prodigiously, sparingly with judgment."

With the Irish, feeling and passion predominate; reason must bow before them. Their sensuous, excitable nature prevents reflection and quiet, persevering activity from reaching development—which a nation is utterly unfit for manufacture as now conducted. Hence they held fast to agriculture, and remained upon the lowest plane even of that. With the small subdivisions of land, which were not here artificially created, as in France and on the Rhine, by the division of great estates, but have existed from time immemorial, an improvement of the soil by the investment of capital was not to be thought of; and it would, according to Alison, require 120 million pounds sterling to bring the soil up to the not very high state of fertility already attained in England. The English immigration, which might have raised the standard of Irish civilization, has contented itself with the most brutal plundering of the Irish people; and while the Irish, by their immigration into England, have furnished England a leaven which will produce its own results in the future, they have little for which to be thankful to the English immigration.

The attempts of the Irish to save themselves from their present ruin, on the one hand, take the form of crimes. These are the order of the day in the agricultural districts, and are nearly always directed against the most immediate enemies, the landlord's agents, or their obedient servants, the Protestant intruders, whose large farms are made up of the potato patches of hundreds of ejected families. Such crimes are especially frequent in the South and West. On the other hand, the Irish hope for relief by means of the agitation for the repeal of the Legislative Union with England. From all the foregoing, it is clear that the uneducated Irish must see in the English their worst enemies; and their first hope of improvement in the conquest of national independence. But quite as clear is it, too, that Irish distress cannot be removed by any Act of Repeal. Such an Act would, however, at once lay bare the fact that the cause of Irish misery, which now seems to come from abroad, is really to be found at home. Meanwhile, it is an open question whether the accomplishment of repeal will be necessary to make this clear to the Irish. Hitherto, neither Chartism nor Socialism has had marked success in Ireland.

I close my observations upon Ireland at this point the more readily, as the Repeal Agitation of 1843 and O'Connell's trial have been the means of making the Irish distress more and more known in Germany.

We have now followed the proletariat of the British Islands through all branches of its activity, and found it everywhere living in want and misery under totally inhuman conditions. We have seen discontent arise with the rise of the proletariat, grow, develop, and organise; we have seen open bloody and bloody battles of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. We have investigated the principles according to which the fate, the hopes, and fears of the proletariat are determined, and we have found that there is no prospect of improvement in their condition.

We have had an opportunity, here and there, of observing the conduct of the bourgeoisie towards the proletariat, and we have found that it considers only itself, has only its own advantage in view. However, in order not to be unjust, let us investigate its mode of action somewhat more exactly.
THE ATTITUDE OF THE BOURGEOISIE TOWARDS THE PROLETARIAT.

In speaking of the bourgeoisie I include the so-called aristocracy, for this is a privileged class, an aristocracy, only in contrast with the bourgeoisie, not in contrast with the proletariat. The proletarian sees in both only the property-holder—i.e., the bourgeoisie. Before the privilege of property all other privileges vanish. The sole difference is this, that the bourgeoisie proper stands in active relations with the manufacturing, and, in a measure, with the mining proletarians, and, as farmer, with the agricultural labourers, whereas the so-called aristocrat comes into contact with the agricultural labourer only.

I have never seen a class so deeply demoralised, so incurably debased by selfishness, so corroded within, so incapable of progress, as the English bourgeoisie; and I mean by this, especially the bourgeoisie proper, particularly the Liberal, Corn Law repealing bourgeoisie. For it nothing exists in this world, except for the sake of money, itself not excluded. It knows no bliss save that of rapid gain, no pain save that of losing gold. In the presence of this avarice and lust of gain, it is not possible for a single human sentiment or opinion to remain untainted. True, these English bourgeois are good husbands and family men, and have all sorts of other private virtues, and appear, in ordinary intercourse, as decent and respectable as all other bourgeois; even in business they are better to deal with than the Germans; they do not haggle and haggle so much as our own pettifogging merchants; but how does this help matters? Ultimately it is self-interest, and especially money gain, which alone determines them. I once went into Manchester with such a bourgeois, and spoke to him of the bad, unwholesome method of building, the frightful condition of the working-people's quarters, and assered that I had never seen so ill-built a city. The man listened quietly to the end, and said at the corner where we parted: "And yet there is a great deal of money made here; good morning, sir." It is utterly indifferent to the English bourgeoisie whether his working-men starve or not, if only he makes money. All the conditions of life are measured by money, and what brings no money is nonsense, unpractical, idealistic bosh. Hence, Political Economy, the Science of Wealth, is the favourite study of these bartering Jews. Every one of them is a Political Economist. The relation of the manufacturer to his operatives has nothing human in it; it is purely economic. The manufacturer is Capital, the operative Labour. And if the operative will not be forced into this abstraction, if he insists that he is not Labour, but a man, who possesses, among other things, the attribute of labour force, if he takes it into his head that he need not allow himself to be sold and bought in the market, as the commodity "Labour," the bourgeois reason comes to a standstill. He cannot comprehend that he holds any other relation to the operatives than that of purchase and sale; he sees in them not human beings, but hands, as he constantly calls them to their faces; he insists, as Carlyle says, that "Cash Payment is the only nexus between man and man." Even the relation between himself and his wife is, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, mere "Cash Payment." Money determines the worth of the man; he is "worth ten thousand pounds." He who has money is of "the better sort of people," is "influential," and what he does counts for something in his social circle. The buckstering spirit penetrates the whole language, all relations are expressed in business terms, in economic categories. Supply and demand are the formulas according to which the logic of the English bourgeoisie judges all human life. Hence free competition in every respect, hence the régime of laissez-faire, laissez-aller in government, in medicine, in education, and soon to be in religion, too, as the State Church collapses more and more. Free competition will suffer no limitation, no State supervision; the whole State is but a burden to it. It would reach its highest

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1 Carlyle gives in his "Past and Present" (London, 1843) a splendid description of the English bourgeoisie and its disgusting money greed.
perfection in a wholly ungoverned anarchic society, where each might exploit the other to his heart's content. Since, however, the bourgeoisie cannot dispense with government, but must have it to hold the equally indispensable proletariat in check, it turns the power of government against the proletariat and keeps out of its way as far as possible.

Let no one believe, however, that the "cultivated" Englishman openly brags with his egoism. On the contrary, he conceals it under the vilest hypocrisy. What? The wealthy English fail to remember the poor? They who have founded philanthropic institutions, such as no other country can boast of! Philanthropic institutions forsooth! As though you rendered the proletarians a service in first sucking out their very life-blood and then practising your self-complacent, Pharisaic philanthropy upon them, placating yourselves before the world as mighty benefactors of humanity when you give back to the plundered victims the hundredth part of what belongs to them! Charity which degrades him who gives more than him who takes; charity which treads the downtrodden still deeper in the dust, which demands that the degraded, the pariah cast out by society, shall first surrender the last that remains to him, his very claim to manhood, shall first beg for mercy before your mercy desiring to press, in the shape of an alms, the brand of degradation upon his brow. But let us hear the English bourgeoisie's own words. It is not yet a year since I read in the Manchester Guardian the following letter to the editor, which was published without comment as a perfectly natural, reasonable thing:

"Mr. Editor,—For some time past our main streets are haunted by swarms of beggars, who try to awaken the pity of the passers-by in a most shameless and annoying manner, by exposing their tattered clothing, sickly aspect, and disgusting wounds and deformities. I should think that when one not only pays the poor-rate, but also contributes largely to the charitable institutions, one had done enough to earn a right to be spared such disagreeable and impertinent molestations. And why else do we pay such high rates for the maintenance of the municipal police, if they do not even protest as far as to make it possible to go to or out of town in peace? I hope the publication of these lines in your widely-circulated paper may induce the authorities to remove this nuisance; and I remain,—Your obedient servant, "A LADY."

There you have it! The English bourgeoisie is charitable out of self-interest; it gives nothing outright, but regards its gifts as a business matter, makes a bargain with the poor, saying: "If I spend this much upon benevolent institutions, I thereby purchase the right not to be troubled any further, and you are bound thereby to stay in your dusky holes and not to irritate my tender nerves by exposing your misery. You shall despair as before, but you shall despair unseen, this I require, this I purchase with my subscription of twenty pounds for the infirmary!" It is infamous, this charity of a Christian bourgeoisie! And so writes "A Lady;" she does well to sign herself such, well that she has lost the courage to call herself a woman! But if the "Ladies" are such as this, what must the "Gentlemen" be? It will be said that this is a single case; but no, the foregoing letter expresses the temper of the great majority of the English bourgeoisie, or the editor would not have accepted it, and some reply would have been made to it, which I watched for in vain in the succeeding numbers. And as to the efficiency of this philanthropy, Canon Parkinson himself says that the poor are relieved much more by the poor than by the bourgeoisie; and such relief given by an honest proletarian who knows himself what it is to be hungry, for whom sharing his scanty meal is really a sacrifice, but a sacrifice borne with pleasure, such help has a wholly different ring to it from the carelessly-tossed alms of the luxurious bourgeoisie.

In other respects, too, the bourgeoisie assumes a hypocritical, boundless philanthropy, but only when its own interests require it; as in its Politics and Political Economy. It has been at work now well on towards five years to prove to the working-men that it strives to abolish the Corn Laws solely in their interest. But the long and short of the matter is this: the Corn Laws keep the price of bread higher than in other countries, and thus
raise wages; but these high wages render difficult competition of
the manufacturers against other nations in which bread, and con-
sequently wages, are cheaper. The Corn Laws being repealed, the
price of bread falls, and wages gradually approach those of other
European countries, as must be clear to every one from our pre-
vious exposition of the principles according to which wages are
determined. The manufacturer can compete more readily, the
demand for English goods increases, and, with it, the demand for
labour. In consequence of this increased demand wages would
actually rise somewhat, and the unemployed workers be re-
employed; but for how long? The "surplus population" of
England, and especially of Ireland, is sufficient to supply English
manufacture with the necessary operatives, even if it were
doubled; and, in a few years, the small advantage of the repeal
of the Corn Laws would be balanced, a new crisis would follow,
and we should be back at the point from which we started, while
the first stimulus to manufacture would have increased popula-
tion meanwhile. All this the proletarians understand very well,
and have told the manufacturers to their faces; but, in spite of
that, the manufacturers have in view solely the immediate ad-

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vantage which the Corn Laws would bring them. They are too
narrow-minded to see that, even for themselves, no permanent
advantage can arise from this measure, because their competition
with each other would soon force the profit of the individual back
to its old level; and thus they continue to shriek to the working-
men that it is purely for the sake of the starving millions that
the rich members of the Liberal party pour hundreds and thou-
sands of pounds into the treasury of the Anti-Corn Law League,
while every one knows that they are only sending the butter after
the cheese, that they calculate upon earning it all back in the
first ten years after the repeal of the Corn Laws. But the
workers are no longer to be misled by the bourgeoisie, especially
since the insurrection of 1848. They demand of every one who
prefers himself as interested in their welfare, that he should
declare himself in favour of the People's Charter as proof of the
sincerity of his professions, and in so doing, they protest against
all outside help, for the Charter is a demand for the power to
help themselves. Whoever declines so to declare himself they
pronounce their enemy, and are perfectly right in so doing,
whether he be a declared foe or a false friend. Besides, the Anti-

Corn Law League has used the most despicable falsehoods and
tricks to win the support of the workers. It has tried to prove
to them that the money price of labour is in inverse proportion to
the price of corn, that wages are high when grain is cheap, and
vice versa, an assertion which it pretends to prove with the most
ridiculous arguments, and one which is, in itself, more ridiculous
than any other that has proceeded from the mouth of an Econo-
mist. When this failed to help matters, the workers were pro-
mised bliss supreme in consequence of the increased demand in
the labour market; indeed, men went so far as to carry through
the streets two models of loaves of bread, on one of which, by far
the larger, was written: "American Eightpenny Loaf, Wages
Four Shillings per Day," and upon the much smaller one:
"English Eightpenny Loaf, Wages Two Shillings a Day." But
the workers have not allowed themselves to be misled. They
know their lords and masters too well.

But rightly to measure the hypocrisy of these promises, the
practice of the bourgeoisie must be taken into account. We have
seen in the course of our report how the bourgeoisie exploits the
proletariat in every conceivable way for its own benefit! We
have, however, hitherto seen only how the single bourgeoisie maltreats the proletariat upon his own account. Let us turn now to
the manner in which the bourgeoisie as a party, as the power of
the State, conducts itself towards the proletariat. Laws are
necessary only because there are persons in existence who own
nothing; and although this is directly expressed in but few laws,
as, for instance, those against vagabonds and tramps, in which
the proletariat as such is outlawed, yet even to the proletariat is
so emphatically the basis of the law that the judges, and
especially the Justices of the Peace, who are bourgeois themselves,
and with whom the proletariat comes most in contact, find this
meaning in the laws without further consideration. If a rich man
is brought up, or rather summoned, to appear before the court, the judge regrets that he is obliged to impose so much trouble, treats the matter as favourably as possible, and, if he is forced to condemn the accused, does so with extreme regret, etc. etc., and the end of it all is a miserable fine, which the bourgeois throws upon the table with contempt and then departs. But if a poor devil gets into such a position as involves appearing before the Justice of the Peace—he has almost always spent the night in the station-house with a crowd of his peers—he is regarded from the beginning as guilty; his defence is set aside with a contemptuous "Oh! we know the excuse," and a fine imposed which he cannot pay and must work out with several months on the treadmill. And if nothing can be proved against him, he is sent to the treadmill, none the less, "as a rogue and a vagabond." The partisanship of the Justices of the Peace, especially in the country, surpasses all description, and it is so much the order of the day that all cases which are not too utterly flagrant are quietly reported by the newspapers, without comment. Nor is anything else to be expected. For on the one hand, these Dogberries do merely construe the law according to the intent of the farmers, and, on the other, they are themselves bourgeois, who see the foundation of all true order in the interests of their class. And the conduct of the police corresponds to that of the Justices of the Peace. The bourgeois may do what he will and the police remain ever polite, adhering strictly to the law, but the proletarian is roughly, brutally treated; his poverty both casts the suspicion of every sort of crime upon him and cuts him off from legal redress against any caprice of the administrators of the law; for him, therefore, the protecting forms of the law do not exist, the police force their way into his house without further ceremony, arrest and abuse him; and only when a working-men's association, such as the miners, engages a Roberts, does it become evident how little the protective side of the law exists for the working-men, how frequently he has to bear all the burdens of the law without enjoying its benefits.

Down to the present hour, the property-holding class in Parlia-

ment still struggles against the better feelings of those not yet fallen a prey to egotism, and seeks to subjugate the proletariat still further. One piece of common land after another is appropriated and placed under cultivation, a process by which the general cultivation is furthered, but the proletariat greatly injured. Where there were still commons, the poor could pasture an ass, a pig, or geese, the children and young people had a place where they could play and live out of doors; but this is gradually coming to an end. The earnings of the worker are less, and the young people, deprived of their playground, go to the beer-shops. A mass of acts for enclosing and cultivating commons is passed at every session of Parliament. When the Government determined during the session of 1844 to force the all monopolising railways to make travelling possible for the workers by means of charges proportionate to their means, a penny a mile, and proposed therefor to introduce such a third class train upon every railway daily, the "Reverend Father in God," the Bishop of London, proposed that Sunday, the only day upon which working-men in work can travel, be exempted from this rule, and travelling thus be left open to the rich and shut off from the poor. This proposition was, however, too direct, too undisguised to pass through Parliament, and was dropped. I have no room to enumerate the many concealed attacks of even one single session upon the proletariat. One from the session of 1844 must suffice. An obscure member of Parliament, Mr. Miles, proposed a bill regulating the relation of master and servant which seemed comparatively unobjectionable. The Government became interested in the bill, and it was referred to a committee. Meanwhile the strike among the miners in the North broke out, and Roberts made his triumphal passage through England with his acquired working-men. When the bill was reported by the committee, it was discovered that certain most despotic provisions had been interpolated in it, especially one conferring upon the employer the power to bring before any Justice of the Peace every working-man who had contravened verbally or in writing to do any work whatsoever, in case of refusal to work or other misbehaviour, and have him condemned.
to prison with hard labour for two months, upon the oath of the employer or his agent or overlooker, i.e., upon the oath of the accuser. This bill aroused the working-men to the utmost fury, the more so as the Ten Hours' Bill was before Parliament at the same time, and had called forth considerable agitation. Hundreds of meetings were held, hundreds of working-men's petitions forwarded to London to Thomas Duncombe, the representative of the interests of the proletariat. This man was, except Ferrand, the representative of "Young England," the only vigorous opponent of the bill; but when the other Radicals saw that the people were declaring against it, one after the other crept forward and took his place by Duncombe's side; and as the Liberal bourgeoisie had not the courage to defend the bill in the face of the excitement among the working-men, it was ignominiously lost.

Meanwhile the most open declaration of war of the bourgeoisie upon the proletariat is Malthus' Law of Population and the New Poor Law framed in accordance with it. We have already alluded several times to the theory of Malthus. We may sum up its final result in these few words, that the earth is perennially overpopulated, whence poverty, misery, distress, and immorality must prevail; that it is the lot of the eternal destiny of mankind, to exist in too great numbers, and therefore in diverse classes, of which some are rich, educated, and moral, and others more or less poor, distressed, ignorant, and immoral. Hence it follows in practice, and Malthus himself drew this conclusion, that charities and poor-rates are, properly speaking, nonsense, since they serve only to maintain, and stimulate the increase of, the surplus population whose competition crushes down wages for the employed; that the employment of the poor by the Poor Law Guardians is equally unreasonable, since only a fixed quantity of the produce of labour can be consumed, and for every unemployed labourer thus furnished employment, another hitherto employed must be driven into enforced idleness, whence private undertakings suffer at cost of Poor Law industry; that, in other words, the whole problem is not how to support the surplus population, but how to restrain it as far as possible. Malthus declares in plain English that the right to live, a right previously asserted in favour of every man in the world, is nonsense. He quotes the words of a poet, that the poor man comes to the feast of Nature and finds no cover laid for him, and adds that "she bids him begone," for he did not before his birth ask of society whether or not he is welcome. This is now the pet theory of all genuine English bourgeoisie, and very naturally, since it is the most specious excuse for them, and has, moreover, a good deal of truth in it under existing conditions. If, then, the problem is not to make the "surplus population" useful, to transform it into available population, but merely to let it starve to death in the least objectionable way and to prevent its having too many children, this, of course, is simple enough, provided the surplus population perceives its own superfluousness and takes kindly to starvation. There is, however, in spite of the violent exertions of the humane bourgeoisie, no immediate prospect of its succeeding in bringing about such a disposition among the workers. The workers have taken it into their heads that they, with their busy hands, are the necessary, and the rich capitalists, who do nothing, the surplus population.

Since, however, the rich hold all the power, the proletarians must submit, if they will not good-naturedly perceive it for themselves, to have the law actually declare them superfluous. This has been done by the New Poor Law. The Old Poor Law which rested upon the Act of 1601 (the 43rd of Elizabeth), naively started from the notion that it is the duty of the parish to provide for the maintenance of the poor. Whoever had no work received relief, and the poor man regarded the parish as pledged to protect him from starvation. He demanded his weekly relief as his right, not as a favour, and this became, at last, too much for the bourgeoisie. In 1833, when the bourgeoisie had just come into power through the Reform Bill, and pauperism in the country districts had just reached its full development, the bourgeoisie began the reform of the Poor Law according to its own point of view. A commission was appointed, which investigated the administration of the Poor Laws, and revealed a multitude of abuses. It was discovered that
the whole working-class in the country was pauperised and more or less dependent upon the rates, from which they received relief when wages were low; it was found that this system by which the unemployed were maintained, the ill-paid and the parents of large families relieved, fathers of illegitimate children required to pay alimony, and poverty, in general, recognised as needing protection, it was found that this system was ruining the nation, was—

"A check upon industry, a reward for improvident marriage, a stimulus to increased population, and a means of counterbalancing the effect of an increased population upon wages; a national provision for discouraging the lowest and industrious, and protecting the lazy, vicious, and improvident; calculated to destroy the bonds of family life, hinder systematically the accumulation of capital, scatter that which is already accumulated, and ruin the taxpayers. Moreover, in the provision of aliment, it sets a premium upon illegitimate children."

(Extracts from Information received from the Poor Law Commissioners. Published by authority. London, 1888.)

Attitude of Bourgeoisie towards Proletariat.

do this, they proposed a Poor Law constructed as far as possible in harmony with the doctrine of Malthus, which is yet more barbarous than that of laissez-faire, because it interferes actively in cases in which the latter is passive. We have seen how Malthus characterises poverty, or rather the want of employment, as a crime under the title "superfluous," and recommends for it punishment by starvation. The commissioners were not quite so barbarous; death outright by starvation was something too terrible even for a Poor Law Commissioner. "Good," said they, "we grant you poor a right to exist, but only to exist; the right to multiply you have not, nor the right to exist as beings human being. You are a pest, and if we cannot get rid of you we do of other pests, you shall feel, at least, that you are a pest, and you shall at least be held in check, kept from bringing into the world, other "surplus," either directly or through inducing in others laziness and want of employment. Live you shall, but live as an awful warning to all those who might have inducements to become "superfluous."

They accordingly brought in the New Poor Law, which was passed by Parliament in 1834, and continues in force down to the present day. All relief in money and provisions was abolished; the only relief allowed was admission to the workhouses immediately built. The regulations for these workhouses, or, as the people call them, Poor Law Basillies, is such as to frighten away every one who has the slightest prospect of life without this form of public charity. To make sure that relief be applied for in the most extreme cases and after every other effort had failed, the workhouse has been made the most repulsive residence which the refined ingenuity of a Malthusian can invent. The food is worse than that of the most ill-paid working-man while employed, and the work harder, or they might prefer the workhouse to their wretched existence outside. Meat, especially fresh meat, is rarely furnished, chiefly potatoes, the worst possible bread and oat-meal porridge, little or no beer. The food of criminal prisoners is better, as a rule, so that the paupers frequently commit some offence for the purpose of getting into jail. For the workhouse is
a jail too; he who does not finish his task, gets nothing to eat; he who wishes to go out must ask permission, which is granted or not, according to his behaviour or the inspector’s whim; tobacco is forbidden, also the receipt of gifts from relatives or friends outside the house; the paupers wear a workhouse uniform, and are handed over, helpless and without reserves, to the caprice of the inspectors. To prevent their labour from competing with that of outside concerns, they are set to rather useless tasks: the men break stones, “as much as a strong man can accomplish with effort in a day;” the women, children, and aged men pick oakum, for I know not what insignificant use. To prevent the “superfluous” from multiplying, and “demoralised” parents from influencing their children, families are broken up; the husband is placed in one wing, the wife in another, the children in a third, and they are permitted to see one another only at stated times after long intervals, and then only when they have, in the opinion of the officials, behaved well. And in order to shut off the external world from contamination by pauperism within these bastilles, the inmates are permitted to receive visits only with the consent of the officials, and in the reception-rooms; to communicate in general with the world outside only by leave and under supervision.

Yet the food is supposed to be wholesome and the treatment humane with all this. But the intent of the law is too loudly outspoken for this requirement to be in any wise fulfilled. The Poor Law Commissioners and the whole English bourgeoisie deceive themselves if they believe the administration of the law possible without these results. The treatment, which the letter of the law prescribes, is in direct contradiction of its spirit. If the law in its essence proclaims the poor criminals, the workhouse prisons, their inmates beyond the pale of the law, beyond the pale of humanity, objects of disgust and repulsion, then all commands to the contrary are unwavering. In practice, the spirit and not the letter of the law is followed in the treatment of the poor, as in the following few examples:

“In the workhouse at Greenwich, in the summer of 1843, a boy five years old was punished by being shut into the dead-room, where he had to sleep upon the lids of the coffins. In the workhouse at Horne, the same punishment was inflicted upon a little girl for wetting the bed at night, and this method of punishment seems to be a favourite one. This workhouse, which stands in one of the most beautiful regions of Kent, is peculiar, in so far as its windows open only upon the court, and but two, newly introduced, afford the inmates a glimpse of the outer world. The author who relates this in the Illuminated Magazine, closes his description with the words: “If God punished men for crimes as man punishes man for poverty, then woe to the sons of Adam!”

In November, 1843, a man died at Leicester, who had been dismissed two days before from the workhouse at Coventry. The details of the treatment of the poor in this institution are revolting. The man, George Robson, had a wound upon the shoulder, the treatment of which was wholly neglected; he was set to work at the pump, using the sound arm; was given only the usual workhouse fare, which he was utterly unable to digest by reason of the unhealed wound and his general debility; he naturally grew weaker, and the more he complained, the more brutally he was treated. When his wife tried to bring him her drop of beer, she was reprimanded, and forced to drink it herself in the presence of the female warder. He became ill, but received no better treatment. Finally, at his own request, and under the most insulting epithets, he was discharged, accompanied by his wife. Two days later he died at Leicester, in consequence of the neglected wound and of the food given him, which was utterly indigestible for one in his condition, as the surgeon present at the inquest testified. When he was discharged, there were handed to him letters containing money, which had been kept back six weeks, and opened, according to a rule of the establishment, by the inspector! In Birmingham such scandalous occurrences took place, that finally, in 1843, an official was sent to investigate the case. He found that four tramps had been shut up naked under a stair-case in a black hole, eight to ten days, often deprived of food until noon, and that at the severest season of the year. A
little boy had been passed through all grades of punishment known to the institution; first locked up in a damp, vaulted, narrow, lumber-room; then in the dog-hole twice, the second time three days and three nights; then the same length of time in the old dog-hole, which was still worse; then the tramp-room, a stinking, disgustingly filthy hole, with wooden sleeping stalls, where the officials, in the course of his inspection, found two other tattered boys, shrivelled with cold, who had been spending three days there. In the dog-hole there were often seven, and in the tramp-room, twenty men huddled together. Women, also, were placed in the dog-hole, because they refused to go to church; and one was shut four days into the tramp-room, with God knows what sort of company, and that while she was ill and receiving medicine! Another woman was placed in the insane department for punishment, though she was perfectly sane. In the workhouse at Bacton, in Suffolk, in January, 1844, a similar investigation revealed the fact that a feeble-minded woman was employed as nurse, and took care of the patients accordingly; while sufferers, who were often restless at night, or tried to get up, were tied fast with cords passed over the covering and under the bedstead, to save the nurses the trouble of sitting up at night. One patient was found dead, bound in this way. In the St. Pancras workhouse in London (where the cheap shirts already mentioned are made), an epileptic died of suffocation during an attack in bed, no one coming to his relief; in the same house, four to six, sometimes eight children, slept in one bed. In Shoreditch workhouse a man was placed, together with a fever patient violently ill, in a bed teeming with vermin. In Bethnal Green workhouse, London, a woman in the sixth month of pregnancy was shut up in the reception-room with her two-year-old child, from February 28th to March 29th, without being admitted into the workhouse itself, and without a trace of a bed or the means of satisfying the most natural wants. Her husband, who was brought into the workhouse, begged to have his wife released from this imprisonment, whereupon he received twenty-four hours imprisonment, with bread and water, as the penalty of his insolence. In the workhouse at Slough, near

Windsor, a man lay dying in September, 1844. His wife journeyed to him, arriving at midnight; and hastening to the workhouse, was refused admission. She was not permitted to see her husband until the next morning, and then only in the presence of a female warder, who forced herself upon the wife at every succeeding visit, sending her away at the end of half-an-hour. In the workhouse at Middleton, in Lancashire, twelve, and at times eighteen, paupers, of both sexes, slept in one room. This institution is not embraced by the New Poor Law, but is administered under an old special act (Gilbert's Act). The inspector had instituted a brewery in the house for his own benefit. In Stockport, July 21st, 1844, a man, seventy-two years old, was brought before the Justice of the Peace for refusing to break stones, and insisting that, by reason of his age and a stiff knee, he was unfit for his work. In vain did he offer to undertake any work adapted to his physical strength; he was sentenced to two weeks upon the treadmill. In the workhouse at Basford, an inquiring official found that the sheets had not been changed in thirteen weeks, shirts in four weeks, stockings in two to ten months, so that of forty-five boys but three had stockings, and all their shirts were in tatters. The beds swarmed with vermin, and the tableware was washed in the slop-pails. In the west of London workhouse, a porter who had infected four girls with syphilis was not discharged, and another who had concealed a deaf and dumb girl four days and nights in his bed was also retained. As in life, so in death. The poor are dumped into the earth like infected cattle. The pauper burial-ground of St. Bride's, London, is a bare morass, in use as a cemetery since the time of Charles II., and filled with heaps of bones; every Wednesday the paupers are thrown into a ditch fourteen feet deep; a curate rattles through the Litany at the top of his speed; the ditch is loosely covered in, to be re-opened the next Wednesday, and filled with corpses as long as one more can be forced in. The putrefaction thus engendered contaminates the whole neighbourhood. In Manchester, the pauper burial-ground lies opposite to the Old Town, along the Irk; this, too, is a rough, desolate place. About
two years ago a railroad was carried through it. If it had been a respectable cemetery, how the bourgeoisie and the clergy would have shrieked over the desecration! But it was a pauper burial-ground, the resting place of the outcast and superfluous, so no one concerned himself about the matter. It was not even thought worth while to convey the partially decayed bodies to the other side of the cemetery; they were humped up just as it happened, and piles were driven into newly-made graves, so that the water seeped out of the swampy ground, pregnant with putrefactive matter, and filled the neighbourhood with the most revolting and injurious gases. The disgusting brutality which accompanied this work I cannot describe in further detail.

Can any one wonder that the poor decline to accept public relief under these conditions? That they starve rather than enter these bastilles? I have the reports of five cases in which persons actually starving, when the guardians refused them outdoor relief, went back to their miserable homes and died of starvation rather than enter these hells. Thus far have the Poor Law Commissioners attained their object. At the same time, however, the workhouses have intensified, more than any other measure of the party in power, the hatred of the working-class against the property-holders, who very generally admire the New Poor Law.

From Newcastle to Dover, there is but one voice among the workers—the voice of hatred against the new law. The bourgeoisie has formulated so clearly in this law its conception of its duties towards the proletariat, that it has been appreciated even by the dullest. So frankly, so boldly had the conception never yet been formulated, that the non-possessing class exists solely for the purpose of being exploited, and of starving when the property-holders can no longer make use of it. Hence it is that this new Poor Law has contributed so greatly to accelerate the labour movement, and especially to spread Chartism; and, as it is carried out most extensively in the country, it facilitates the development of the proletarian movement which is arising in the agricultural districts.

Let me add that a similar law in force in Ireland since 1838, affords a similar refuge for eighty thousand paupers. Here, too, it has made itself disliked, and would have been intensely hated if it had attained anything like the same importance as in England. But what difference does the ill-treatment of eighty thousand proletarians make in a country in which there are two and a half millions of them? In Scotland there are, with local exceptions, no Poor Laws.

I hope that after this picture of the New Poor Law and its results, no word which I have said of the English bourgeoisie will be thought too stern. In this public measure, in which it acts in corpus as the ruling power, it formulates its real intentions, reveals the animus of those smaller transactions with the proletariat, of which the blame apparently attaches to individuals. And that this measure did not originate with any one section of the bourgeoisie, but enjoys the approval of the whole class, is proved by the Parliamentary debates of 1844. The Liberal party had enacted the New Poor Law; the Conservative party, with its Prime Minister Peel at the head, defunds it, and only alters some petty-fogging trudges in the Poor Law Amendment Bill of 1844. A Liberal majority carried the bill, a Conservative majority approved it, and the "Noble Lords" gave their consent each time. Thus is the expulsion of the proletariat from State and society outspoken, thus is it publicly proclaimed that proletarians are not human beings, and do not deserve to be treated as such. Let us leave it to the proletarians of the British Empire to re-conquer their human rights. 1

1 To prevent misconstructions and consequent objections, I would observe that I have spoken of the bourgeoisie as a class, and that all such facts as refer to individuals serve merely as evidence of the way of thinking and acting of a class. Hence I have not entered upon the distinctions between the diverse sections, subdivisions and parties of the bourgeoisie, which have a mere historical and theoretical significance. And I can, for the same reason, mention but casually the few members of the bourgeoisie who have shown themselves honourable exceptions. These are, on the one hand, the pronounced Radicals, who are almost Chartists, such as a few members of the House of Commons, the manufacturers Hindley of Ashton, and Fielden of Todmorden (Lancashire), and, on the other hand, the philanthropic Tories, who have recently constituted themselves "Young
Such is the state of the British working-class as I have come to know it in the course of twenty-one months, through the medium of my own eyes, and through official and other trustworthy reports. And when I call this condition, as I have frequently enough done in the foregoing pages, an utterly unbearable one, I am not alone in so doing. As early as 1833, Gaskell declared that he despaired of a peaceful issue, and that a revolution can hardly fail to follow. In 1838, Carlyle explained Chartism and the revolutionary activity of the working-men as arising out of the misery in which they live, and only wondered that they have sat so quietly eight long years at the Barmecide feast, at which they have been regaled by the Liberal bourgeoisie with empty promises. And in 1844 he declared that the work of organizing labour must be begun at once “if Europe or at least England, is long to remain habitable.” And the Times, the “first journal of Europe,” said in June, 1844: “War to palaces, peace unto cabins—that is a battle-cry of terror which may come to resound throughout our country. Let the wealthy beware!”

Meanwhile, let us review once more the chances of the English bourgeoisie. In the worst case, foreign manufacture, especially that of America, may succeed in withstanding English competition, even after the repeal of the Corn Laws, inevitable in the course of a few years. German manufacture is now making great efforts, and that of America has developed with giant strides. America, England, among whom are the members of Parliament, O'Meara, Northwick, Ferrand, Lord John Manners, etc. Lord Ashley, too, is in sympathy with them. The hope of Young England is a restoration of the old “Merry England” with its brilliant features and its romantic feudalism. This object is of course unattainable and ridiculous, a satire upon all historic development; but the good intention, the courage to resist the existing state of things and prevalent prejudices, and to recognize the wretchedness of our present condition, is worth something anyhow. Wholly isolated is the half-German Englishman, Thomas Carlyle, who, originally a Tory, goes beyond all those hitherto mentioned. He has sounded the social disorder more deeply than any other English bourgeois, and demands the organization of labour.

with its inexhaustible resources, with its unmeasured coal and iron fields, with its unexampled wealth of water-power and its navigable rivers, but especially with its energetic, active population, in comparison with which the English are phlegmatic dwellers,—America has in less than ten years created a manufacture which already competes with England in the coarser cotton goods, has excluded the English from the markets of North and South America, and holds its own in China, side by side with England. If any country is adapted to holding a monopoly of manufacture, it is America. Should English manufacture be thus vanquished—and in the course of the next twenty years, if the present conditions remain unchanged, this is inevitable—the majority of the proletariat must become forever superfluous, and has no other choice than to starve or to rebel. Does the English bourgeoisie reflect upon this contingency? On the contrary; its favourite economist, McCulloch, teaches from his student’s desk, that a country so young as America, which is not even properly populated, cannot carry on manufacture successfully or dream of competing with an old manufacturing country like England. It were madness in the Americans to make the attempt, for they could only lose by it; better far for them to stick to their agriculture, and when they have brought their whole territory under the plough, a time may perhaps come for carrying on manufacture with a profit. So says the wise economist, and the whole bourgeoisie worships him, while the Americans take possession of one market after another, while a daring American speculator recently even sent a shipment of American cotton goods to England, where they were sold for re-exportation.

But assuming that England retained the monopoly of manufactures, that its factories perpetually multiply, what must be the result? The commercial crises would continue, and grow more violent, more terrible, with the extension of industry and the multiplication of the proletariat. The proletariat would increase in geometrical proportion, in consequence of the progressive ruin of the lower middle-class and the giant strides with which capital is concentrating itself in the hands of the few; and the proletariat
would soon embrace the whole nation, with the exception of a few millionaires. But in this development there comes a stage at which the proletariat perceives how easily the existing power may be overthrown, and then follows a revolution.

Neither of these supposed conditions may, however, be expected to arise. The commercial crises, the mightiest levers for all independent development of the proletariat, will probably shorten the process, acting in concert with foreign competition and the deepening ruin of the lower middle-class. I think the people will not endure more than one more crisis. The next one, in 1846 or 1847, will probably bring with it the repeal of the Corn Laws and the enactment of the Charter. What revolutionary movements the Charter may give rise to remains to be seen. But, by the time of the next following crisis, which, according to the analogy of its predecessors, must break out in 1852 or 1853, unless delayed perhaps by the repeal of the Corn Laws or hastened by other influences, such as foreign competition—by the time this crisis arrives, the English people will have had enough of being plundered by the capitalists and left to starve while the capitalists no longer require their services. If, up to that time, the English bourgeoisie does not pause to reflect—and to all appearance it certainly will not do so—a revolution will follow with which none hitherto known can be compared. The proletarians, driven to despair, will seize the torch which Stephane has preached to them; the vengeance of the people will come down with a wrath of which the rage of 1793 gives no true idea. The war of the poor against the rich will be the bloodiest ever waged. Even the union of a part of the bourgeoisie with the proletariat, even a general reform of the bourgeoisie, would not help matters. Besides, the change of heart of the bourgeoisie could only go so far as a lukewarm justice-miliens; the more determined, uniting with the workers, would only form a new Girondes, and succumb in the course of the mighty development. The prejudices of a whole class cannot be laid aside like an old coat; least of all, those of the stable, narrow, selfish English bourgeoisie. These are all inferences which may be drawn with

the greatest certainty: conclusions, the premises for which are undeniable facts, partly of historical development, partly facts inherent in human nature. Prophecy is nowhere so easy as in England, where all the component elements of society are clearly defined and sharply separated. The revolution must come; it is already too late to bring about a peaceful solution; but it can be made more gentle than that prophesied in the foregoing pages. This depends, however, more upon the development of the proletariat than upon that of the bourgeoisie. In proportion as the proletariat absorbs socialistic and communistic elements, the revolution diminish in bloodshed, revenge, and savagery. Communism stands, in principle, above the breach between bourgeoisie and proletariat, recognizes only its historic significance for the present, but not its justification for the future: wishes, indeed, to bridge over this chasm, to do away with all class antagonisms. Hence it recognizes as justified, so long as the struggle exists, the exasperation of the proletariat towards its oppressors as a necessity, as the most important lever for a labour movement just beginning; but it goes beyond this exasperation, because Communism is a question of humanity and not of the workers alone. Besides, it does not occur to any Communist to wish to revenge himself upon individuals, or to believe that, in general, the single bourgeois can act otherwise, under existing circumstances, than he does act. English Socialism, i.e. Communism, rests directly upon the irresponsibility of the individual. Thus the more the English workers absorb communistic ideas, the more superficial becomes their present bitterness, which, should it continue so violent as at present, could accomplish nothing; and the more their action against the bourgeoisie will lose its savage cruelty. If, indeed, it were possible to make the whole proletariat communistic before the war breaks out, the end would be very peaceful; but that is no longer possible, the time has gone by. Meanwhile, I think that before the outbreak of open, declared war of the poor against the rich, there will be enough intelligent comprehension of the social question among the proletariat, to enable the communistic party, with the help of events, to conquer
the brutal element of the revolution and prevent a "Ninth Thermidor." In any case, the experience of the French will not have been undergone in vain, and most of the Chartist leaders are, moreover, already Communists. And as Communism stands above the strife between bourgeoisie and proletariat, it will be easier for the better elements of the bourgeoisie (which are, however, deplorably few, and can look for recruits only among the rising generation) to unite with it than with purely proletarian Chartism.

If these conclusions have not been sufficiently established in the course of the present work, there may be other opportunities for demonstrating that they are necessary consequences of the historical development of England. But this I maintain, the war of the poor against the rich now carried on in detail and indirectly will become direct and universal. It is too late for a peaceful solution. The classes are divided more and more sharply, the spirit of resistance penetrates the workers, the bitterness intensifies, the guerrilla skirmishes become concentrated in more important battles, and soon a slight impulse will suffice to set the avalanche in motion. Then, indeed, will the war-cry resound through the land: "War to the palaces, peace to the cottages!"—but then it will be too late for the rich to beware.

THE END.

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