

CHILDREN'S EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION 1842.

**REPORT by ANTHONY AUSTIN, Esq., on
the Employment of Children and Young
Persons in the Mines and Quarries in the
North of Lancashire, and on the State,
Condition and Treatment of such Children
and Young Persons.**

and

**REPORT by JOSEPH FLETCHER, Esq.,
on the Employment of Children and Young
Persons in the Collieries in the
neighbourhood of Oldham and on the State,
Condition and Treatment of such Children
and Young Persons.**

Edited by Ian Winstanley.

PICKS PUBLISHING

Published by:-

**PICKS PUBLISHING
83. Greenfields Crescent,
Ashton-in-Makerfield,
Wigan WN4 8QY
Lancashire.
Tel: (01942) 723675**

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COMMISSION

(UNDER THE GREAT SEAL)

FOR INQUIRING INTO THE EMPLOYMENT AND CONDITION OF CHILDREN IN MINES AND MANUFACTORIES.

VICTORIA, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland Queen, Defender of the Faith: To Our trusty and well beloved Thomas Tooke, Esquire, Thomas Southwood Smith, Esquire, Doctor in Medicine, together with Leonard Horner and Robert John Saunders, Esquires, two of Our Inspectors of Factories, Greeting:- WHEREAS, an humble Address was presented unto to Us by Knights, Citizens and Burgesses and Commissioners of Shires and Burghs in Parliament assembled, humbly beseeching Us that We should be graciously pleased to direct an Inquiry to be made into the Employment of the Children of the Poorer Classes in Mines and Collieries and the various branches of Trade and Manufactures in which numbers of Children work together, not being included in the provisions of the Acts for regulating Employment of Children and Young Persons in Mills and Factories and to collect information as to the time allowed each day for meals and as to the actual state, condition and treatment of such Children and as to the effects of such Employment, both with regard to their morals and their bodily health; NOW KNOW YE, THAT WE, reposing great trust and confidence in your ability and discretion, have nominated, constituted and appointed and do by these presentiments nominate, constitute and appoint you the said, Thomas Tooke, Thomas Southwood Smith, together with, Leonard Horner and Robert John Saunders, to be Our Commissioners for the purposes aforesaid and We do hereby enjoin you to obey all directions touching the premises which shall from time to time be given you, and any two or more of you, by one of our principle Secretaries of State and for the better discovery of the truth in the premises, we do, by these presentiments, give and grant to you, or any two or more of you, full power and authority to call before you such persons as you will judge necessary, by whom you may be the better informed of the truth in the premises, and to inquire of the premises and every part thereof, by all other lawful way and means whatsoever and We do hereby also give and grant unto you, or any two or more of you, full power and authority when the same shall appear to be requisite, to administer an oath or oaths to any person or persons whatsoever, to be examined before you, or two or more of you, touching or concerning the premises and Our further will and pleasure is, that you Our said Commissioners, or any three of you, do, with as little delay as may be consistent with a due discharge of the duties hereby imposed upon you, Certify to Us, under your hands and seals, or under the hands and seals of any three of you, your several proceedings in the premises; And We further will and command, and by these presents ordained, that this Our Commission shall continue in full force and virtue, and that you, Our said Commissioners, or any two or more of you, shall and may from time to time proceed in the execution thereof, and of every matter and thing therein contained, although the same be not continued, from time to time by adjournment: AND WE HEREBY COMMAND all and singular Our Justices of the Peace, Sheriffs, Mayors, Bailiffs, Constables, Officers, Ministers, and all other of Our loving Subjects whatsoever, as will within Liberties as without, that they may be assistant to you and each of you in the execution of these presentiments. And for your assistance in the due execution of this Commission, We have made choice of Our trusty and well beloved Joseph Fletcher, Esquire, to be the Secretary of this Our Commission, whose services we require you to use from time to time, as occasion may require. In witness thereof, We have caused these Letters to be made Patent. Witness Ourselves at Westminster, the Twentieth day of October, in the Fourth Year of Our Reign.

By Writ of Privy
Seal,

EDMUNDS.

**LETTER OF INSTRUCTIONS EXTENDING THE TERMS OF THE COMMISSION TO
“YOUNG PERSONS”**

Whitehall, February 11th, 1841.

GENTLEMEN,

THE QUEEN having been pleased to comply with the prayer of an humble Address presented to Her Majesty, in pursuance of a Resolution of the House of Commons, dated 4th. of February, 1841, ‘That Her Majesty will be graciously pleased to direct that the Commission appointees in answer to an Address of this House, on August 4, 1840, for the investigation of certain branches of Infant Labour, do include within its inquiry the Labour also of Young Persons designated as such by the provisions of the Factory Act’ I am delighted by the Marquis of Normanby to desire that you will include within your inquiry the Labour of Young Persons designated as such by the provisions of the Factory Act accordingly.

I am, Gentlemen,
Your Obedient Servant,
(Signed) F. MAULE.

*The Commissioners for inquiring into the Condition
of Children employed in Mines, &c.*

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CHILDREN'S EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION.

REPORT by ANTHONY AUSTIN, ESQ., on the Employment of Children and Young Persons in the Mines and Quarries in the North of Lancashire; and on the State, Condition and Treatment of such Children and Young Persons.

TO HER MAJESTY'S COMMISSIONERS.

GENTLEMEN,

1. THE Poor Law Union of Blackburn, in its three districts of Blackburn, Over Darwin and Oswaldtwistle, contain foundries, paper-works, paper-staining works, calico-printing works and coal-mines.

2. The latter being the most important, as regards the employment of young children, I shall make my statement concerning them first.

3. The returns are by no means complete and the time allowed for the investigation was not sufficient to enable me to make them so.

COLLIERIES. - Blackburn Union.

In the Blackburn district there is one colliery:-

No.1 LITTLE HARWOOD COLLIERY.

The children employed here are:-

1 of 10 years old, 1 of 11 years old, 1 of 12 years old. Not one of these can read or write and they do not attend Sunday schools or public worship. The wages average 3s. 2d. per week, the highest being 3s. 6d. and the lowest 2s. 6d.

Young Persons:-

1 of 14 years old, 1 of 15 years old, 2 of 17 years old. None of these can write, 4 can read and attend Sunday Schools but not public worship. The wages average 4s. 4¹/₂d., the highest being 5s. and the lowest being 3s. 6d.

The hours of work at this colliery are 8 per diem and no night work. No particular system of ventilation is adopted. The number of adults employed is 6. The seam of coal seam is 4 feet and the headings generally 6 feet. The drawers use the girdle and chain. It is said to be a well-regulated colliery.

No.2 In the OSWALDTWISTLE DISTRICT I have only obtained returns from two works. Mr. John Lomax's Colliery at Clayton-le-Moors, in the parish of Whalley.

Children employed:-

1 of 7 years old, 2 of 9 years old, 2 of 11 years old, 2 of 12 years old. Of these nine can write, 5 can read, 6 attend Sunday Schools, 6 attend public worship. The wages average 4s. 2d. per week, the highest being 6s. and the lowest 3s.

Young Persons:-

2 of 13 years old, 1 of 14 years old, 4 of 15 years old. None of these can write, 6 can read, 5 attend Sunday Schools, 5 attend public worship. The wages average 5s. 8d. per week, the highest being 6s. 6d., the lowest 4s.

Some are employed at piece work and some are paid by day wages, The hours of work are 9 per diem. The seam of coal is thick, and the headings admit of the employment of adults as drawers. Only one child is so employed. Choke-damp exists in this colliery but the ventilation by means of fire at one of the shafts is sufficient to prevent mischief. No 'accidents' have occurred. The number of adults employed is 57.

No.3 DUCKWORTH HILL COLLIERY, George Yates, Proprietor, situated in Oswaldtwistle Township, parish of Whalley.

Girls are employed as well as boys.

Of the male children the numbers and ages are:-

3 of 11 years old, 8 of 12 years old. No particulars are given of the state of education.

Of the female children there are:-

1 of 10 years old, 1 of 11 years old, 2 of 12 years old. No particulars given.

The hours of work are 9, the wages 5s. per week.

Young persons employed in the said colliery.

Males:-

3 of 13 years old, 4 of 14 years old, 5 of 15 years old, 4 of 16 years old, 6 of 17 years old,. No particulars given I returned the papers to have them completed but no satisfactory information was obtained.

The females are:

2 of 13 years old, 1 of 14 years old, 1 of 215 years old. No particulars given relative to education.

The hours of work are 9 per diem, the wages average 5s. per week.

All the above are paid by day wages. There are 31 adults employed at this mine. Horses and asses are employed to draw up the coal. All those enumerated above are drawers and draw by the belt and chain. The length of the run 120 yards. The weight of coal drawn 1¹/₂ cwt.

The seam of coal is here thin, being only 18 inches and the headings are cut away at the top to make the runs 30 inches high. Adults cannot therefore be employed as drawers.

The evidence respecting the conduct of some of the getters towards their drawers, and the wetness and badness of the runs, will be found from witness No.3A and No.4A. The pit is 28 yards deep. No particular system of ventilation is adopted.

No.4 The OVER DARWIN COAL-MINE, Messrs. Holden and Shorrocks. The Over Darwin district. Township of Over Darwin, parish of Blackburn.

The number of children under 13 years of age:-

1 of 10 years old, 2 of 11 years old, 1 of 12 years old. None can write, 2 can read, the same 2 attend Sunday Schools, none attend public worship.

The wages average 4s. per week, the highest being 5s., the lowest 3s. All these are drawers.

Young persons:-

1 of 13 years old, 1 of 14 years old. None can write, 1 can read and attends a Sunday School and place of public worship.

These are also drawers, and their wages average 6s. The number of adults returned is 4 and of these 4 adults not one can write, 2 can read and one attends a place of worship.

The drawers use the belt and chain and the weight of coal drawn is said to be 120lbs. The drawers work 9 hours, the getters work eight. They are paid by the quantity landed. The seam of coal is of moderate thickness and the gates or ways not less than 3 feet high. A little choke-damp exists occasionally but no loss of life has been caused by it. One young person was killed by a fall. They are wound up by a winch by the adults and only two allowed to descend together.

No.5 The ELESON-FOLD COAL-WORKS, Messrs. Blandwood's. Township of Over Darwin, parish of Blackburn.

The number of children:-

5 of 8 years old, 1 of years old, 6 of 10 years old, 3 of 11 years old, 5 of 12 years old. Not one of these can write, 17 can read, 16 attend Sunday Schools, 15 attend public worship.

Number of hours of work 8, the wages average 2s. 6d. per week, highest 3s. lowest 2s.

Young persons:-

There are 22 males between the ages of 13 and 18 but no particulars were returned. I sent back the paper for the insertion of the detail but it has not yet been again forwarded to me.

The number of adults is 39 males, no females.

A large steam engine is in use, viz., 46 horse power.

The ventilation is by means of shafts sunk in various parts of the mine to cause a current of air. The depth of the mine is 102 yards. The height of the gates or ways is only 2 feet in some places and the runs are 200 yards. The quantity of coal drawn is 3¹/₂ cwt. The boys draw by belt and chain, the girls assist by 'thrutching' (or pushing).

Carbonic acid gas occasionally makes its appearance but the ventilation is said to be sufficient to expel it and no lives have been lost within the last two years.

No.6 HEIGHT COLLIERY, Mr. Eccles Shorrock. Township of Lower Damer, parish of Blackburn.

Children:-

1 of 10 years old, 1 of 11 years old. None can write, all can read and attend Sunday School and church or chapel.

The hours of work are eight. The wages average 4s. per week and they are paid by quantity landed.

The above are all drawers.

Young Persons:-

3 of 13 years old, 3 of 16 years old, 1 of 17 years old as usual not One of them can write, 4 of them can read and attend Sunday School as well as church, chapel or conventicle.

Hours of work 87, wages average 6s. 6d., highest being 9s., lowest being 4s. per week. 8 are coal getters. The numbers of adults employed is only 4, all males.

The pit is entered by a drift or level at side of a hill. The height being 3 feet, the length 300 yards. The coal is brought to surface on a waggon running on iron tram-road and carrying about 2 cwt. of coal. The mine is ventilated by an upright shaft and no deaths have occurred within the last two years.

No.7 MARCH COLLIERY. Township of Over Darwin, parish of Blackburn.

Children employed:-

1 of 9 years of age. Not one can write, all can read and attend Sunday Schools and public worship.

The time of work in 109 hours and the ages 3s. 6sd. a week, the highest being 4s., the lowest 2s.

Young Persons:-

Total 3. The ages and particulars not given.

No.8 SOUGH COLLIERY, Mr. P. Smalley, Entwistle. Township of Over Darwin, parish of Blackburn.

Children employed:-

1 of 7 years of age, 2 of 11 years of age. Not one can write, all can read and attend Sunday Schools and public worship.

The time of work in 9 to 10 hours and the wages average only 3s. a week, paid by the piece, the lowest being 2s. 6d., the highest 4s. per week.

These are all drawers.

Young Persons:-

1 of 13 years of age, 2 of 17 years of age. Not one can write, all can read and attend Sunday Schools and public worship.

These three are principally getters of coal and earn 7s. 9d. a week on the average, some getting as much as 12s., some only 4s. 6d. per week.

The mine is ventilated by openings communicating with another mine, and by shafts constructed for the purpose. The contractor states in his return that for 20 years past no accidents have occurred from any cause, 'not even a finger broke.'

There is no school or sick-fund connected with the works and though every effort is made by the principle to put a stop to the utterance of bad language by the men, and of punishment towards the children, he has not been able effectually to prevent them.

The drawers use the girdle and chain and they are assisted by younger ones as thrutchers who become drawers when 11 or 12 years old. Only 1 adult is employed.

No.9 OLD LIONS COLLIERY, Mr. John Tattelsal. Township of Over Darwin, parish of Blackburn.

Children employed:-

2 of 9 years of age, 2 of 10 years of age, 3 of 11 years of age. No particulars given of the state of education. The wages average 6s. a week.

Young Persons:-

1 of 13 years of age, 2 of 14 years of age, 1 of 15 years of age, 1 of 16 years of age. Particulars of state of education and morals not given. The wages average 7s. 2d., the highest being 10s., the lowest 5s.

They are paid by quantity, not by time. The average number of hours being worked being 10 per diem.

Female.

1 of 14 years of age, whose wages are 5s. per week, hours of work the same as the males.

The workmen descend into the mine by a shaft 20 yards deep and are let down by one of the above-ground men.

Only one workman is allowed to descend at each turn. No accidents have occurred for the last two years.

The gates or ways are 2 feet 3 inches high, the runs 65 to 70 yards. The weight of coal brought by the drawers is about 150 lbs. They draw by the belt and chain. No firedamp is found here. The men are forbidden to strike the children

No school or sick fund, but the book-keeper teaches the children to read.

Number of adults employed, 10 males.

No.10 WINTER HILL COAL MINE, Mr. Mark Townley. District of Over Darwin, township of Tockholes, parish of Blackburn.

Children employed:-

1 of 11 years of age, 1 of 12 years of age. None can write, 2 can read and attend Sunday Schools and public worship. The wages average 5s. a week.

Young Persons:-

1 of 13 years of age, 1 of 14 years of age. 1 of these can write, 2 can read, 2 attend Sunday Schools and public worship. The wages 6s. Number of adults, 8

All the above are drawers, they draw by belt and chain. The length of the run is about 60 yards, the weight of coal 1 cwt., the heights of the headings 2 feet only.

No firedamp exists in this mine and no loss of life or injury has been sustained by any 'accident' for two years past.

By the forgoing statement it will be seen that, taking these statements where particulars have been given, of 45 male children, not one can write, 35 or 77.77 per cent. can read and the same number attend Sunday Schools and public worship.

I may say that 2 out of 3 of those returned as 'can read an easy book', know little more than the isolated letters of the alphabet.

Of the young persons (males) I have particulars of 25, 1 only of these can write and he is a relation of the person who rents and works the mine, 20 or 80 per cent. can read, 19 or 76 per cent. attend Sunday Schools, 15 or 60 per cent. attend public worship.

Of the females, these details are not given.

The average of the ages of the 63 children is 4s. 3d., of the 53 young persons, 6s. 7d.

The proportion of adults to young persons is as 100 adults to 50 young persons, the proportion of adult to children is 100 adult to 46 children. to both children and young persons, 100 to 95.

BURNLEY UNION.

As the collieries form a most important feature of this inquiry. I will here introduce those in the Burnley and Haslingdon Unions, from which I have got returns and complete my report on that branch of the subject.

No.1 MARSDEN LOWER PIT, Executors of the late J Hargreaves, Esq. Township of little Marsden, parish of Whalley.

Children employed:-

1 of 7 years of age, 2 of 11 years of age, 3 of 12 years of age. None can write, 4 can read, 6 attend Sunday School and public worship.

The wages of the youngest are 2s. 6d. a week, the average of the others 7s. 2¹/₂d., the highest being 10s., lowest 5s. Some are paid by piece-work, other by day-work.

Young Persons:-

2 of 13 years of age, 6 of 14 years of age, 1 of 15 years of age, 2 of 16 years of age 3 of 17 years of age. Of these not one can write, 10 can read, 12 attend worship.

The ages average 9s. per week, the highest being 12s., the lowest 6s.

The hours of work by day are 10, they sometimes work at night. No regular meal-time, they eat when they can find time.

The seams of coal are thick, the gates or ways 5 feet 6 inches high. Horses are employed to draw the coal. The young persons are there as door-tenders, or else helpers, to run of errands, fetch candles &c. The ventilation is effected by a fire at the upcast shaft, no foul or firedamp is found and no loss of life has occurred for 30 years past.

The number of adults employed is 48. No sick-fund or library,

No.2 BURNLEY HILL COAL WORKS. Executors of the late J Hargreaves, Esq. Township of Habergam Eaves, parish of Whalley.

Children employed:-

4 of 9 years of age, 2 of 10 years of age, 6 of 11 years of age, 8 of 12 years of age. None can write, all attend Sunday Schools and public worship and can read a little.

Young Persons:-

10 of 13 years of age, 11 of 14 years of age, 5 of 15 years of age, 6 of 16 years of age 5 of 17 years of age. None can write, 36 can read and attend worship, 35 attend Sunday Schools.

The wages averaged 6s. 10d. per week, highest 7s. 6d., lowest 6s. 6d.

The hours of work by day are from 8 to 10 according to the pleasure of the workmen. There is no work at night. All are paid by the piece. Some of the headings are 5 feet 6 inches high and then horses are employed. Others are 4 feet high. Children and young persons from 9 to 17 years of age are employed in these latter to the number of 46. The belt and chain is not used. Iron tram-roads and carriages in all the runs, which are from 150 to 200 yards long.

I visited the colliery. The machinery appeared to be in perfect order. A railroad from the shaft to the canal, and the carriages. As they are brought up from the pit, are conveyed by an endless chain to the wharf, emptied and then brought back again by the same chain.

The number of adults employed is 64. There is a sick-fund, lending library and Sunday School. No injury from fire or chokedamp, 1 life lost by the roof falling.

No.3 GAWTHORP and IGHTON HILL COLLIERIES. Miss Janet Shuttleworth, Townships of Padiham and Ighton Hill, parish of Whalley.

Children employed:-

2 of 10 years of age, 1 of 11 years of age, 3 of 12 years of age. None can write, 3 can read, 5 attend Sunday Schools and public worship.

The wages average 3s. 11d. per week, highest 4s. 6d., lowest 2s. 6d., hours of work 9 to 10.

Young Persons:-

1 of 13 years of age, 5 of 14 years of age, 4 of 15 years of age, 3 of 16 years of age, 3 of 17 years of age. Of these 3 can write, 14 can read and 12 attend Sunday Schools and public worship.

The wages averaged 8s. 5d. per week.

The hours of work amount to 8 or 10 and no regular time for meals, they eat when they can.

The seams now in working and winning are 28 inches, 3 feet and 5 feet respectively. None of the children draw by belt an chain, they assist adults in the mainways..

There is a school, lending library and sick-fund. The schools in connection with Miss. Shuttleworth's collieries are noticed by the Rev. T.G. James. (See evidence No.15.).

No.4 HAGGATE COAL-WORKS. Executors of the late J. Hargreaves, Esq. Townships of Briar's Cliffe, parish of Whalley.

Children employed:-

1 of 12 years of age, who cannot write but can read and attends Sunday Schools and public worship.

He is a drawer and earns 7s. a week.

Young Persons:-

1 of 13 years of age, who cannot write but can read and attends Sunday Schools and public worship.

His wages are also 7s. a week. There are only two adults employed.

The hours of work are from 8 or 10 as usual. No night work. Meal times are irregular.

The seams of coal are 4 feet, and consequently, no necessity of employing young children as drawers.

The ventilation is by up and down shafts and no injury from choke or firedamp or from any other cause for more than two years. There is a sick fund, library and school.

No.5 VICARAGE COAL MINE. Executors of the late J. Hargreaves, Esq. Townships of Briar's Cliffe, parish of Whalley.

Children employed:-

1 of 7 years of age, 1 of 9 years of age, and 3 of 11 years of age. Of these 2 can write and all can read. All attend Sunday Schools and public worship.

Wages average 6s. 1¹/₄d. per week, the highest 7s. 6d., the lowest 4s.

Young Persons:-

1 of 13 years of age, who cannot write but can read and attends Sunday Schools and some place of public worship.

Wages are 7s. 6d. a week.

The hours of work are from 8 in the morning to 4 in the afternoon, sometimes till 6.

The height of the headings is generally 3 feet 6 inches, the length from 150 to 200 yards. The drawers do not use the belt and chain.

The ventilation is by up and down shafts and no injury has been sustained from choke of firedamp.

Only 4 adults employed at this colliery. There is a sick fund, library and school.

No. 6 DRIFT MINE, Executors of the late J. Hargreaves, Esq. Township of Habergam Eaves, parish of Whalley.

Children:-

1 of 10 years of age, 1 of 17 years of age. Neither of these can read, both attend Sunday School and public worship.

Wages 6s. 6d.

Young Persons:-

1 of 14 years of age, who cannot write but can read and attends Sunday Schools and some place of public worship.

Wages 9s. average, one gets 11s. per week, the other 7s.

The hours of work are the same as those previously mentioned.

The seams of coal are 4 feet thick. No drawing by belt and chain and no necessity for the employment of children.

The ventilation is by up and down shafts and no loss of life has occurred for some years past.

The number of adults employed at this colliery is 10. There is a sick fund, a school and a lending library attached to these works. The regulations having been sent, I print them here for the information of the Commissioners.

RULES, ORDERS AND REGULATIONS OF THE COLLIER'S BURIAL SOCIETY, Held at Back Lane National School. Established October, 1836.

RULE I. - The true meaning and intent of the regulations following, and the sole design and purpose for which this society was instituted, is to make provision for the decent interment of every deceased member and, if the members are married, in the event of the death of their wives. And the members do collectively and individually disclaim all intention of applying the fund to any other purpose whatever.

RULE II - That any person employed in the collieries belonging to the late Colonel Hargreaves be eligible to become members.

RULE III - That at the commencement of the society every member shall pay the sum of one shilling; and the proceeds of such subscription, upon the death of any of the members shall be paid to the widow or next of kin to the deceased member.

RULE IV - That when it shall please Providence to call a member from his transitory world, every subscribing member shall put one shilling on the Saturday evening following, in order that there may be always be a fund ready to be immediately applied for the purpose specified.

RULE V - There shall be a treasurer, secretary and four stewards elected by a majority of the members.

RULE VI - That the secretary shall keep the books and accounts of the society send all notices of meetings and transact such other business as may be considered his duty. That the stewards shall assist the secretary in receiving the subscriptions and deliver them to the treasurer. They shall also attend the funeral of any deceased member to see that the funeral is in every way conducted in decent and becoming manner.

RULE VII - That a distinct and separate fund be raised for the purpose of purchasing scarves, gloves and staves for the use of stewards to attend funerals.

RULE VIII - That there shall be an appropriate place in Back Lane National School where the scarves, gloves and staves may be safely kept and if any of them shall be lost or damaged, the value of such scarves, gloves and staves shall be paid by the person who had previous possession of them.

RULE IX - That if any member shall neglect to pay his contribution on the Saturday immediately following the funeral of a member, he shall be fined sixpence and if he shall omit to pay three successive Saturday evenings he shall be excluded.

RULE X - That all the meetings of this society shall be held in Back Lane School, on any Saturday evening immediately following the death of a member, of which notice shall be given by the secretary.

RULE XI - That the widow of any deceased member shall, if she thinks proper, after the death of her husband, continue to pay the subscription and at her decease the next part of kin shall be entitled to the same sum which is allowed to any other member.

RULE XII - All fines shall be appropriated to augment the funds of the society.

Read and Approved.

Wm. THURSBY
Ormerod House, October 20th. 1836.

**RULES, ORDERS, and REGULATIONS of the COLLIER'S ACCIDENT SOCIETY,
Established, March 10th., 1834.**

RULE I - That seven members shall comprise the committee and shall be called upon at any time to transact such business as is necessary for the welfare of the society and to act in that capacity for six calendar months, at the expiration of which time a fresh committee to be chosen by a majority of the society assembled by notice.

RULE II - That there shall be two stewards and the same to act for six calendar months and at the expiration of that time the committee shall choose two fresh ones whose business shall be to visit every member who claims the relief of the society, according to the directions of the committee.

RULE III - That every member entering this society shall pay two shillings and sixpence and one penny per week for his subscription.

RULE IV - That if the above subscription is not adequate to meet the demands made upon the society, the committee shall, if they think fit, fix an advance on the same.

RULE V - That any member neglecting to pay his subscription for any longer period than two weeks shall be fined two-pence and of the neglecting of the same for any longer period than three weeks, four-pence and neglecting to pay the same for the fourth week, the committee shall have power to exclude him.

RULE VI - That any member removing to a greater distance than four miles shall appoint any one to pay his weekly subscription, or make an agreement with the committee to pay quarterly or half-yearly as the committee shall think proper.

RULE VII - That if any member should meet with misfortune or accident that may hinder him from performing or following his usual employment, shall receive from the stewards the sum of ten shillings per week for the period of six months, after which time the committee shall fix the allowance per week.

RULE VIII - That of any member meet with an accident during a state of intoxication, or by fighting or wrestling and can be proved by the committee or any other person before and to the satisfaction of the committee, shall receive no pay.

RULE IX - That of any member meeting with an accident shall give a notice to the steward on or before the third day after the accident, that he claims the benefit of the society, or he will make a trial to follow his usual employment and if he is not able to follow the same, he shall be entitled to the benefit of the society after such trial.

RULE X - That of any member of the society shall strike another member the same shall be fined two shillings and sixpence and if resentment or blows be returned, each member shall be fined that sum. Any member refusing to give evidence, being witness of the deed, when called upon by the committee, shall be fined sixpence.

RULE XI - That all moneys, subscriptions, &c., belonging to this society, shall be kept in the hands of Mr. E. Helm and he, after receiving the committee's authority shall pay all claims made upon the same.

RULE XII - That a public meeting be called every twelve months, when and where the books shall be examined and all other business transacted.

RULE XII - That any rule may be altered by calling a meeting by public notice specifying the same.

RULE XIV - That any boy may become a member of this society by paying half the entrance money, half the contribution, and half the benefits, and being subject to the above rules.

CATALOGUE of BOOKS in the Library established by the Rev. W THURSBY, M.A., for the use of his workpeople.

1. Life of Robinson Crusoe.
2. Life of Archbishop Leighton
3. Life of David Brainerd.
4. Life of Captain Cook.
5. History of Moses.
6. History of Joseph.
7. History of Prince Lee Boo
8. History of Mac. Ready.
9. History of Tom Higgins.
10. Isaac Jenkins.
11. Memoirs of John Knox.
12. Memoirs of Rev. Eli Parson.
13. Memoirs of The Reformers, Vol. 1.
14. Memoirs of The Reformers, Vol. 2.
15. Memoirs of The Reformers, Vol. 3.
16. Travels in England and Wales.
17. Travels in Southern France.
18. Travels in Northern France.
19. Travels in Southern Italy.
20. Travels in Northern Italy.
21. Travels in Southern Asia.
22. Travels in Northern Asia.
23. Travels in South Western Asia.
24. Travels in South America.
25. Travels in North America.
26. Travels in Africa.
27. Travels in Africa.
28. Travels in European Russia.
29. Travels in European Turkey.
30. Travels in Switzerland.
31. Travels in Germany.
32. Travels in Sweden, Denmark and Norway.
33. Travels in Arctic Travels.
34. Mungo Park's Travels.
35. Mungo: The little Traveller.
36. Arctic Voyages.
37. Voyages in the Arctic Seas.
38. Voyage through the Islands of the Pacific.
39. A Voyage through the Islands of the Pacific Ocean.
40. Anson's Voyage round the Worlds.
42. Bligh's Dangerous Voyage.
43. Byron's Narrative of the Loss of the Wager.
44. Shipwreck of the Alceste.
45. Shipwreck of the Antelope.
46. Historical Geography of the Holy Land.
47. Natural History of Remarkable Trees &c.
48. Natural History of Remarkable Insects.
49. Natural History of Remarkable Birds.
50. Natural History of Remarkable Beasts.
51. Natural History of Wonderful Fishes.
52. Natural History of Domestic Animals.
53. Natural History of Reptiles.
54. Natural History of Robins.
55. Natural History of Animals.
56. The Bee.
57. Picture of the Seasons.
58. Views of Creation.
59. Scripture Zoology.
60. Animal Sagacity.
61. Nature Displayed.
62. Reflections on the Wisdom and Power of God.
63. Sufferings of the American Missionaries.
64. Progress of the Gospel in Polynesia.
65. Missions in Labrador.
66. Civilisation and Christianisation of South America.
67. The Golden Treasury.
68. The Wreath.
69. The Village Observer.
70. The Guilty Tongue.
71. The Young Christian.
72. The Week.
73. The Holy War.
74. The Mother at Home.
75. The Village Church Yard.

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| 76. The Apprentice's Monitor. | 107. Short Narratives from Real Life. |
| 77. The Young Christian's Guide. | 108. Scripture Reader's Guide. |
| 78. The Retrospect. | 109. Companion to the Bible. |
| 79. The Miscellany. | 110. Heaven Opened. |
| 80. The New Robinson Crusoe. | 111. Labourers in the East. |
| 81. The Scrap Book. | 112. Christian Records. |
| 82. The Peddler. | 113. Narrations, &c., by Charlotte Elizabeth. |
| 83. The Schoolmistress. | 114. Token for children, Vol. 1. |
| 84. The Cottage Fireside. | 115. Token for children, Vol. 2. |
| 85. The Village Pastor. | 116. Alleine's Alarm to the Unconverted. |
| 86. The Christian Hearer. | 117. Short Memorials. |
| 87. The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit. | 118. Cheap Repository Tracts, Vol. 1. |
| 88. Destruction of Jerusalem. | 119. Cheap Repository Tracts, Vol. 2. |
| 89. Entertaining Medley. | 120. Memories. |
| 90. Poems. | 121. Anecdotes. |
| 91. The Manners and Customs of the Israelites. | 122. Letters to the Young. |
| 92. Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul. | 123. History of the Inquisition. |
| 93. Discourses on Christ's Death &c. | 124. History of the Christian Church, Vol. 1 |
| 94. Israel's Prayer in the Time of Trouble. | 125. History of the Christian Church, Vol. 2 |
| 95. The Pilgrim's Progress. | 126. History of the Christian Church, Vol. 3 |
| 96. Tracts by Mrs. Sherwood Vol.1. | 127. Familiar Treatise on Practical Mechanics. |
| 97. Tracts by Mrs. Sherwood Vol.2. | 128. History of the Useful Arts and Manufactures. |
| 98. Tracts by Mrs. Sherwood Vol.3. | 129. Hints for the Small Farmers in Ireland. |
| 99. Farmer Goodall and his Friend. | 130. Moral Essays. |
| 100. Fireside Piety. | 131. Cabinet of Useful Arts. |
| 101. Elizabeth Allen. | 132. Æsop's Fables. |
| 102. Balm of England. | 133. Elizabeth, or the Exiles of Siberia. |
| 103. Narratives. | 134. Selections from the Psalms &c. |
| 104. Lecture to Young Men. | 135. Baxter's Saints' Rest. |
| 105. Family Conversations. | 136. Pike's Persuavies to Early Piety. |
| 106. Scripture Stories. | |

ELIJAH HELM, Librarian
Counting House, Bank, Burnley, Dec. 19th., 1835.

Books delivered out every Saturday evening. It is particularly requested that they be kept as clean as possible.

No.7 BURNT HILLS. Executors of the late J. Hargreaves, Esq. Township of Habergham Eaves, parish of Whalley.

No Children Employed.

Young Persons:-

1 of 13 years of age, 3 of 14 years of age, 1 of 15 years of age, 2 of 16 years of age, 1 of 17 years of age. Not one of these can write but can read and attend Sunday Schools and some place of public worship.

Wages 8s. 6d. per week piece-work.

The hours of work are the same as those previously mentioned.

The seams of coal are 30 inches thick and the height of the gates or ways the same. The above 8 are all drawers.

There are 11 adults of whom it is stated that not one can read or write. These adults earn from 20s. to 24s. per week

No loss of life by gasses or falls. Usual mode of ventilation only required.

No. 8 FULL EDGE. Thomas Grimshaw, Esq. Township of Burnley, parish of Whalley.

Children:-

2 of 10 years of age, 2 of 11 years of age, 4 of 12 years of age. Of these one can write, 4 can read consequently 50 per cent. cannot read, 5 attend Sunday Schools 5 attend public worship.

Wages 4s. 3d. per week, the highest being 7s., lowest 2s. 6d.

Young Persons:-

2 of 13 years of age, 4 of 14 years of age, 3 of 15 years of age, 1 of 16 years of age, 3 of 17 years of age. Of these 2, can write, 5 can read and 7 attend Sunday Schools, 3 attend public worship.

Wages 8s. 9d. per week, the highest being 18s. 8d., lowest 7s.

Of the above children and young person 2 are trap-door tenders, 2 are gin-drivers, these are all children, 1 a coal-getter, is 17 years old, the rest drawers and hurriers. 30 adults employed.

The hours of work amount to 8 per diem, ordinarily the children working 1 hour less than the adults. The meals, as usual in this district, irregular, each one taking his own time and convenience.

The height of the main roads is 33 inches. No drawing by belt and chain is used, the coal is forwarded on tram-waggons containing about 3¹/₂ cwt., the younger assisting the stronger as thrutchers or pushers behind the waggon.

No loss of life at any time by gasses or falls. Carbonic acid gas is sometimes found but the usual mode of ventilation is sufficient to keep the mine clear.

There is no Sunday School, a sick fund, or lending library connected with these works.

No.9 HIGHER MARSDEN PIT. Executors of the late J. Hargreaves, Esq. Township of Little Marsden, parish of Whalley.

Children:-

1 of 8 years of age, 4 of 10 years of age, 1 of 11 years of age. None can write, 3 can read, and attend Sunday Schools, they also attend some place of public worship.

The wages 4s. 2d., highest 5s., lowest 3s.

Young Persons:-

2 of 13 years of age, 2 of 14 years of age, 1 of 15 years of age, 1 of 16 years and 1 of 17 years of age. None can write, 3 can read and attend Sunday School and public worship.

Wages 6s. 8¹/₂d. per week, the highest being 10s., lowest 3s.

8 drawers, 2 door-tenders, 1 horse-driver, 1 banksman 12 years old, 1 hooker-on at the endless chain 10 years old.

The headings are 4 feet 6 inches high, therefore no occasion for children as drawers. If brought in it is by their parents, to inure them early to underground work. The quantity drawn or pushed in the tram waggons in the runs is about 5¹/₂ cwt. requiring a strong young person and an assistant, the extreme distance is about 200 yards. No noxious gases are formed in this pit, no loss of life or limb from other causes.

The number of adults employed is 10.

No.10 FOXCLOUGH PIT. Executors of the late J. Hargreaves, Esq. TOWNSHIP OF GREAT MARSDEN, PARISH OF WHALLEY.

Children:-

1 of 8 years old, 4 of 10 years old and 1 of 11 years old. Total 6. None can write, 3 can read and attend at Sunday-schools; they also attend some place of public worship.

The wages average 4s. 2d; highest 5s., lowest 3s.

Young Persons:-

2 of 13 years old, 2 of 14 years old, 1 of 15 years old, 1 of 16 years old, 1 of 17 years old. Total 7.

None can write, 3 can read and attend Sunday-school and public worship.

Wages average 6s. 8½ d. per week; the highest being 10s. the lowest 3s.

8 drawers, 2 door-tenders, 1 horse driver, 1 banksman 12 years old, 1 hooker-on at endless chain 10 years old.

The headings are 4 feet 6 inches high and therefore no occasion for children as drawers. If brought in it is by their parents to inure them early to underground work. The quantity drawn or pushed in the tram-waggons in the runs is about 5½ cwt., requiring a strong young person and an assistant. The extreme distance about 200 yards. No noxious gases are formed in this pit and no loss of life or limb from other causes.

The number of adults employed is 28.

No.11 SIMONSTONE COLLIERY. Messrs. Hargreaves and Whitaker. Townships of Padiham and Simonstone, parish of Whalley.

Children:-

1 of 11 years of age, 1 of 12 years of age. Neither of these can write, only one can read and attends Sunday School and public worship.

The wages average 2s. per week, highest 2s. 6d., lowest 1s. 6d. One of these is employed as a waggoner, the other as a gin-driver.

Young Persons:-

One of 17 years of age, who cannot write or read and is not attending at a Sunday School and does not go regularly to some place of public worship, his earnings are 18s. per week at piece-work, the usual length of time employed is 10 hours. He is a coal-getter.

The seams of coal varies from 3 feet to 12 feet in thickness. All the drawing is done by horses or adults. No lives lost by accidents.

In this return a statement is made of the employment and qualifications of the adults amounting to 28. Only 4 of these can write, 1 of whom is the bookkeeper, 1 a salesman and engineer and 2 are banksmen. Only 14 of the 28 can read.

No.12 ALTHAM COAL MINE. Altham Mining Company. Township of Altham, Parish of Altham.

In this mine there is only one young person who is 14 years old and is a coal-getter.

The number of adults is 100, This drawing is all done by them in large tram-waggons containing 5 cwt. the runs being from 3 feet 10 inches to 4 feet 5 inches high. No loss of life has been sustained by gasses, or by falls, or other casualties.

In the Burnley Union the returns received by me give the following results-

There are 56 children, 105 young persons and 416 adults.

Of the 56 children only 3 can write, very little more than 5 per cent., 43 can read, about 77 per cent., 48 attend Sunday Schools, 85 per cent., 47 attend public worship, 85 per cent.

The wages average 6s. 3d. a week, the highest 7s., the lowest 1s. 6d.

Of the 105 young persons 5 can write, 4¾ per cent., 84 can read, about 80 per cent., 47 attend Sunday Schools, 85 per cent., 73 attend public worship, 70 per cent.

The wages average 8s. 4d. a week, the highest 18s., the lowest 3s.

Putting together the Burnley and Blackburn districts, we have the following results:-

119 children, 182 young persons, the total of adults is not given.

The number of those who can write among the children is not quite 3 per cent. Of those who can read is 77 per cent., and nearly the same proportion attend Sunday Schools and public worship. The wages average 6s. 5d. per week.

Of the young persons the proportion of those who can write to the whole number is 4¾ per cent., of those who can read 80 per cent. and about the same number attend Sunday Schools. Those who are regular in their attendance at some place of public worship are 68 per cent.

The whole of this district is part of the same coal-field varying in the thickness of the coal. In some places the headings are not more than 18 inches high in places. This was the case in the Bankmoor Mine into which I descended. The highest run did not exceed 2 feet. In these thin seams, or, as the technical term is, mines of 'little coal', children are employed as drawers.

I have given the numbers and ages and the general hours of work. Not many of these works carry on their labours at night. Where they do so they have regular relay hands and the shifts are usually eight hours. But where an occasional call or demand for coal arises, those who do not work regularly who at night experience the greatest suffering, for no relays of hands are provided and the getters will, when paid piece-work, work for many hours together, compelling their drawers, the children, to do the same. (See Evidence No.12). Sometimes worked twelve hours, sometimes more underground. And this happens at almost all those works which do not work regularly night and day.

The state of the place of work varies but in this district there are very few wet mines or on the other hand, mines which are so dry as to cause much dust. Where the mines are wet the suffering of the children is great (See evidence No.12).

The wet pit is not above 20 inch seam and had a foot of water in it. Could hardly keep his head out of water sometimes. He draws with a belt. The belt made boils on his belly sometimes. Was terrible hard work that. Got sores on his feet in the water.

This youth did not mind work for he says further on:-

Had rather work greatly hard to get his living than work less and not get so much.

NATURE OF THE EMPLOYMENT.

Another great evil is the want of sufficient height in the 'little coal' mines and the consequent ungainly position in which children and young persons are compelled to toil and to drag along burdens which would be as much as they could easily draw even in a favourable posture.

On the hardship of such labour as this I need not dwell. Every person of feeling will pity those poor children whose position in life has caused them to be subject to it.

That it does not excite a strong feeling of commiseration in the parents who send their children at an early age to this work, might surprise any one but use reconciles them to it. Many have been colliers themselves and see no reason why their children should not do as their fathers have done before them, forgetting, as age is apt to do, the sufferings they experienced and remembering only that by this toil they earned their bread and so must their children.

MEALS.

The irregularity in the meals is also a great addition to the suffering of the children. In many cases the young drawers are not allowed to stop work, but are compelled to eat their food while they are pushing or drawing their load and thus derive no benefit or even comfort from it. I refer to the evidence of the witness No.12.

Ate his dinner in the pit many a time it was both wet and dirty; did not do him much good; never made him sick; made his belly work eating it cold. It made the sweat run off him working all day, and so it did off all the drawers. They had not enough time to eat their dinner and kept working all day.

This state of things which is deplorable to contemplate, working up to the knees in water incessantly for eight hours, "sometimes for twelve or more", and having the sweat running off those parts of the body not immersed, eating cold food which occasionally produced diarrhoea, coming above ground in winter only after sunset and seeing no daylight for weeks or months together, retiring to their cold ill-covered beds, and perhaps with an insufficiency of food. The witness No.14 states in his evidence:-

I wish you could see them come in. They are as tired as dogs and throw themselves of the ground like dogs [he pointed to the hearthstone before the fire] We cannot get them to bed.

In some collieries they stop the engine for an hour in the middle of the day and as no coals are landed, the drawers cannot be employed in bringing them, to the shaft. The evidence of Mr. Townley, the relieving officer states:-

That at 11 years old he was employed in a pit as drawer. They stopped one hour for dinner and he found no inconvenience in eating underground. There was no dust where the drawers worked [this is a dry pit] and as he

had plenty of food he did not have any injury done to his health but generally speaking, he thinks it prevents them from thriving.

ACCIDENTS.

The accidents are few in this district. There is only one mine where firedamp exists. Mr. Bradley, surgeon, (No.11), states:-

That there has been only one accident from firedamp within the last 12 months. The man was not killed. Previous to that there were several accidents but only one man has been killed. This was at Dunken Halgh [From this mine I have no return.] Improvements have been made since and it is the fault of the men if they get hurt. The masters here, both printers and colliers are humane men.

Mr. Bradley stated that the man who was hurt, not killed, was amusing himself with lighting the gas as it issued from the fissures by a candle. The quantity must, therefore generally have been very small. In all the mines I have seen or had account of, men work by candles, and no necessity exists for the use of the Davy lamp.

HIRING AND WAGES.

The children and young persons are most frequently hired by the men under whom they work and then they receive 2d. out of every shilling earned by the getter. Sometimes they are paid by the week. The average amount of the earnings at each pit and the aggregate average has been stated in the preceding tables.

TREATMENT AND CARE.

This of course varies not only in some pits but according to the disposition of the man under whom each drawer works.

That any harsh usage is contrary to the wish, and even the peremptory orders of the proprietors or undertakers, is certainly the case almost in every pit. But that, as the colliers are (see No.8) "uneducated people and they are generally vicious," the children are, notwithstanding all the efforts of the proprietors, frequently ill treated. A little above he says, "They are very badly used in the mines sometimes." The evidence of Mr. Townley (No.5), states:-

The men are sharpish with the colliers. He has known children injured by being severely beaten. They beat them with pick handles, sometimes and he has known them crippled by it.

Mr. Richard Ashton No.1 says:-

There are two or three boys who went o the workhouse in Oswaldtwistle district to one of the other collieries. They were about nine years of age. The colliers treated them very harshly and their health was much injured when they returned to the workhouse. One in particular, who might be a stupid boy, his name is Bolton [it will be seen that this is not of the two boys he brings to me to give evidence of similar treatment], had black marks from the threshing he received.

Mr. Whalley, No.2 says:-

He had been in the habit of sending children from seven years old to nine from the workhouse to work in the coal-pits but was obliged to take them back because they were so badly used. This bad usage is general in this district. One Roger Taylor* was sent by him to Bank Moor Colliery† where he stayed 12 months. There he was sadly beaten &c. After nine months he was brought back and the doctor pronounced that he had been so badly used that he was not fit for work. [He was notwithstanding this, sent to another colliery. He is not ill-used there. He died of smallpox] The ill usage is beating them with the pick handle.

*This is not one of the boys brought to me.

†This colliery belongs to a gentleman who would by no means suffer any ill usage, if it came to his knowledge.

William Forrest, now 15 years 9 months, after several statements of ill usage says:-

At George Yates's he was 'caught' in the side by a pick handle by Joseph Eccles and it knocked him over. He was sick and obliged to be taken out of the pit. He never went to work for three days. It cuts him now sometimes in the afternoon if he runs like. He got 5s. a week wages and he gave it to an aunt who gave him plenty of meat.

Joseph Wareing gave similar testimony saying:-

He should not have been ill if he had not been beaten. He was beat because he had not the strength to keep his turn.

William Holt, No.9.

Has been beaten with a pick haum, hammer and lumps of wood, some as gets their legs broke with it, striking too hard and does not think of it, never seed any of it but he has heard tell of it. He has seen when they gotten an eye knocked out by whizzing stones at them [He is now a getter, now a drawer] and does not beat his drawer yet. He does not mean to.

I need not multiply these facts. In every return from the masters or from the agents of the collieries it is stated that no punishments are allowed and no complaints made, or the parties would be dismissed. Mr. Ashton, the overseer of Blackburn, also states that he has no complaint from the parent or children employed in his district. Mr. Hutchinson says he will endeavour to bring me one or two of the parents who can speak of the ill usage of their children but he does not know if he can, for there is 'scarcely one as dares.'^o (See Evidence No. 8). He did not persuade one to come. Mr. Hutchinson subsequently gave me the address, and I walked two miles out to find some. (See Betty Duxberry and her husband's evidence No. 17). They acknowledge the beating but say:-

There is not so much beating as there used to be. Mr. Brandreth would turn off any who did and Mr. Pickup the same. *The getter likes to master the drawers.* They have never heard of any misfortune happening from beating, or of their beating them *audacious.*

The witness No.12 says:-

Sometimes the getter loses coals and does not get paid for it. This is by the drawer putting a wrong stick in and then the drawer gets licked. Sometimes they hit them with the pick haum, sometimes they whiz coal after them. He has had his head broke with a bit of coal and had a swelling on his elbow which kept him a fortnight off work from a blow with the pick haum.

As to the care that depends upon their parents and of course varies according to their means or dispositions.

What passes underground in the dark tunnels in which the people work is not known even to the under-ground overlooker for the children dare not complain and he (the overlooker) can only be in one of the many burrows of which a coal-mine consists and cannot hear what passes in the others.

PHYSICAL CONDITION.

The evidence on this point is conflicting but the general opinion seems to be that the children are not unhealthy where well treated.

Mr. James Pickup, surgeon of Blackburn (See evidence No.6):-

He is not aware of any injury to the health of the young persons being derived from their employment.

Mr. C. Bradley, surgeon (See evidence No.13) says:-

But the children who work there are as well as the colliers themselves, in this neighbourhood, though pale from want of light and of oxygen in the air in those mines which are not well ventilated, generally in good health.

^oThis apprehension is general. Mr. Bradley (See evidence No.13) says he has endeavoured to persuade the parents of children, &c., to come to me but the answer is "We shall get nought by it."

On the other hand Betty Duxberry (See evidence No.17) says:-

They cannot thrive at such work, but there is the trade.

And again a little further:-

Colliers are all crooked and short legged. They are not like other men who work above ground but there were always colliers and there always will be. The boy who went first at five years old went with his brothers for his own pleasure. He ran errands and got candles and began to work (as a drawer) at seven years old. He has been poorly lately. He turns his feet out and his knees together. Drawing puts them out of shape. We had him above ground for a fortnight and thought of sending him to school.

From my own observations, I should say that they were generally thin, their chests hollow and of course pale with a general appearance of weakness and that they are short in stature.* Their clothing, when at work is only a shirt and drawers, or frequently only a thin pair of trousers or drawers. The witness No.17 says:-

They draw in their shirts, and had a bit of sackcloth put round their middle to keep them from rubbing their shirts and backs against the top. They work on their hands and knees, and the top rubs against their backs.

The witness No.9 says:-

The runs are dry except under foot. The children wear flannel dresses to go down in [because the water drops down the shaft so that the hooker-on is always wet], which they pull off and put in a dry place near the pit eye and they work nearly naked.

The temperature of the pits, especially the deeper ones, varying very little in summer and winter, no change of dress is necessary while at work. I have seen very few of them above ground and only in returning from their work. Their clothes are not ragged but of course they were black and dirty.

EFFECT OF THIS WORK ON AFTER-LIFE.

It does not appear that the working in collieries early in life is very injurious to the constitution. Mr. Robinson, relieving officer (See evidence No.14), says:-

Has been called upon to relieve some persons who work in coal-mines. Generally speaking, the children who work in coal mines are as healthy as any children in the neighbourhood. He has not observed any effects produced on the adults by working at an early age in coal mines.

In the quotation I have already given from Mr Bradley's (a surgeon) evidence, the colliers themselves in this neighbourhood, though pale, &c., are generally in good health.

Another witness, well acquainted with coal pits and the nature of the work in them (No.8), says:-

Those who work in the little mines, if you follow them on the road, you will see that they are crooked in the hams, generally bow-legged a little. If they are tall men they grow round in the back, in consequence of being too tall of their employment but they are not distorted. They are not an unhealthy race of man in these mines. They have generally good health.

Though not unhealthy, the crookedness and stooping must in some measure unfit them for other employments.

MORAL CONDITION.

Those who have received but little instruction, either religious or secular, cannot have a very correct idea of knowledge of their moral duties, and we shall not find perhaps among any set of men, so few whose education had hitherto been so little attended to as among adults working in the collieries. Their intellects are as little enlightened as their places of work. Darkness reigns throughout.

* Short children and men are chosen for this work, the taller they are, if possible, put to their employments.

In all probability the next generation will be better off in this respect, for great exertions are being made in every town and village to promote the cause of popular education.

Daily schools will be of no use to those who work throughout the week and are put to work, as in the small coal mines, at the early age of seven but in a great part of the district which I have visited, where the seams of coal are four feet or more in thickness, which is the case about Burnley and where young children are not employed, much good may, and in all probability, be effected.

At the present moment there are in the whole of this district a sufficient number of schools open at a small charge, for the education of the poorer classes.

I cannot attempt to give a list of the whole, but in the parish of Blackburn alone, I have a list given to me by the Rev. Dr. Whittaker, the vicar, of 39 schools connected with the Established Church. The average attendance at these schools is 6393 children.

GENERAL ACCOUNT of all the SCHOOLS within the Parish of Blackburn, in which Children are Instructed according to the Principles of the Established Church of England, from Easter Day, 1839 to Easter Day, 1840.

NAME OF SCHOOLS	Number on the books during the year		Maximum Attendance		Average Attendance	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
The Seven Blackburn Schools	1990	2017	1331	1405	1030	1072
Walton-le-Dale National School	173	154	134	110	110	91
Walton-le-Dale Sunday School	221	238	140	189	134	163
Bamber Bridge Sunday School	120	147	267	267		
Bashall's Day School	39	22	61	61		
Bashall's Sunday School			Merged in Bamber Bridge School			
Samlesbury Day School	12	6	12	6	12	6
Samlesbury Sunday School	118	162	105	113	90	104
Turner's Green Day School	30	45	20	34	15	25
Great Harwood Day School	69	12	45	10	40	8
Great Harwood Sunday School	175	207	105	127	90	118
Rishton Sunday School			No return			
Balderston Day School	24	24	17			
Balderston Sunday School	36	36	30	36	25	34
Mellor Brook Sunday School	33	37	33	37	22	30
Langho Day School	44	41	34	32	18	25
Langho Sunday School	79	70	43	46	37	43
Tockholes Day School	59	34	38	23	24	16
Tockholes Sunday School	137	198	124	180	93	127
Waterloo Sunday School	121	142	111	129	85	86
Over Darwin (St. James's) Day School	34	12	30	10	20	4
Over Darwin (St. James's) Sunday School	54	51	28	40	28	24
Over Darwin (Trinity Church) Day School	148	175	110	132	104	110
Over Darwin (Trinity Church) Sunday School	184	284	160	241	140	215
Over Darwin Culvert Sunday School	55	60	38	35	30	30
Over Darwin Pickup Bank Sunday School	117	106	96	106	80	86
Salesbury Day School	37	33	23	21	18	16
Salesbury Sunday School	172	208	122	178	90	145
Mellor Day School	36	30	34	26	32	24
Mellor Sunday School	103	150	88	100	60	82
Lower Darwin Day School	154	112	81			
Lower Darwin Sunday School	205	237	158	169	125	131
Feniscowles Day School	30	73	22	38	18	29
Feniscowles Sunday School	110	86	92	64	76	58
Witton Day School	88	89	75	75	65	65
Witton Sunday School	124	123	108	108	88	93
Blackburn Workhouse Day School	25	15	25	15	99	10
Blackburn Girl's Charity School		76		76		60
Total	10,532		7,879		6,393	
Return at Easter, 1839	9,194		7,259		5,758	
Increase	1,338		620		685	

Certified to be a true report According to the returns.
JOHN WILLIAM WHITTAKER, Vicar of Blackburn.

General Abstract of Annual Reports of the Parish of Blackburn since the Returns were first made.

	<u>Total Number of children.</u>
At Easter 1831	5,505
At Easter 1832	6,453
At Easter 1833	7,086
At Easter 1834	7,593
At Easter 1835	7,710
At Easter 1836	8,331
At Easter 1837	8,384
At Easter 1838	8,355
At Easter 1839	9,194
At Easter 1840	10,534

Certified to be a true report According to the returns.
JOHN WILLIAM WHITTAKER,
Vicar of Blackburn.

The number of schools, especially Sunday Schools, maintained by the Dissenters, I have every reason to believe is quite equal to this. I could not procure a general list and as I have not individual returns from all, a correct one cannot be made.

The owners of the collieries are very desirous of enabling the rising generation to obtain instruction and there are schools and lending libraries supported by them for the use of their workpeople, in some cases without pecuniary charge. The Rev. Thomas G. James says:-

There are three daily schools in the district. One is wholly maintained by Miss. Shuttleworth, containing an infant school and a room for children from four years old upwards. This school is situated in the centre of the collieries belonging to that lady. No charge is made for the tuition of those employed at her works.

Further on:-

There is every facility in this district of the education of all the children it contains but the demand for the labour of children in some measure prevents their attendance and a further cause is, the indifference on the part of the parents, and the unwillingness on the part of the children. [An instance is then given.]

The Rev. J. Birchall, incumbent of church near Oswaldtwistle, says:-

This chapelery contains a population of 9000. There are many Sunday Schools. The only daily education is in an infant school, well attended but manifestly insufficient. There is a great want of general education here. As a proof of it, one half of those who come to be married cannot write but as the daily schools would not succeed here from interfering with the hours of work, we have determined to establish night schools, to locate these schools in several parts of the parish and to begin by opening them three times a week gratis. Copy books for writing will probably be charged. We expect to see those who attend at the night schools attend also at the Sunday Schools, either as teachers or as scholars and by these means united, we hope to furnish them with secular and religious education without taking away their opportunities of work. They will be allowed to attend at these schools at any age and as long as they attend, we will find something useful for them to learn. I will attend to them myself. Up to this time the means of education have been very insufficient, although means pecuniary might at any time have been obtained. The opportunities now offered to the poorer classes are likely to be made use of, for the masters of the different works are determined, as far as possible, to require of the parents of those working there that they should attend the schools.

In the districts where the seam of coal is thick, and the young children are not employed, we do not find that the young persons of from 14 to 18 years old are better educated than those who in the other districts have commenced their employment younger. Up to recent periods the means have been wanting, and the necessity of instructing and enlightening the minds of the working classes not sufficiently appreciated by any part of the community.

Infant schools would be extremely beneficial in these districts could the parents be induced to send their children.

In towns where the parents are employed all day in factories, it is actually advantageous to them in a pecuniary point of view, to leave their children at such schools, even though they were indifferent to the benefits of education. The mothers of the colliers who live in villages being seldom employed from home, have no such inducement and would require some little urging by

the employers of their husbands and elder children to make them profit by such schools. In the present day, when the education of the poor is the subject of general interest, this would not be wanting and we may hope to witness not only the establishment of schools in every village but a race of children, who, before they go to work at eight years old, may have acquired the power of improving themselves whenever occasion called for it. Reading, once mastered, is never forgotten.

SLATE QUARRIES AT KIRKBY IRELETH, NEAR ULVERSTON.

There are extensive slate quarries and a stone saw-mill belonging to the Earl of Burlington. Several of the former are let, some of them and the mill are under the superintendence of his Lordship's agent, Mr. J. Jopling.

There are about 100 children and young persons employed at these quarries &c., about half of them under 12 years of age.

The occupation of these boys being principally driving carts, through the tunnels, which are in this place all open to the air at both ends, and not of any considerable length, approached too nearly to an agricultural labour to need further investigation than is contained in the statements of the witnesses Nos. 20 and 21.

The boys employed in carting iron-ore at the iron mines in this part of the country were not subject to my inquiry. They are not employed by the mining company but are the servants of farmers of whom the carts are hired by the mining companies and do not work in numbers together.

COPPER MINE AT CHURCH CONISTON.

I visited a copper mine belonging to the Coniston Mining Company. A considerable number of young children and young persons are employed here.

Their occupations are above ground and are principally washing and sorting stones which contain the ore. The number is as under

Children - Males.

3 of 7 years old, 3 of 8 years old, 8 of 9 years old, 5 of 10 years old and 8 of 11. Total 35

Young Persons.

10 of 13 years old, 8 of 14 years old, 12 of 15 years old, 3 of 16 years old and 2 of 17 years old. Total 35.

Of these 70 children and young persons, there are only 8 or 11½ per cent. can write. Of these 8 only one is under 13 years of age.

The number who can read amounts to 63, or 90 per cent. Those who attend Sunday Schools are 53 or nearly 76 per cent. 81 per cent. attended public worship.

The wages average 3s. 5d per week, the highest being 8s., the lowest 2s.

Females.

1 of 6 years old, 1 of 7 years old, 2 of 9 years old, 4 of 10 years old, 3 of 11 years old and 5 of 12 years old. Total 16.

Of these not one can write, 154 can read and 14 attend Sunday Schools. 14 attend public worship.

The wages average 3s. 7½d. per week, the highest being 4s. 6d. the lowest 2s. 6d.

231 adult males and 7 females are employed.

HOURS OF WORK.

The hours of work are from seven o'clock in the morning till six o'clock in the evening in summer but as the work is almost in the open air, and a lighting of the place not very practicable, no work is done in winter before or after light. One hour is allowed at mid-day for dinner.

In the mines where adults are employed, the work is carried on day and night, except on Sunday on which day no work is done. The shifts are eight hours, three sets of hands being engaged. Thus each set labours 8 hours out of the 24.

NATURE OF THE EMPLOYMENT.

The nature of the employment of the children and young persons, male and female, is various. When the ore is brought (by waggons on a tramroad) to the open air, it is broken by some boys and girls* with hammers. For this they get paid 1½d. per barrow, about half a cubic yard.

It is then washed and broken while still wet in another shed by smaller boys and girls. In this shed the ground and the tables on which it is broken are always in a wet state. The children wear the Lancashire clog with a sole of wood about 1 inch or 1¼ inch thick which is the best protection and there is no necessity for getting their body clothes wet. They are obliged to handle the cold, wet stone constantly with one hand and this in winter time must be painful employment. There the ore is sorted. The next preparation for the children is what they call tubbing. This used to be done by hand by the children, and was by far the worst part of the work. [When I was in Ireland, at Banmahon, in 1834, it was so performed.] This tubbing is now in the more modern phraseology, called jigging and is performed by machinery. The ore, when passed through a crushing-mill, is placed in large sieves, formerly held in the hands of children who stooped with them over a tub or a small reservoir of water and agitated them till the ore separated from the stone, but now, immersed in a tub or reservoir each sieve is agitated by machinery driven usually by water power. After a certain quantity of agitation the water is let off and the refuse is separated from the ore by the boy, who holds in his hands an iron scraper for that purpose. This is performed only at considerable intervals of time, and it is scarcely necessary (though perhaps not easily avoidable) to wet even their hands. This work is performed in a shed open in the front. Another employment is separating with shovels certain portions of finely pounded ore, which is brought down by a stream of water from the stamper. The ground of the shed is always damp, or even wet but as the work is performed by shovels there is no need of getting wet in any other part than the feet or soles of the clog, if the clog be waterproof.

The children suffer considerably from the cold, though in severe frosty weather no work is done and they of course, complain when they get home. A witness (Ann High, No.27) who has four children working at the mines says:-

“When the children work in winter they complain of the cold a little, It does not give them chilblains. They could not work for a good bit in the bad weather.” In the same page, witness No. 28 says, “Never any ill effects produced by the cold in winter but it is very severe. No persons are employed in drawing, as in some coal-pits. Horses only do this work, the adits being made high enough by cutting away top and bottom to admit them”

STATE OF THE PLACE OF WORK.

The places of work for the children and most of the young persons are described above. One or two of the boys who are apprenticed to the mining business work underground.

The mine is entered by level adits, which are from five to six feet high and three feet wide. The one I entered was rather wet from the drippings of the roof, below this there are other levels.

The shaft of the mine which leads the lowest level is descended by ladders or steps, each ladder being not more than 24 feet long and resting upon a platform or landing-place sufficiently large to prevent the descent of anything which might fall beyond the foot of the ladder. This precaution is necessary because the men carry with them a considerable load of tools which are slung at their backs. Occasionally one of these slips and falls out. Those below would run great risk of being killed if this mode of construction were not adopted. [The same method is used in Cornwall at some of the deep mines.] The angle at which the ladder is placed if carefully attended to by Mr. Barrett and is always that which is the easiest of ascent and descent. The period of work under ground called eight hours but seldom exceeds seven.

**This work is done in a shed having a roof and walls on three sides, open to the air on the fourth side.*

ACCIDENTS.

Accidents rarely happen.

Every possible precaution is taken and there are strong coverings of timber over the ladders at every 10 or 20 fathoms. One man was killed within the last two years though his own negligence by falling into a shaft.

WAGES.

The amount of wages earned by the children and young persons had been already stated. The generality of them are paid daily wages. About half a dozen dressers of ore are paid by the quantity. Another occupation, wheeling the ore from one place to another, is sometimes paid by the barrow, about half a cubic yard, i.e. 18 inches cube. The master or head superintendent pays them.

TREATMENT AND CARE.

Great attention is paid by Captain Barrett, a proprietor and superintending agent, to the welfare of these youths and no corporal punishments are inflicted. Witness No.27. and her companions, confirm this. Not only is their physical welfare attended to but their moral also.

There is a sick fund also but this is confined to the adults.

The Rev. Thomas Tolming, the incumbent, said that "Mr. Barrett, the superintendent of the copper-mine, is particular as to the character of those he employs," (No.29), "They are therefore not so much demoralised as might be expected by their assembling together in great numbers and hearing the conversation of adults."

Their physical condition is good.

Their work is in the open air, with protection from storms of wind and rain and every attention is given to prevent all unnecessary exposure to inclemency of climate. I need not therefore dilate on this point.

I have the honour to be,
Gentlemen,
Your most obedient servant,
ANTHONY AUSTIN.

EVIDENCE COLLECTED BY ANTHONY AUSTIN, Esq.

No.1 Mr Richard Ashton, relieving officer of the Blackburn district. May 18th.

At the foundries the young persons employed are principally apprentices about 14 years of age. Some few boys are employed younger but not under 12 to 14 years of age. At the only colliery* in this district there are not more than about 8 boys employed who draw the coal from the place where they dig it out to the shaft. The headings are said to be 2¹/₂ feet. He thinks they work 8 hours a day. There are a good many accidents in the collieries generally, but not in Mr. Clark's. He sees the children when they come up and had not seen anything in their appearance which indicated that their work injured their health. They generally become colliers when they grow up. The colliers are a low race and their appearance is rather decrepit. There were 2 or 3 boys who went from the workhouse in the Oswaldtwistle district to one of the collieries, they were about 8 9 years of age. The colliers treated them very harshly and their health was much injured when they returned to the workhouse. One in particular (who might be a stupid boy, his name is Bolton) had black marks upon him from the thrashing he received. He says he will bring a boy to me. He has heard no complaints from the parents of the children employed in any of the places named in his return of the treatment of the persons working there.

(Signed) RICHARD ASHTON, Relieving Officer.

No.2 Mr. Thomas Whalley, relieving officer of the Over Darwin district, Blackburn. May 19th.

He is acquainted with the nature of the employment of young persons in the collieries. The seams in the mines in his district are very thin. The headings are not more than one yard high, and the children stoop at the work and are greatly crippled by it. When they get to be men they are old men and they are used very badly used the men under whom they work. He has been in the habit of sending children from 7 to 9 years old from the workhouse, but was obliged to take them back because they were so badly used. This bad usage is general in this district. One Roger Taylor was sent back to Bank Moor Colliery where he stayed 12 months. There he was badly beaten. After 9 months he was brought back and the doctor pronounced that he had been so badly used he was not fit for work. After some time the doctor got him right again and he went to Mr. Simpson's and Co.'s colliery where he died but it was the smallpox that killed him. He is not aware that he was ill-used at Simpson's colliery and he went to Sunday School with the children of the man he worked under. He has been applied to since for children to work in the collieries but he does not like to send them. The ill usage is beating them. Sometimes it is down with the pick handle. He never knew a broken limb from it but the back had been covered with bruises. The hours of work depend upon the demand for coal. They sometimes have to work as far as 10 hours under ground and have their meals under ground. Accidents do happen but from the carelessness of the men, it is not the master's fault. The cause is generally from the men going down when a basket is coming up which they ought not to do.

No.3. William Forrest.

He is 15 years 9 months old and now works in a cotton factory. He did not work in the colliery for 5 years and he began at 8 or 9 years old when he drew. He had a strap round his middle and a basket was fastened to it. He does not know the weight of coal it contained. It was hard to draw. The place was always knee deep in water, sometimes up to his belly and he worked for 8 hours. They went on their hands and feet and always crawled that way. Sometimes when he was tired he had to stop and then he was always licked with a strap. He always came up at noon for meals and sometimes for an hour, sometimes three-quarters. He did not come up more than once. He had no food underground, it was too wet. He worked in a flannel shirt which was dry when he went down but wet through before he got to the bottom. The place was cold because of the water. If it had been dry, it would have been hot. Sometimes they would hit us with a pick handle. When he was at George Yates's, he was caught in the side with a pick handle by Joseph Eccles and it knocked him over. He was sick and obliged to go out of the pit an could not go to work for three days. He

*Little Harwood Colliery, Mr. Clarke's.

went to a pit for a week and then back to the workhouse. His legs swelled there and he always thought it was from the blow in the side. It cuts him sometimes in the afternoon if he runs. He got 5s. a week and gave it to his aunt who gave him plenty of meat. Sometimes he had one or two days play in a fortnight on account of water in the pit or too many coals on the bank. He went to Sunday School there sometimes and goes now. He can read but cannot write.

No.4 Joseph Wareing.

He is going on 10 and is in the workhouse now. He worked at a colliery at Cheeseden where he drew coal. He also worked at George Yates's colliery which was terrible wet. The men sit on a board and they lade the water out once in half an hour. They sometimes strouch. Strouching is the hardest work. At Cheeseden, which is a dry pit, he was badly used sometimes when he got the sticks wrong. Billy Bobby Yates, (the man he worked for) got him to the end of the run and beat him with the pick handle. Sometimes he got a stick to lick him with. The pick haum was the worst. He stayed half a year there and when he got ill from being beat he was sent back to the workhouse.

When at Cheeseden he stayed underground from 4 in the morning till 7 at night very often every day. They work longest hours at that pit than anywhere else. He eats his breakfast before he went down. At 10 o'clock he had some bread and butter and had a good appetite when he ate it. The place was hot but not dusty. He ate again at 12 when they stopped for half an hour. He kept drawing and eating at 10 o'clock. He had no bagging and his supper was at 7 when he got home. He should not have been ill if he had not been beaten. He was beaten because he had not the strength to keep his turn. He could not draw as much as the others. He went in August, 1840 and came back sick in March, 1841. [Mr. T. Whalley, who was present said they, (speaking of this and the proceeding witness) were so bad he did not think they would recover. It was owing to ill-usage.] He goes to school in the workhouse and he can read but not write.

No.5 Mr. Townley Townley, relieving officer of the Oswaldtwistle district of the Blackburn Union.

At the collieries one half of those employed are children under 13 years of age, [correcting himself he said] the young persons and children would average one half of the whole number. They take them in young, particularly in this district, because the mines are low mines, and the young ones answer the best. [Mr. Westwell says, the height of the runs is from 20 to 30 inches.] They walk on their hands and feet and have a strap round their middle from which a chain goes between their legs and the weight of coal in the basket is 112 lbs. He worked himself in the colliery at 11 years old and found it hard work. He worked for 4 years but seldom more than four hours a day. (They work longer now, generally 10 hours.) [or scarcely so much says Mr. Westwell, often only 9]. They stopped an hour for dinner and he found no inconvenience in eating underground. There was no dust where the drawers worked and he had a good appetite and he had plenty of food. He did not have any injury done to his health but, generally speaking, he thinks it prevents them from thriving. The men they work under are sharpish with the children, more severe than printers. He has known children injured by being severely beaten. They beat them with a pick handle sometimes and he has known them crippled by it. Stopping long at work, too, prevents them from thriving. If they had worked at the colliery from 8 till 20 years of age, they would not be very fit to undertake any other employment. If they continue working at the colliery, they seldom live so long as at their employments. He had men on his books at 65 who were infirm as others who have been hand-loom weavers or agricultural labourers at 80.

(Signed) TOWNLEY TOWNLEY.

[Mr. John Westwell, an under-steward to Sir Robert Peel, was present the whole time and was referred to by Mr. Townley on points regarding the state of the collieries.]

No.6 Mr. James Pickop, of Blackburn. May 23rd.

He is surgeon to the Melton and Oswaldtwistle districts of the Blackburn Union. He has been resident between 20 and 30 years in the district before his appointment. Except for a few accidents no cases have been brought to him from coal mines. Those arose from carelessness of the children in descending. He should not say that in the district he has attended the hours are not much and he is not aware of any injury to the health of the young persons being derived from their employment. The hours are from 8 in the morning till 4 in the evening. He has frequently seen them going and coming at those hours. The pits are small and are not much liable to firedamp or fogdamp. He has no further information to give me on the subject.

(Signed) JAMES PICKOP.

Mr. Gaulter, the surgeon of the Over Darwin may give more information.

No.7 Mr. William Gaulter, of Over Darwin. May 24th.

He has practised as a surgeon 24 years in this neighbourhood. Those who work in collieries at an early age, when they arrive at maturity are generally not so robust as those who work elsewhere. They are frequently crooked (not distorted), bow-legged and stooping. He has not found that the work produced any particular disease. They are not incapacitated or less qualified as regards the physical powers, for undertaking any other employment but they improve very much in physical appearance and strength when put to other businesses above ground. The children go to the collieries as young as 7, perhaps younger. They work in the pits only 8 hours a day. He has only heard this and does not know from personal knowledge. Generally the collieries are dry in this vicinity but they are occasionally subject to blackdamp or were so many years ago. Deaths from that cause have not occurred for nearly 20 years and firedamp never occurs. There are often accidents from the heading or roof fall in or from descending the shaft. He has known 6 killed at one time by the upsetting of a basket. This was not the fault of the owner but of the men and boys themselves.

(Signed) WILLIAM GAULTER.

No.8 Mr. Wm. Hutchinson.

He has resided in the parish 24 years and served the office of guardian, assessor of taxes, land agent to Mr. Hilton and surveyor to the stone-mines to Lord Hilton and is a land valuer. Children at the print-works are employed as young a 7 years old. There are about 120 colliers, that is, men working in the coal pits. Each of these men had a drawer, boys or girls, but chiefly boys here. Very few girls go into the mines. They draw by a belt and chain. The belt is round their middle and the chain goes between their legs. The thickest main we have is one yard, the smallest coal 15 inches but they take off the top until it is 2 feet 3 inches high, The children go on their hands and feet. The getters of coal, who are from 16 years old and upwards, lie on their side or sit in a curved posture. Those who work in the little mines, if you follow them on the road, you will see that they are crooked in the hams, generally bow-legged a little. If they are tall men they grow round in the back in consequence of being too tall for their employment but they are not distorted. They are not an unhealthy race of men in these mines, they generally have good health. The drawers, who are children, work longer hours than the men, because the men get the coal in 8 hours and leave the children to draw it which takes them an hour longer and sometimes more than that. The children complain when they come out. They are very badly used in the mines sometimes. He has heard of getters beating their drawers with a strap. Some beat and some do not beat at all. Those who beat generally beat severely because they are uneducated people and they are generally vicious. [To the question whether Mr. H. knew any of the parents who could give me a history of beatings, he answered, "There is scarcely one who dares." On being assured that no one would be informed of what they said, he said he would try and find one or two.] The mines in this neighbourhood are all thin. Those near Burnley are generally 4 feet mines and they are in the hands of able men who work them well. Fewer accidents happen there than here. It is in the thin mines, worked by little men, (i.e. men of small capital) that there is the greatest oppression to the working people and the most accidents.

May 25th. - Going to Red Delph Pit, Over Darwin. I met the two following witnesses:-

No.9 William Holt.

He is going on 19 and works at the Red Delph Pit. He gets coal. The seam of coal is about 20 inches average and the roof is cut away about 1 foot. He crawls them on his hands and knees and sits on a board and works the coal before him. [He showed me how.] They take their meals in their work. They go to work in the morning and have only one meal a day when he stops 20 minutes to eat it. He comes away at 6 o'clock, sometimes 5. When in full employ he works 10 hours by the piece, 12 tubs for 1s. 10d. and he can do 12 in a day but they are never in full work lately. There are about 15 altogether, most as young as us [Both say it is a more healthful work than in the factories.] There are pits where they can not get more than 15 inches of heading and they should have to learn to work there not being used to it. It does not do for them when it is so low but ours is not too low, we can stretch our neck up. He was a drawer ever since he was 6 years old. He thrutches at first and afterwards drew by the belt. He had leifer thrutch than draw. Some thrutched with their head because they cannot thrutch enough with their hands alone. Thrutching makes a gathering in the head and makes them very ill and yet, the getters make them do it and beat them if they do not. He has been beaten with the pick haum, hammer and lumps of wood and there are

some who gets their legs broken by it, striking too hard and [the striker] does not think of it. He has never seen any of it but he has heard of it. He has seen when they get an eye knocked out by whizzing stones at them. He does not beat his own drawers and does not mean to do so. Some beat other drawers than their own. He can read and is learning to write. He has been to Sunday Schools but does not go now. The work has been so slack they can not find clothes to go in. His brother sets him copies and so he learns to write.

At Walsh's coal mine the water drips down the shaft so that the hooker-on is always wet. He is a grown up person. The runs are dry except under foot. The children have flannel dresses to go down in which are pulled off and put in a dry place near the pit eye and they work nearly naked.

No.10 William Almond.

He will be 20 on the longest day. He says they start in about 7. He can read but not write.

[William Almond was present the whole time and confirmed the statements of William Holt.]

No.11 C. Bradley, Esq., surgeon, Inspector of Children under the Factories Act.

As to the collieries he was appointed surgeon to a colliery and he had been making inquiries. The clerk told him that there had been only 1 case of sickness at his colliery for the last 12 months and that was from smallpox. Children are employed there from 9 years old upwards. The effect of working in the damp and in such confined places is that they get sores on their feet, (and they also get scratches on the back from rubbing it against the top where the mines are low) The sores on the feet are the nature of chilblains. In some mines they are not annoyed by them but in others, according to the quality* of the water they are more or less so. He has never had any cases brought before him arising out of injuries inflicted by the punishments of the coal-getters on the children employed there. The position in which colliers work, i.e. the drawers, would appear to impede growth and to be injurious to health, but the children who work there as well as the colliers themselves in this neighbourhood, though pale from want of light and oxygen in the air in these mines which are not well ventilated, generally in good health. He is not aware of any ill-ventilated ones in his neighbourhood. The hours of work in the collieries are from 8 in the morning to 4 in the afternoon. They do not regularly come up for dinner they are more or less so. He has never had any cases brought before him arising out of injuries inflicted by the punishments of the coal getters on the children employed there. The position in which colliers work, i.e. the drawers, would appear to impede growth and to be injurious to health, but the children who work there as well as the colliers themselves in this neighbourhood, though pale from want of light and oxygen in the air in these mines which are not well ventilated, generally in good health. He is not aware of any ill-ventilated ones in his neighbourhood. The hours of work in the collieries are from 8 in the morning to 4 in the afternoon. They do not regularly come up for dinner. The eating underground is not injurious, except in cases mentioned before, where there is not sufficient oxygen for want of ventilation. He has not observed any effect on their health in after-life from working in collieries. An accident occurred at a new pit which was being sunk. A furnace was at the bottom and the rope being new, and too long, folded at the bottom and getting too near the furnace was scorched. In consequence it broke when it went down next with two boys and they were killed. There had been 1 accident from firedamp within the last 12 months, the man was not killed. Previous to that time there were several accidents but only 1 man was killed, This was at Dunken Halgh. Improvements have been made and it is the fault of the men if they get hurt. The masters, here, both printers and colliers are humane men.

Accrington, May 28th., 1841. (Signed) CHRISTOPHER BRADLEY, M.R.C.S.

No.12 John Galloway, drawer, or sometimes getter at Park Colliery near Oswaldtwistle.

He is going on 15. He sometimes draws and sometimes gets coal. He draws when no coal is wanted and has been a drawer for about 3 years. He works in a dry pit but has worked in a wet one. He likes the dry pit the best. He has never caught a cold for working in a wet pit but he has got sores on his feet and he does not get sores now. The seam is 30 inches and he can almost stand upright. He thrutches a waggon. The wet pit was not above 20 inch seam and had a foot of water in it and he could hardly keep his head out of the water sometimes. He drew with a belt basket (wiskets) and the belt made boils on his belly sometimes. That was terrible hard work that was. He got kicked many a time. There are some getters faults† the drawers how good they be.

* *Mr. B. associates the sores with the quality of the water because they do not occur in all wet mines.*

† 'Faults', i.e. find fault with.

His getter kept a stick to lick him with. He sometimes worked 12 hours a day, sometimes more underground. He ate his dinner in the pit many a time. It was both wet and dirty and did not do him much good but it never made him sick. It made his belly work eating it cold. The work made the sweat run off him working all day. He had rather work 'greatly hard' to get his living than work less and not get much. He gets 7s. a week. His own sister draws for him now and she is 12 years old. She gets 6s. a week. She likes being below very well. He likes working at the bottom better than the fields above. There is more pleasure. Anybody would like a dry pit very well if he did not get licked none. Some as gets licked very badly and does not like going. Sometimes they (the getters) loses coals and does not get paid for it [this is by the drawer putting in a wrong stick] and then the drawer gets licked. Sometimes they hit them with the pick haum, sometimes they whiz coal after them. He has had his head broke with a piece of coal and a swelling on his elbow which kept him a fortnight off work from the blow of a pick haum. He worked with a chap called Cator but he does not know his regular name, they call him Cator for a nickname. His father was killed by the falling in of the roof but he never thinks about that and is not afraid of it. He likes going down in the morning and sometimes goes down at 6 and come out at 3 or 4. They are beginning to be slack now.

No.13 Charles Bradley, Esq., surgeon.

He has endeavoured to persuade some of the parents of the children employed in the different works in the neighbourhood to come to be examined on the subject but their answer is, "We shall get nought by it," [not one has come] by which he infers that they are apprehensive of any alteration being made which should have a tendency to deprive them of the profits of their child's labour.

[The above is part of a conversation which I had with Mr. B on meeting him in the road at Accrington.]

No.14 Mr. J. Robinson, relieving officer.

He has no knowledge of the hours of work in the collieries except seeing the people go to their work in the mornings and return in the evenings. They go abut 6 or 7 in the morning and they return between 3 and 4 o'clock in the afternoon. The coal mines are not in full work here and there are always plenty of hands so that they do not need to work long days. He has been called upon to relieve (lately) some persons who work in the coal mines because they cannot obtain employment. Generally speaking, the children who work in the collieries are as healthy as any children in the neighbourhood. He has not observed any effect produced on the adults by the working at an early age in the coal mines. They do not begin very early here perhaps a stout boy of 10 or 11 years may get in, very rarely so young. The seams are generally thick here but there are some thin but he is not aware that younger children are employed. Very few accidents occur but when they do it is generally from the roof falling down and not from firedamp or chokedamp. There is now and then a case but very rare. Many of the colliers belong to Messrs. Hargreaves and they have very attentive stewards who look to these things. There are no complaints of ill-usage of the children employed in the collieries and it is never heard of in conversation, nor at the print works or the foundries.

(Signed) JAMES ROBINSON.

No.15 Rev. Thomas G. James, incumbent of Habergam Eaves, for his evidence on education.

He has lived 5 years in the Habergam Eaves district. He does not know the ages at which the children are taken into the collieries nor the hours they work there but those employed have no time to come to day schools. An evening school was opened in the centre of the population working at the coal mines but it was obliged to give up in consequence of the non-attendance of the children. Only 6 came. The charge was 1d. per night. He thinks that the parents of the children do not value education. In this coal mine district the children are obliged to attend Sunday schools. If not at Sunday School, no work on Monday.* The condition of the colliers is worse than that of any other class of people. One third of the year they are seldom above ground by daylight. They are as a body, rough, uncouth and illiterate but a healthy race of men.

No.16 Mary Crossley. June 2nd.

She has 2 children at the Habergam Eaves mine, They were 12 and 13 years old when they first went there to work in the pit. They sometimes went at 6 o'clock and sometimes later. They always

* This applies only to Messrs. Hargreaves collieries.

eat their meals in the pit and have a warm dinner sent to them. The latest they ever stayed was 9 o'clock. They drive horses in the pit. They were never ill-used there and the children are still not ill-used. The master would not have children pined [means beaten] or hurt.

[Sundry persons working at the pit stated that the works continued for 15 successive hours occasionally and neither drawers or getters come up during that time.]

No.17 Betty Duxberry, hand-loom weaver Over Darwin. May 26th.

She has 1 young fellow and 4 children. She earns by her loom from 4s. to 4s. 6d. per week.

[Her second husband, step-father to the children, is also a weaver and the principle part of the answers to my questions were given by him, the wife assisting.]

The oldest of the children is 16, the second is 14 and the next only 10. The youngest is 20 months. One of the children (the one who is 10 now) would go to the collieries for his own pleasure. The children go to the coal pit at half past 7 o'clock in the morning but do not get to work until 8. They are rather slack at present. When in full work they go down much sooner. They have no regular time to come up. Does not know but it would be better [if they had] but it cannot be. They cannot come at it regular on account of accidents. 'The coals worsen by lying by and so they do not land them beforehand'. The children's dinners are all taken to them and there is a stoppage for dinner but it is no set time. They do not come up. They do not complain of this as they are brought up to it and are used to it. The pit they work is a dry pit but all the runs are not dry. They draw in their shirts and have a bit of sackcloth but round their back and middle to keep them from rubbing their shirts and backs against the top. They work on their hands and knees and their backs rub against the top. Some work for James Pickup in the little coal [i.e. thin seams of coal] and some work for Mr. Brandreth's at the great coal which is about 1 yard thick. I wish you could see them come in, they are as tired as dogs and throw themselves on the ground like dogs. We cannot get them to bed. They cannot thrive at such work but there is a trade. If they could get the same wages it might be better to work a shorter time. The one of 16 years old is a drawer and he pays 2s. 6d. a week to his thrutcher and gets 8s. a week and has his thrutcher and candles to pay out of it. He is low and stiff, not tall. It requires a short, strong boy to draw. In the great coal they have a waggon and a wisket or basket for the little coal. He is too big to draw little coal and is too weak for great coal without a thrutcher. Some are strong enough. There is not as much beating as there used to be. Mr. Brandreth would turn off any who did and Mr. Pickup is the same. The getter likes to master the drawers. She has never heard of any misfortune happening from beating or of their beating of them 'audacious'. She does not know anything about other pits. The one who went at 5 years old went with his brothers for his own pleasure and ran off errands and got candles &c. and began work at 7 years old. Colliers are all crooked and short-legged, not like other men who work above ground but there are always colliers and always will be. This young boy has been very poorly lately. He turns his feet out and his knees together. Drawing puts them out of shape. We had him above ground for a fortnight and thought of sending him to school. They (the children), all except the getter, go to Sunday School. He* has got good learning and he can read and write very decent for a poor man. There were no infant schools established before the younger ones went to work and they have not been to a daily school but they are very fond of their books and they like to go on Sundays. They are too tired to go to a night school. It will be 7 or 8 o'clock before they come home of a night in summer. In winter they are often later. Men who work under ground require twice as much food as those who work above. If the hours of work were less, she supposes that they would require less food. The sweat runs off their rubs. They work naked [except trousers]. Girls are seldom employed in coal works here, the factories take nearly them all.

No.18 A witness who wishes his name to be omitted.

He works at Messrs. Hilton's pit at Over Darwin. The works continue in action night and day. There are only two gangs and the shifts are 12 hours. The only person who comes above ground during either of the 12 hour shifts is the hooker-on. The getters come up some time before the drawers who are left to draw the coal. This requires generally an hour longer. The engine only stops once during the day. They have 1 hour for dinner.

Description of the Bank Moor Colliery.

The shaft is 36 yards deep. We let down the waggons which are wheeled on to a cage as it is called or flat plate of iron kept in its horizontal position by iron brackets and guided in its descent by rods of iron reaching from the top to the bottom of the shaft. These guide rods prevent also the

**That is the getter.*

untwisting of the rope which is about 1 inch and a quarter in diameter. The power used to turn the wheel is a single horse. Water oozes from the shaft in the lower part and from the roof at the beginning of the runs where there is a very small quantity and dripped from the roof in other parts of the run we were in but on the whole the place was dry or rather damp but not wet. The seam was 24 inches thick generally. In some of the runs, we were told, it was in some parts only 18 inches. The width was about 10 to 12 feet having a flat and solid roof of stone with no shale intervening between the good coal and the hard rock. The coal is drawn in waggons on iron rails. These waggons carry a load which require two thrutchers. To the waggon in our run there was a boy about 14 years old and a girl about 11. A nice looking little lass, but too shy to answer my questions. None of the children here drew with a belt. I was wheeled, lying down on a low truck, by the underlooker of the mine and an assistant, to the extremity of the run, a distance of 90 yards, where I saw the process of digging or 'getting' the coal. The getter was a youth of 16 who sat on the floor on the run or on a board and made his blow from his right side to the left, horizontally, his head nearly touching the roof at every blow, though held rather reclining over his right shoulder. This posture must be an uneasy one until a person becomes accustomed to it. The thrutchers then filled the waggon and pushed or thrutched it along the run and I followed close to watch the mode of doing it.

No.19. Evidence of the man who manages the machinery at the Bank Moor Coal Mine.

In the morning, when the drawers go down and also the getters, the horse is not at work. A man turns the wheel. Only 1 getter is allowed to go down at a time. Three drawers are sometimes (and always 2) let down at once. The man's power is not sufficient for more.

ULVERSTONE.

SLATE QUARRIES AND STONE SAW-MILLS.

No.20 Mr. John Pearson Postlethwaite, attorney-at-law, son of the lessee of one of the slate quarries at Kirkby Ireleth. May 8th.

He is well acquainted with the mode of working the slate quarries which is thus:-
The children and young persons are hired by the leesee of the quarries at so much per day for 12 months, reserving power to the masters to discharge them during the years. Their employment during the first, second or third years is driving the carts from inside of the quarry to the hill top where they make the 'metal' or solid mass of slates into lamina or 'slates'. They are then frequently taken and made rivers or dressers of slates to which they serve an apprenticeship of 5 to 7 years. There may be 5 or 6 at each quarry. They commence at the age of 8 or 9 years old. They go through a subterranean passage, which is not always dry. The boys generally speaking, ride through the passage. As to their morals, they are not exposed to much contamination by association with the older persons working there. No spirits are allowed to be drunk in the quarries. A little ale is allowed once in 8 weeks by the masters but generally speaking the boys get none. Generally speaking they are the sons of persons working in the quarries. They are under the superintendence of the foreman. No complaint of ill-usage has ever been made. The masters are generally at the quarries themselves every day. The boys come so young that they are generally illiterate. There are 2 Sunday Schools in the parish and several infant schools kept by mistresses and there is a parish school which is supported out of the rates by an allowance of about £4 or £5 a year and the deficiency of master's salaries is made up by payments from the boys and girls. Those employed at the quarries have not time to attend these. There is a night school but whether much attend or not he cannot say. They do attend Sunday School. The present vicar established the Sunday School about 2 years ago. The effect of this is already visible by the absence of the habits of playing in the streets on the Sabbath and their conduct is also perhaps better. Several of the children are able to go through the catechisms and explanations thereof, which would not have been if the Sunday School had not existed.

(Signed) PEARSON POSTLETHWAITE.

[The hours of work are from 7 in the morning to 6 at night, deducting 1 hour for meals at noon but in winter they work only from daylight until dark.]

No.21 Mr. Joseph Jopling, agent for Lord Burlington.

The saw-mill belongs to the Earl of Burlington who has established here [in a very nice airy room at the upper part of the mill] a night school for the children and young persons who work at the mill and in the quarries. They are taught reading and writing gratis. The superintendent is the bookkeeper or clerk [he was present and said about 9 attend now and 6 of them can write]. Other boys would be admitted if they applied. More attend in winter than in summer. In the latter season, they go to get peats in the evening. These children or young persons who write on paper find their own copy books [some of these books were produced, the writing very good]. A part of the books provided for the school were purchased by fines levied on the men for misconduct, about £5 10s. was collected this way [the clerk referred to his accounts to ascertain the sum] When they were dismissed for drunkenness they were not taken on again without paying a fine, generally a days wage. At one time it was the custom (and it is still at some works) for the men who had received only of their wages weekly to be paid up in fully at the end of every 8 weeks [this is mentioned in Mr. Postlethwaite's jun. evidence No. 20] or once a month. This was a temptation to them to spend money in drink and they had monthly drinks at the quarry. This he put a stop to by deducting a quarter of a days pay from those who drank. The men who left the quarry and went home without drinking had the full days wages. The boys occasionally partake of this drinking bout and are seen coming home reeling with a pipe in their mouths. Mr. Jopling had put a stop to this, the men are regularly paid their wages every week on Tuesdays. In a short time fewer boys will be wanted at these quarries for iron railroads and waggons are coming into use on the levels. 1 horse and 1 boy to drive it will do as much work with these waggons as can be done by several now. He has a list at home of the number of boys employed at all the quarries. He will revise it and send me an account.

Letter subsequently received from Mr. Jopling:-

SIR,

Furness Abbey, 8th. May, 1841.

I beg respectfully to acquaint you that I referred to my account on the boys employed at the quarries in Kirkby for which I consider that they do not exceed 100 at present and that not half of that number under 12 years.

I have, &c.,
JOSEPH JOPLING.

P.S. - The boys employed in carting iron ore (sometimes girls are thus employed) are deserving your attention. The accomplishments they thus receive is sometimes distinguished by 'education in the Red-lane College.'

No.22 Mr. Postlethwaite, sen., leese of the three quarries.

At his 3 quarries he employs together about 12 children or young persons under 18 years of age. The probable number at the 10 quarries in this neighbourhood belonging to the Earl of Burlington will not be more than 5 or 6 to each quarry. The youngest age he likes to take them is at 14. He does not know that there is one younger. The hours of work are from 6 in the morning to 7 at night in summer, from daylight to dark in the winter. The occupation of these boys when they first come, is to lead the horse through the levels while a man steers the cart but a lad under 14 is hardly strong enough because occasionally he is required to help the cart round a point of rock or over a difficulty. The levels are cut through the rock are high enough for a horse to walk under. They are occasionally wet and muddy, though drains are cut on each side. The inclination is not sufficient to carry off the water. There an be no foul air because the tunnel is open at both ends. The longest is 140 yards.

CHURCH CONISTON. - COPPER MINE.

No.23 Mr. John Barrett. May 10th.

He is a shareholder in the copper mine and the resident manager. The number of children and young persons employed at the works is about 100. Of these every few (perhaps not one) under 18 years are employed under ground. Their occupation above ground is washing, breaking, picking and sorting ore. The youngest is about 8 years of age. He has been obliged to reject some this summer on the consideration of their being too young. Parents are anxious to get their children employed as soon as possible and there is not other employment for them. The parents are chiefly

miners. He endeavours as much as possible to separate the girls from the boys while at work and there is a person appointed to superintend the place whose moral character is attended to. He is not allowed to use corporal punishment and is desired to prevent the use of improper language. We subscribe to a day school which is supported by the joint contributions of Mr. Marshal, Lady de Fleming and the mining company. We require as far as possible the attendance of the children at school in the winter, when they are unemployed. The parents are beginning to see the value of education. At the first establishment of the night school, the young persons of 18 to 20 years old objected on account of the payment of 1d. per week. Since then instruction has been (for that reason) given gratis the attendance is good and the boys advance rapidly.

No.24. John Borrick.

He is 11 years old and has been at work in the mine for 2 years. His employment is sometimes picking (ore) sometimes wheeling [in barrows]. The wheeling is the hardest work. He comes to work at 7 o'clock in the morning and goes away at 6 o'clock at night but never works later. He brings his dinner with him and breakfasts before he comes. He does not go home. He has 1 hour allowed for dinner and no time allowed for tea. His hours of work are in winter only from daylight to dark. He has 1s. 6d. a week. He attends Sunday School and can read very little. [He is a fine, robust, healthy looking boy.]

No.25 Mark Millican.

He is 16 years old and works at the copper mine. Tubbs, that is, works the jiggling machine. He does not work in the winter and has been at work for about 65 years. He gets 1s. 2d. a day. He never went to day school but learned to read at Sunday School and to write at night school. He learns ciphering and knows figures but has not yet learned much. He works 10 hours a day.

No.26 ----- Jackson.

He has a son who works underground, He is now just gone to work [we did not find him]. His son is 16 years old. The time of work is now from 2 o'clock today till 10 at night. They rest from 10 to 6 in the morning. He will go tomorrow at 6 in the morning and come away at 2 in the afternoon and rest till 10, work from 10 till 6, rest from 6 till 2 and so on. The shifts being 8 hours. [In 48 hours they have three times 8 hours work and three times 8 hours rest]. They are never underground more than 8 hours at a time.

No.27 Ann High.

She has 4 children working in the mine. The eldest 15, gets 8d. a day, a boy who wheels, The second is Anthony, just turned 13 who wheels and picks for 7d. a day. They have worked there for 2 years. The third is 10 and gets 5d. a day. The youngest is 7 years old and has just gone. He gets 2s. 9d. a month. Her husband works in the mine. He has worked 9 days at the mine. He was a shoemaker before. They have 8 children and the rest are too young to work. They get no relief from the parish. They were obliged to apply in winter and got some clothes. The children could not work for a good it in the bad weather. When the children work in the winter they complain of the cold a little but it does not give them chilblains. They are not such bad masters. They send them home if they misbehave. They are sent home to their parents and they beat them, they are forced to, They could not get a living without the children's work.

[Betsy Harcourt was present and said the same. She said that the overlooker over her children was a nice little man as could be. They were not allowed to beat the children. They were never misused.]

No.28 Anna Fleming.

She has 7 children alive and her husband died 7 weeks ago. He had worked in the mines. He took bargains, sometimes he made money by the bargains, sometimes made scarcely any. During his lifetime he never set the children to work in the mines. One of her sons has set up for a joiner but he is a wild young man. One worked at the smithy and one at the mines. They maintain themselves but are not able to help her. When she applied to the overseer after her husband's death for relief, he refused it. (She had nothing from him to bury her husband.) He asked her why she did not send her children to the mines. The one is 12 years old and is very unhealthy. She is now taken by the Miss Beavers (who have assisted them very much and do assist the poor of the parish and are very kind to them), to try if change of air will do her good. The other was going on 10. She does not work. The younger one goes to school. Miss Beaver pays for her going and did pay for the elder's schooling when she was well enough. The widow Stewardson has only one little boy working in the mines. He is a fine, sharp, stout healthy little boy. Never has there been any ill effects produced by the cold in winter but it is very severe.

No.29 Rev. Thomas Tolming, incumbent of Coniston Church.

The principle employment of the children in this village is at the copper mine. They do not work underground. The employment above ground is very cold in the winter season. The mothers complain that their children suffer from this. He is not aware that it brings on any disease. Consumption is the most prevalent disease of the district.

There is an excellent Sunday School. Some ladies of this parish superintend it with great care and attention and are of considerable assistance in improving the moral condition of the children and young persons in the parish so that they are not so much demoralised as they might otherwise be from assembling together in works where the moral conduct is not the made the principle object of bringing them together. Mr. Barrett, the superintendent of the copper mine is particular as to the character of those he employs and a register is kept. Persons proved guilty of gross misconduct would be duly cautioned or dismissed. The mining company contribute to the daily school and some of the children who work at the mines in summer attend at the school in winter. It is the wish of the manager of the mines that they should do so. Several of these children go to the mines at an early age having no previous instruction. In cases where the poverty of the parents who have a young family has compelled them, to apply to the relieving officer for relief he has made this one of his pleas for refusing it. "You have children. Why do you not send them to work in the mines?" This has been said where the children were so young that they ought not to have been sent to work and in other cases the delicate health of the child rendered it dangerous to send it. In the cases alluded to he thinks that the ages were from 7 to 12.* There are some in the parish who can earn about £50 to £60 per year who will not send their children into the mines. Those who do send them are almost always in so poor a state that they are compelled to send their children for the sake of the assistance derived from the produce of their labour. He thinks that they are anxious to have their children educated and as a proof of it, when a night school was established during the winter, it was attended by about 30 who were employed chiefly in the mines during the day.

**These are the widow Fleming's children (see No.28.)*

CHILDREN'S EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION.

REPORT by JOSEPH FLETCHER, ESQ., on the Employment of Children and Young Persons in the neighbourhood of Oldham and on the State, Condition and Treatment of such Children and Young Persons.

TO HER MAJESTY'S COMMISSIONERS.

GENTLEMEN,

Oct. 28th. - Nov. 5th, 1841.

Limits within which inquires were restricted.

With the accompanying minutes of evidence, I have the honour to submit a brief statement of the results of the few days examination which you requested me to make into the employment of children and young persons in the collieries around Oldham, on finding that the inquiries already made in the district were less extensive than its apparent importance demand. The week during which I was permitted to pursue this examination sufficed for investigations in little more than the parish of Oldham which comprises a tract of seven miles in length and four in breadth with a population of upwards 61,000. But as this parish and the contiguous part of Ashton-under-Lyne parish, which I also visited, comprise the pits which chiefly supply Manchester with fuel which it receives from the eastern portions of the Lancashire coal field, the information here collected may be considered to afford a faithful picture of the state of things in the whole of the south-eastern parts of this county in which coal is found, in a district extending from Rochdale to Ashton and comprising a population of above 150,000 souls.

Situation of the district in which made.

The town of Oldham is seven miles north-east from Manchester and comprised in the township of Oldham to the north of which lie three rural townships of Chadderton, Royton and Crompton form the rest of the parish.

Contiguous, on the north, is the parish of Rochdale and on the south, that of Ashton-under-Lyne and in these three parishes, especially in that of Oldham, are numerous pits, worked partly to supply the factories scattered over the surface of the populous region, partly for the domestic wants of its inhabitants, and partly for the supply of Manchester to which town some, of their produce is carted by a class of higglers, who are also small land owners, while the rest is taken by the Rochdale and Ashton canals. On the eastern side, the district rises into high bleak ridges, on one of which the town of Oldham itself chiefly stands, but westwards, it sinks into the great plain which occupies the south and west of Lancashire. It is within the last sixty years that its industry had attained to its present importance. The first cotton mill in the parish of Oldham having been erected about 1778.

Peculiarities in the mining of this district

The information which you will derive from more important districts, will render unnecessary in this place any description of the general disposition of coal in strata at various depths and inclined at different angles or of the approach made to them by vertical pits from which horizontal caverns are extended in long galleries through those strata, to bring up the coal when hewn out of its resting place to the pit bottom for winding up. The prevailing peculiarities of the Lancashire Collieries are described in the evidence of Mr. Knowles (No.1) to be, that the coal measures (or strata of coal with the beds of other material that usually accompany it) are of such quality that they emit very little carburetted hydrogen gas, when it does occur, being lighter specific gravity than the common atmospheric air,

easily escapes without any extensive provision of air-doors, trappers and artificial draughts which is necessary when these measures pour out more inflammable gas and lie more flat.

Their influence upon the earliest employment of children in the pits

The children and young persons employed in the coal mines of Lancashire, therefore, instead of commencing their labour with the 'tenting' of an air-door, usually commence at once with the task of bringing coal from the place where the getter is at work at the bottom of the pit. In this labour there are a great numbers employed. A few horses being taken underground because the seams are not generally thick and lie at such moderate depths that it is less expensive to sink new shafts at short distances than to make extensive systems of ways underground. In some few instances, the young people are employed by the proprietors, but generally they are employed by the colliers or getters themselves and if the members of their own families can do the work, they are always preferred. The getters are paid according to the quantity of coals they send to the bottom of the pit and they may employ whomsoever they please to bring them there.

Peculiarity in the exclusion of females from the pits

Besides the smallness of the number of 'trappers' or air-door 'tenters' which is common to the whole country, there is a peculiarity in this south-eastern district which distinguishes it from the rest of the Lancashire coal fields. No women or girls of any age are employed in underground labour, the men unite in a dislike to their being brought into circumstances so disgusting, although their employment is common within a few miles of Manchester, on the other side, and the only man who, coming from that side, has been known to take his wife into the pit, was compelled to leave the district. The men said they would leave work if he continued. (See Evidence Nos.3,7.)

Boys taken into the pits as soon as possible

But the collier boys are taken down into the pit so soon as they can be of the least service, and often before, in order merely that they may count as assistants. The collieries being in all ordinary times overhand, the proportion of coal which each man's labour shall get is regulated among themselves and his assistants being reckoned as so many fractions of a man, if he can have down another member of his own family he will be at liberty to count it as a sanction for getting a certain proportion of coals, and receiving wages accordingly, although the child may really have done very little of the labour.

Proportions of each age employed in the pits of this district

Of the number of collieries in this district I have no complete return. The Queries addresses to the proprietors, requesting some details concerning their works, having in many circumstances remained without answer. But the returns made by others will suffice to show the proportion of each age usually employed.

Proportions of each Age and Sex employed in the Mines of those Oldham Districts which had made Returns.

OLDHAM

Stanley and Scolefield, Broadway Lane.

Adults upwards of 18 years of age, males 52, no females.
Young persons between 13 and 18 years of age, males 24, no females.
Children under 13 years of age, 20 males, no females.
Total 96.

James Clegg, Pauldin Wood.

Adults upwards of 18 years of age, males 38, no females.
Young persons between 13 and 18 years of age, males 22, no females.

Children under 13 years of age, 25 males, no females.
Total 85.

Taylor, Milne and Co., Burnedge Colliery, Crompton.

Adults upwards of 18 years of age, males 28, no females.
Young persons between 13 and 18 years of age, males 26, no females.
Children under 13 years of age, 2 males, no females.
Total 36.

James Collinge and Co., Glodwick Colliery, Greenacres Moor.

Adults upwards of 18 years of age, males 57, no females.
Young persons between 13 and 18 years of age, males 15, no females.
Children under 13 years of age, 3 males, no females.
Total 75.

James Lees, Jones and Booth, Greenacres Moor.

Adults upwards of 18 years of age, males 66, no females.
Young persons between 13 and 18 years of age, males 21, no females.
Children under 13 years of age, 5 males, no females.
Total 92.

Ainsworth and Lees. Pit Bank Colliery.

Adults upwards of 18 years of age, males 20, no females.
Young persons between 13 and 18 years of age, males 4, no females.
Children under 13 years of age, 3 males, no females.
Total 27.

Joseph Jones jnr., and Co., Chamber Lane and other collieries.

Adults upwards of 18 years of age, males 286, no females.
Young persons between 13 and 18 years of age, males 150, no females.
Children under 13 years of age, 73 males, no females.
Total 509.

William Wrigley, Low Side Colliery, Glodwick.

Adults upwards of 18 years of age, males 58, no females.
Young persons between 13 and 18 years of age, males 22, no females.
Children under 13 years of age, 13 males, no females.
Total 93.

ASHTON.

Jonah Kirkshaw, Prestbooth Colliery, Todmorden.

Adults upwards of 18 years of age, males 170, no females.
Young persons between 13 and 18 years of age, males 21, no females.
Children under 13 years of age, 7 males, no females.
Total 33.

Whittaker and Lees, Hurst.

Adults upwards of 18 years of age, males 20, no females.
Young persons between 13 and 18 years of age, males 7, no females.
Children under 13 years of age, 6 males, no females.
Total 33.

ROCHDALE.

John Kirkshaw, Prestbooth Colliery., Todmorden.

Adults upwards of 18 years of age, males 4, no females.
Young persons between 13 and 18 years of age, males 1, no females.
Children under 13 years of age, 3 males, no females.
Total 8.

Edmund Jackson, Hade's Colliery, Hurdle and Mardle.

Adults upwards of 18 years of age, males 1, no females.
Young persons between 13 and 18 years of age, males 1, no females.
Children under 13 years of age, no males, no females.
Total 2.

Haywood Coal Company, Captain Fold Colliery.

Adults upwards of 18 years of age, males 36, no females.

Young persons between 13 and 18 years of age, males 15, no females.

Children under 13 years of age, 7 males, no females.

Total 58.

A total of 1312 persons employed, 836 males over 18 years, 309 males between 13 and 18 years and 167 children under 13 years of age.

Of the 13 firms enumerated above, only part have filled up the tabular forms which were sent to them and the following abstract is from the returns made by seven firms working the main seams in the lower country. Of the 'mountain' mines, only two returns have been made and I have had no statistics therefore to adduce, in addition to the evidence of the witnesses themselves, as to the very early ages at which the children their are employed.

Number of young people of each year of age employed in certain of the thick seam mines.

The number of children and young persons at each age, returned as employed in the collieries of seven proprietors working the main seams in the Oldham District are as follows:-

<u>Years of age</u>	<u>Number</u>
7 to 8	32
8 to 9	11
9 to 10	16
10 to 11	31
11 to 12	31
12 to 13	47
13 to 14	55
15 to 16	47
16 to 17	38
17 to 18	38
	<u>358</u>

I - STATE OF THE PLACE OF WORK.

Classification of the circumstances determining the character of the place of work.

The circumstances determining the character of the place of work from the mouth of the pit to its most distant working are various and in no two collieries the same. They may, however be classed as follows:-

1st. - The depth, thickness and inclination of the seams of coal. The nature of the contiguous strata and the prevalence of water, carburetted hydrogen gas (firedamp), or carbonic acid gas (chokedamp), in the coal or in the contiguous strata.

2nd. - The number, size and construction of the shafts. The disposal and security of pumping and the drawing apparatus there is. The quality of the gearing. The sufficiency of the steam engine and engineer, The dimensions of the drawing ways and the construction of the roads with rails, trams or stone. The state of the drainage. The preparations and securities for ventilation. The due provision of safety lamps and the existence of proper plans and surveys by which the limits of the neighbouring old workings may be known with accuracy.

3rd. - The due government of the mines and the mining labour by the vigilance of agents, viewers, underlookers, lampmen &c., keeping order and seeing to the enforcement of the regulations required for common safety.

4th. - The judgement, caution, sobriety and general intelligence of the colliers themselves.

Circumstances of physical structure. fathoms

(1.) - The physical construction of this district had already been briefly noticed. The depth at which the seams are found varies from a few to 120. The thickness of those which are worked are from 18 to 48 inches and their dip, generally to the west from south, from one yard in six to one in two. There is often considerable flow of water. Firedamp is troublesome in some pits, though not generally. Chokedamp is apt to accumulate in considerable quantities and when the barometer is low to extend itself considerably through the workings.

Circumstances of the application of capital.

(2.) - The application of capital to rescue the mineral treasures of these seams, in spite of the physical obstacles, is various in amount and character. The mines in the thin mountain seams in the higher parts of Oldham and Rochdale parishes are, with few exceptions, worked on a very small scale and in a very rude manner.

In small pits working thin mountain seams.

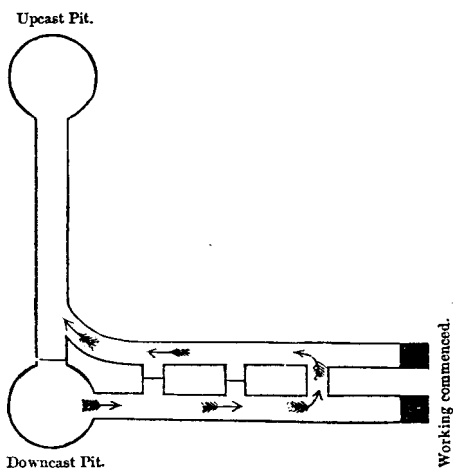
Several, indeed, are entered by 'breast-eyes', or 'day-holes' in the hill side and others are well constructed pits, with very rude and insecure gearing. Many have insufficient drainage. The ways are so low that only very little boys can work in them, which they have to do naked and often in mud and water, dragging sledge-tubs by the girdle and chain, in a ventilation which proves sufficient only because the deleterious gases are almost unknown. In regard to gearing, the larger concern of Mr. James Clegg, of Pauldin Wood, is, however, a very creditable example of superiority and happily the number employed in such pits is not great.

In pit worked by larger capitals.

The greater proportion of the coal raised in the Oldham district is raised by proprietors of larger capital, among whom is the Chamber Colliery Company of Messrs. Jones and Lees who had 16 shafts in operation, and have a high reputation for the good construction of its works and the excellence of its gearing. Each colliery has more than two shafts, perhaps 20 yards from each other. One is the downcast pit sunk towards the dip of the strata for the air to descend and the other the upcast pit towards the rise for it to return to the surface. The current is generally quickened by a furnace in the upcast shaft which, rapidly drawing off the air from the passages below, brings a brisk current through the whole distance from the downcast pit, however great the distance, by its purposed tortuousness may have been made.

Air-courses.

The mode in which the current between the two shafts is made to circulate to all the places when the works are carried on is very simple, The advances from the bottom of the drawing pit, to whatever distances and in whatever



direction they may be required, are made always in double galleries about 6 feet apart, one for air in its course from the downcast shaft, which is also the drawing road, and the other for its return towards the upcast shaft. When these have been pushed about five yards forward or as far as the quality of the strata will permit without danger of accumulated firedamp, a 'cut-through' or short transverse gallery, is made between them which, by the stoppage of all the more direct communication between the two shafts, becomes the channel of the whole current between them which rushed from the one gallery and up the other so as to clear both from the accumulation of any noxious gasses. The current of air is perfectly ductile and is carried at once to the furthest extremity of the tract of coal which it is proposed to excavate, along the galleries which serve as drawing ways and commencing to clear the coal there, the getters gradually retreat backwards towards the shaft as they exhaust it (See Evidence Nos. 1, 3)

to excavate, along the galleries which serve as drawing ways and commencing to clear the coal there, the getters gradually retreat backwards towards the shaft as they exhaust it (See Evidence Nos. 1, 3)

Ascent and descent by winding.

Descent into the pits and ascent up the shaft is made by the man and boys standing in tubs, generally three at a time with their heads inclined towards the cross-beam. Horse gins are used for winding at some smaller pits but steam engines are generally employed.

Getting.

There are several modes of proceeding to hew the coal, but these rather concern the adult getter than the young people assisting him whose universal occupation of loading and waggoning the coal which has been brought away from its resting place. Except, indeed, in the few instances where, in the thin mountain seams, youths beginning very early to be getters working nearly or quite naked and they lie on their sides. The men in the other mines generally keep in their frieze trousers while at work.

Drainage and prevention against explosions.

The drainage of the pits of generally good (No.3) and the men are supplied with safety lamps to use whenever there is an apprehension (No.4) but owing to the dip of the strata, the moderate depth at which the coal lies, the system of ventilating by two distinct shafts which this circumstance facilitates and the quality of the coal itself, the strata here are generally speaking, so little incommoded with 'sulphur' that the Davy lamp is seldom used though each man had one and the system of ventilation is too simple to require the employment of an express class of children to tend the trap-doors. The current is generally kept in its right track by walls of brick and soot and lime across the disused cut-throughs, except in the mainways where the waggoners open and shut as they successively pass the door placed there and which are held to by a pulley heavily weighted.

Dimension of subterranean ways.

The mainways are, in the large mines, 3 feet 6 inches or 4 feet high where the young people have to work and sometimes six inches higher but in the narrow seams they are sometimes as little as 1 foot 10 inches with width enough only for the passage of a tub, a candle stuck in front of which or in the drawer's cap, is the sole light in these dark passages. These passages are kept on a level by being run across the dip of the strata but there are inclined passages from one gallery to another. Where horses are employed, the ways, by removing portions of the floor and roof according to the material of which they are composed, are made a little higher. The ends or bays where the getters work are no higher than the thickness of the strata wrought.

Various construction and safety of roads, shafts and gearing.

The construction of the roadways is various from the rudest up to the excellent flat railways found in some of the larger mines and what is of still more importance to safety, that of the shafts is unfortunately very various also and that of the gearing for effecting ingress and egress and drawing the coals scarcely less so. The best shafts are walled all the way down wherever the strata is soft and have wooden sliding rods to guide the tubs in their ascent and descent. The beam over the tubs to which the rope is attached, having three friction rollers at each end, which embrace the rods. The rope ascends from the pit to the summit of the framework, 20 or 30 feet high, over its mouth, from which it declines over pulleys, to the winding roller besides the engine house, where, being flat, it is coiled and uncoiled between guiding arms of iron in the manner of a roll of ribbon.

Complaints of men against incompetency of engineers and insufficiency of gearing.

But the reliance of the colliers themselves on the gearing of inferior quality is naturally very different from the feeling of confidence which they express in that of the best masters (No.8) and repeated and just were the complaints made against the practice, followed even by the latter, of employing children to manage the engines by which the men as well as the coals are drawn out of the pit. The power of the steam engine is applied

directly and in the simplest form, to this purpose and upon the accurate stoppage of the engine, at the exact moment of their appearance at the surface, depends whether the men ascending shall not be wound over the pulley above and dashed down the shaft again, an event which here has repeated occurred (Nos.8, 34,39.)

Circumstances in the character of the master's *pit police*.

Various parts of the evidence will show how much depends on the character of the 'industrial police' of a mine which will naturally be influenced by that of the proprietors. See that of a viewer (No.5), the collier

(No.7), the lad (No.10), and the colliers (Nos. 29,30,31,32,33). The viewers are generally respectable men and the underlookers are chosen chiefly from the more religious and intelligent as well as the most honest and industrious, of the labouring colliers, though some are men of very low conduct and bad example. The pit regulations of Messrs. Jones and Lees are an example of those more frequently laid down than enforced. (See No.4 in the Appendix to the Evidence of Mr. John Ogden). Their little book of cautions distributed to their colliers, on the use and abuse of safety lamps, affords a praiseworthy example to other firms. (See No.3 in the same Appendix.) No regulation as to the number ascending or descending at one time in other collieries appears to be very rigorously enforced but it is generally limited to two men or one man and two boys.

Circumstances in the *conduct of the men and boys themselves*.

The men and lads appear to have some shrewdness as well as vigour in matters connected with their labour but being uninstructed and frequently foolhardy, the dangers of their occupation are augmented by their own conduct and they are liable to numerous accidents, frequently fatal.

II - AGE.

Ages at which children enter the pits.

The most common age for boys to be taken to labour in the coal mines of this district is at seven, eight or nine. (Nos.7,8,13,15,16,10,25,27,6,12, 19, 39.) but in the 'mountain mines', or small collieries highest towards the hills, which have only thin strata, varying in thickness from 18 inches to 2 feet, they will go so early as six, five or even four years of age. "Some are so young they go in their bed-gowns." (Nos.20,21,24,23,26.) One little fellow I endeavoured to question could not even articulate, although his father, between whose legs he hid his little black face as he stood before me, answered for him that he was seven years old (No.23.)

Earlier because of the Factories Act. pits,

The chief agent of the largest mining company here, having his attention drawn to the subject by the increased number of minor accidents in the

had become convinced that parents are pushing their children into colliery employment at an earlier age, because of the legal restriction from sending them to the neighbouring factories, in which they would be exposed to far less hardship and hazard. (No.4.) See also the testimony of the witness No.7.

Opinion of the thinking proportion of the colliers opposed to the early labour of children, who are themselves anxious to be in the pit.

The children themselves are naturally ambitious to go with their fathers and brothers into the pit. (See No.20.) The licence which they there enjoy and makes the lads, even when acquainted with it hardships, still prefer it to home to school but as they get older they see the disadvantages under which they had been placed and some of the older colliers are vehement in their denunciations of such early employment in the pits. "A child of six, seven, or eight," says James Warrener aged 69 (No.8), "had better be transported than sent into a coal pit, for it does not know danger when it sees it and any man that has a child at that age, ought rather to send it to school than at five o'clock in the morning into the pit. There ought to be inspectors to go round and not allow such slavery to children." The six witnesses connected with collieries, examined together at Knott Lane,

“believes it is a general desire in the parents here, if they were earning good wages (25s. a week), to send their children to the day school till 12 years of age. This is soon enough for any child to go to work, especially in the bottom of a coal pit. It is a worse place than a factory because of the wet, cold, firedamp and other dangers. Before 12, are sure that a child is not properly able to take care of itself in a coal pit.” (No.28,29,30,31,32,33.) But wherever they can, the colliers and towards Rochdale, weavers also No.13), put their children into the pits at the early age which has been described and the ready plea is universally their poverty, which in ‘slack times,’ is universally true but in “good times” is true where improvidence makes it so.

III - NATURE OF EMPLOYMENT.

Prevailing occupations of the young colliery workers.

Besides a few boys employed as engineers and as carters at the mouths of the pits, the whole of those to whom the colliers afford employment are engaged underground, chiefly as waggoners, drawers or thrutchers there being very few ‘trappers’ or air-door tenters. (Nos.3,4,6.)

Small number of trappers and priority of their supersedence by superannuated miners.

Where trappers are employed they are the youngest of the children (No.6), and their occupation is the first step in their early and long apprenticeship to the trade of miner, or ‘getter’ of coal, to which they will be attain at from 18 to 20 years of age in the thick seams but to which they will be admitted much earlier in the ‘mountain’ mines of thin coal. It is merely for economy that children so young are employed in a duty, upon the vigilant discharge of which depend their own lives and those of any others. They have, it is true, sufficient physical strength for their task, which is merely that of pulling open a door. But it is suggested by Mr. Garforth, for a long time in the employment of Messrs. Lees and Jones, “that there is many an old collier that is not half a man for work, that would be peculiarly qualified for such a job and when it is required equally for the safety of the men and the advantage of the master, what is 12s. a week?” (No.3). His further observations are perfectly consistent with the fact that there are many colliers, in that early decline of life to which their labour subjects them, who are forced, by their inability to pursue the task of getters, to abandon the pits altogether, and in their latter years to pick up a scanty livelihood in casual employments as they can (No.4). Were the mere infants who are now employed in trapping at school, where they ought to be, it is probable that the work would fall very acceptability into the hands of veterans, at a trifling additional charge on the working.

Mechanical substitute for trappers.

One means of the lessening the dreary employment of little trappers is here simply to attach to the front of the air-door across a mainway, a stiff projecting spring, against which the waggoners force their tub with some impetus, the door therefore flies open, and ere it can rebound the waggon has passed.

Occupation of thrutchers.

Thrutching is the next labour in the ascending scale to which the children are put and consists in being helper to a drawer or waggoner, who is master, or butty, over the thrutcher. He is chiefly employed in thrutching or thrusting, behind the loaded tubs of coal, with his hands and head which latter is generally protected by a thick cap, although the thrutcher in the thin seam mines works in all respect, naked, or nearly so (Nos.3,20,25,26). In other pits he will keep on his trousers and clogs. The size of the roads which he has to thrutch varies with the thickness of the seam and with the size varies his butty’s method of proceeding which is either as a drawer or a waggoner.

Drawing by the
belt and chain.

The drawers are those who use the belt and chain, which is not seldom employed, except in the thinner seams. Their labour consists in loading, with the coal hewn down by the getter, an oblong tub without wheels, measuring 27 inches long by 24 inches wide and 9 inches high and containing 3 cwt. or a basket and a half and dragging this tub on its sledge bottom by means of a girdle of rough leather passing round the body and a chain attached to that girdle in front and hooked to the sledge. The drawer has, with the assistance of his thrutcher, to sledge the tub in this manner from the place of getting to the mainway, generally down, though sometimes up a 'broo', brow or incline, of the same steepness as the inclination of the strata, in descending which he goes to the front of his tub, where his light is fixed and turning his face to it, regulates its motion down the hill as, proceeding back foremost, he pulls it along by his belt. When he gets to the mainway, which be at various distances, not exceeding forty or fifty yards from his loading place, he has to leave this tub upon a low truck running on small iron wheels and then to go and fetch a second, which will complete its load and with these two to join with his thrutcher in pushing it along the iron railway to the pit bottom, to have the tubs successively hooked on to the drawing rope. Returning with his tubs empty, he leaves the mainway, first with one and then with the other tub, to get them loaded, dragging them up the 'broo' by his belt and chain, the latter of which he now passes between his legs, so as to pull, face foremost, on all fours. (Nos.3,4,6,20,22.) In the thin seams this labour had to be performed in 'bays', leading from the place of getting to the mainways, of scarcely more than 20 inches in height and in mainways of only 2 feet 6 inches and 3 feet high, for the seam itself will be only 18 inches thick. (See Nos. 20 &c.)

Waggoning which
has mainly superseded
drawing by
the belt and chain.

Waggoning is the form of drawing the coals which comes into use with the more extensive employment of railways in the thicker seams. Rails are here laid by the miners at the charge of the employer, up to the very spot of getting and the tubs, which increase in size for those carrying 3 cwt. to others for 4 cwt., 6 cwt. and 8 cwt., according to the thickness of the seam, are all mounted on their own wheels. The weight of the waggons or tubs will be from half cwt. to 2 cwt. in addition to the coal which they carry, making those of the largest size, when loaded, about half a ton in weight. The waggoners of the larger tubs are youths of seventeen or eighteen, when one person has to manage the whole load but younger boys often join two together, to 'make a waggoner,' receiving the pay of one, and dividing it between them, according to their relative ability. The younger one calling himself a thrutcher only and designating the older one as his butty.. From the place of getting, the loads are pushed by the waggoners with hands and head to the bottom of the pit along the levels and where they have to descend from one level to another, this is generally done by a cut at right angles directly from the dip, down the 'broo' or hill which it makes. Here there is a winch and pinion for jiggging the waggons down the incline with a jigger at the top and a hooker-on at the bottom of the plane, where it is as such to require these. The jiggers and the hookers-on are children of 12 or 13. Sometimes, however, the descent of one line of level into another is by a diagonal cutting at a smaller angle from the levels, called a slant, down which the waggoners can and so, in some instances, take their waggons without jiggging, by their own labour and a very rough process it is, owing to the impetus which so great a weight acquires notwithstanding the scotching of the wheels. Horses are seldom used (Nos.4,6).

Character of
this labour.

Provided the young people employed in bringing the coal from the getter to the bottom of the pit be of proper age and fair strength, there is nothing in the labour of waggoning itself which is injurious beyond liability to injured hands and limbs from falls before the waggons, crushed against the sides and the falling stones from the roof. The animation with which the youths pursue their labours, severe as they are, excite a felling of pleasure

in the beholder in the many roomy ways and the muscular development acquired, even by the little children, about the arms and chest, is remarkable. Except in a few cases where they are ill-treated by the getters, or the instances in which the stronger abuse the weaker of the boys in the same pit, the testimony of the youngsters themselves proves their liking for the work, and of the play to which they sometimes turn (Nos.10,20,25). The distance the waggoners have to bring coal often approaches half a mile in the deepest pits. An 800 yard trip (nearly a mile there and back) would be done 16 times a day for a full days work No.10) but colliers are not now in such full work as to require of their waggoners this exertion and the distance will generally not exceed 600 yards, from which it will decrease down to absolute contiguity with the shaft. The employment of children as engineers is noticed hereafter.

Means of improving the character of this labour and that of drawing.

The old method of drawing is, of course, a still lower class of labour, the character of which, like that of the waggoning, is susceptible of improvement only by the more extensive use of mechanical appliances, such as railways with wheeled tubs in lieu of the sledging with the girdle and chain, which is yet practised in other than the thinnest seams and jigging machines from the inclined planes, in lieu of the severe and dangerous labour of bringing down the loaded tubs with merely scotched wheels. The jigging machine is merely a short cylinder with a rope passing round it, to one end of which loaded tubs may be attached to go down, and to the other unloaded tubs to come up. The velocity of the descending tubs, which draw up the others, being regulated by an iron clasp on the revolving cylinder.

IV - HOURS OF WORK.

Unusual hours.

When in full employment, the adult coal getters work 9, 10 and 11 hours a day and the children and young persons employed in bringing to the pit bottom the coal which they have hewn, about two hours longer or 11, 12 and 13 hours, which are sometimes protracted to 14 and 15 (Nos.6,7,10,11, 15,16,20). When working day work for the employers, the collier's hours are 8 but when at piece work, generally 10.

Prevalence of night as well as day work.

When the demand is good the collieries generally are wrought night and day by alternate sets. The night shift of one week being the day shift for the next (Nos.4,7). The young people go down with the men between five and six, or between seven and eight in the morning, or at night, according to their turn and will not get up again until about the same hours at night of in the morning, although the man will generally be out an hour or two earlier (Nos.4,7). Some of the collieries are now regularly working double sets, others are not and the men employed in all are working generally short time by which the labour of the men employed in all are working short time, by which the labour of the young people is proportionately reduced, in accordance with regulations among themselves. "It would be a grand thing for this country if the night work were put a stop to," says the colliers whom I examined in each other's presence at Knott Lanes and to the considerations which lead them to this opinion I cannot too earnestly call your attention (Nos.28,29,30,31,32,33). They describe its effects generally and the children (Nos.10,20) describe their own sensations (See also No.7).

A few always employed in night work, though there be not regular night work.

In each pit, where there is not a night set regularly at work there is always, however, one getter, with his waggoner, aided commonly by a thrutter, during the whole of the night. The drawing engine, at the top of the shaft, not working during the night, it is needless for more than this one collier to

be at work, for his labour alone will suffice to fill the complete set of tubs which the whole of the workmen use during the daytime, when the engine is winding them up loaded and returning them down empty, as fast as they can be brought to the pit bottom. It is a saving to have all the tubs full, for the engine at once to commence drawing in the morning, while the getters are hewing more. This night work, the men of each pit and their assistants, take alternately, in addition to their ordinary labour.

Hours seldom prolonged much beyond the usual time.

It is generally difficult for the men greatly to prolong their hours at one time or the sake of idleness at another, for if another set be not coming to supersede them at the close of their regular hours, the engine ceases to work and though they may and do work harder towards pay day, and the young people also, this has comparatively little influence on the hours (No.4).

V - MEALS.

No time set apart for the comfortless pit dinner.

There is only one meal eaten in the pit, which is a dinner, taken down in the morning or sent down some time during the day. It generally consists, in the case of the young people, of only bread and butter or bread and cheese, which they eat as they can snatch an opportunity while at work, or perhaps while waiting to hook on their tubs at the bottom of the shaft (Nos.4,10,25). The desire to get out of the pit again as soon as possible is perhaps a sufficient plea for reducing the time allowed for this meal within such comfortless limits, which gives an additional feature of the severity to the labour and the disinclination of the proprietor to stop the drawing engine had undoubtedly considerable influence in keeping up the custom.

VI - HOLIDAYS.

Holidays and play.

The usual holidays are, a day or two at Christmas, New Year's Day, if it be on a Monday or Tuesday, two days at Easter, two at Whitsuntide and two at the wakes on which occasions the engineers generally leave the engines. But these holidays are not universally taken unless work be slack, when it sometimes happens that the greater portion of the colliers will be doing only three of four days work in a week although they may go every day in the pit and the young people with them (No.4,10). The latter seize with avidity the opportunities which the slackness below, or an hour to two in the evening above allow to them for play and frolic, not always of a very amicable sort. (Nos.10, 20, 25).

VII - HIRING AND WAGES.

Weekly earnings.

The whole of the young drawers, waggoners and thrutchers are employed by adults whom they assist and it is only the few engaged as air-door tenters, jiggers, hookers-on, engineers and carters that are employed by the master. A collier reckons his days work at 5s. but he seldom has six days work a week. He counts his waggoner's at 3s., the latter sum being commonly shared with a thrutcher. But those who are now in work are making generally only three days a week and the young people, who can get only the same proportion of work and pay as the men, have to share 3s. between two or among three, sometimes equally, but in various proportions, according to their relative ability. In good times they would make about five days a week. (Nos.4, 7, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 20, 21, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 73).

The following is an abstract of the average wages paid to the young people when in full work by the firms which have made returns, and under which the best earnings will generally be made:-

Average Wages of the Young People employed in Collieries in the Oldham District, according to the Employer's Returns.

Years of age	Number	Average Wages when in full work.	
		s.	d.
7 to 8	3	3	8
8 to 9	11	4	3
9 to 10	20	4	9
10 to 11	32	5	3
11 to 12	36	6	2
12 to 13	47	7	10
13 to 14	55	8	2
14 to 15	44	10	5
15 to 16	48	11	6
16 to 17	37	12	6
17 to 18	31	14	4
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The worst characters put their children to work soonest.

It is not to be supposed that parents who employ their own children will be more scrupulous about their being set early to labour than if they sold their services to others and accordingly, the most improvident are pointed out by their fellow workmen as those who have least mercy on the infantile capacities of their offspring. "There are drunken blackguards," states one of these, "that would not mind at what age they took them. They went themselves into the coal pit so early that they do not know their own duties. If there be justice for collier's children as for factory children, God sent it."

Desire among the more thinking to dispense with their labour at too early an age.

See the rest of the witness's testimony (No.8) and that of another, who is, "certain parents bring children into the pit earlier than they did," and that if they can, "merely sit down and keep the rats from their dinners they will bring them down." (No.7). I am inclined, however, to think that the very early employment of children in the coal pits here is a practice of ancient barbarianism, somewhat on the decline before the passing of the Factories Act. (See also the evidence of the colliers, Nos. 15,16,20,21,29,30,31,32, 33,) from which it will appear that, though the worst characters unhesitatingly use up the whole existence of their children from infancy in labour, there is, in the best a steady desire to free them during their early years, could they thereby ensure their getting any religious and useful instruction, through which they might enjoy a mental as well as a bodily existence.

Mode of payment.

The colliers and their young assistants are generally paid at one and the same time, at the master's pay table. One of the largest firms pays one half of the men one week and the other half the next, with a view partly to break their unanimity in a disposition to lose time in drinking when all are paid at the same time (No.4). The earnings of the children are transferred immediately to their parents or guardians. The labour, it will be seen, is piece work throughout, excepting only that of the air-door tenters, jiggers and hookers-on, who are paid, according to their ages, in nearly the like proportion as the drawers and thrutchers, by the masters who employ them. The earnings of the young people employed as engineers is a little higher (No.4).

Parish apprentices few. Lads being almost wholly natives.

Only four parish apprentices appear in the returns which have been made and their total number in the collieries of this neighbourhood is believed to be small (No.39). nearly all the boys in the pits are natives of the immediate neighbourhood, to which their manners are assuredly native.

VIII - TREATMENT AND CARE.

- Discipline kept by masters and its influence. The treatment which the children receive in the pits is much influenced by the state of their discipline as places of work generally and this depends immediately upon the underlooker, and ultimately upon the viewer and the proprietor himself. It is obviously only to see to the due performance of the labour that viewers and underlookers and employed by the proprietors but upon the character of these agents and upon the faithfulness and diligence generally, will much depend on the amount of order and decency that is preserved and rude as the commencement of any moral discipline may be, it is obvious that, where they are desirous to see good conduct, they become the fulcrum of its enforcement by such of the man as may be influenced by feelings of religion or perceptions of common decency to exert themselves in its cause (No.7 &c.)
- Superior in the larger pits. Generally speaking, the underlookers will be, in cultivation, above the average of the colliers from whom they are all selected, and the larger above the smaller proprietors so that with due allowance for exceptions, there is in the pits of the larger companies a considerable desire on the part of the employers and their immediate servants to preserve order, and to repress every misconduct, though in some pits this is not accomplished. The worst conduct will, on the other hand, be found in the smaller scattered mines in the thin seams where there is no 'industrial police' if I may be allowed such a term to describe the class of underlookers (Nos.4,5,7,8,9). The boys are not generally maltreated by the men, notwithstanding the savageness of the cases mentioned by witnesses Nos. 12 and 39 but the general rudeness and want of moral culture leave the young people in the practice of cruelties upon each other. (Nos.10,25.)
- Parish apprentices. The witness (No.39) remembers few cases of the ill usage of parish apprentices to have been brought before the magistrates but that any parish authorities to have sent unprotected children into labour until 21 years of age, unrequited, in these mines, is deeply to be regretted. The premium given with each of these children, too, is, as another witness observes, "merely a premium on getting rid of him for another." (No.4).
- Punishments. When punishments are inflicted they are strongly savage and the practice of leaving the children alone in the pit exposed to casualties, which they do not fail to incur, is exceedingly reprehensible but these boys are too useful to be systematically ill-treated in a body, within the pit or at home.
- Home. They are generally as well fed and lodged as the houses and habits and means of their parents and guardians will afford as they themselves testify. They are, however, various injuries to which they are liable in the pit, according to the state in which it is kept.

IX - ACCIDENTS.

- Employment for coroner. The Oldham district is that in which the coroner of this part of Lancashire finds the most frequent occasion for his services, on account of the chief employment of its numerous population being in the coal mines and factories. (No.39).
- Description of accidents which occur, shown in the record kept by Messrs. Jones. Of the casualties occurring in coal mines, the best possible description that afforded by the following abstract from the records kept by the Chamber and Werneth Colliery Company, of all the accidents requiring surgical assistance, which have occurred in their 16 pits, from the end of October 1840 to the end of October 1841. A record which they have enabled to make in providing gratuitous surgical assistance for their people. (No.4.) The amount of casualty here presented is decidedly small for a concern of

such extent and the company's chief agent regards the accidents of a nature which they could not by any means prevent. (No.4.) Assuredly the endeavours made by this company, in instructing their people in the uses of the safety lamp, in laying down good regulations and providing respectable underlookers and in the outlay of money to make their works and gearing good and secure, are worthy of universal imitation. (See Appendices 3 and 4 to the Evidence, Nos.4).

Number out of which these accidents occurred.

The number employed underground in their works is returned as 509 of whom 286 are adults, 150 between 13 and 18 years of age and 73 under 13 and the number employed on the surface 151, of whom only 25 are under 18 years of age, making a total of 660. Excepting the boys employed as engineers and carters, the surface workers are chiefly banksmen and mechanics. A list of the pits will be found in the Appendix to the Evidence, No.4.

ACCIDENTS demanding Surgical Assistance, which have occurred in the pits of the CHAMBER and WERNETH COLLIERY COMPANY, OLDHAM, during the years 1840-1.

Adults.

Thomas Lees, 43, coal getter. Trusdey Pit, 4th. Nov. 1840. Foot crushed by shale falling from roof and broke one toe.

John Winterbottom, 25, coal getter, No.3 Pit Chamber, 18th. Nov. 1840, A pick stuck into his hand.

Joshua Bradley, 21, waggoner, No.4 Pit Chamber, 21st. Nov. 1840. Testicles injured by waggon running down brow.

John Dyson, 23, carter, No.4 Pit Chamber, 7th. Jan. 1841. Fingers crushed by waggon. The slipper getting off, threw the edge of the waggon against the roof.

Stanley Taylor, 50, carter, Manchester Road Pit, 18th. Feb. 1841. Leg hurt by cart wheel. The horse became restive, threw him down and the wheel passed over his leg.

James Brindle, 40, coal getter, No.4 Hunt Lane Pit, 11th. March, 1841. Back and loins injured by roof falling.

Thomas Nicholson, 35, coal getter, No.3 Pit Chamber, 30th. Mar. 1841. Back and loins injured by roof falling.

Joseph Bakewell, 55, coal getter, Fancy Pit (Werneth), 3rd. Apr. 1841. Crushed by the roof falling.

James Bakewell, 30, coal getter, Fancy Pit (Werneth), 3rd. Apr. 1841. Killed by roof falling on him while at work.

Joseph Needhand, 40, coal getter, No.1 Pit Chamber, 20th. May 1841. Foot crushed by piece of stone falling from roof.

William Chamber, 60, coal getter, Bowling Green (Werneth), 2nd. Aug. 1841. Ankle put out by coal falling on it while at work.

Edward Davies, 60, Bowling Green (Werneth), 7th. June 1841, Hand crushed by a stone falling from roof while drawing his posts out.

Samuel Ashton, 19, waggoner, No.1 Pit Chamber, 24th. June 1841. Hand crushed.

James Lonsdale, 26, coal getter, No.1 Pit Chamber, 6th. July 1841. Leg crushed by roof falling.

James Chadderton, 23 coal getter, Chamber Hall Pit, 15th July 1841. Knee dislocated by stone falling from roof.

Thomas Beswick, 30, coal getter, Fancy Pit (Werneth), 2nd. Aug. 1841. Killed by roof falling while drawing props. The roof being loose and he not taking the precaution to set a prop near to himself was killed immediately after knocking out the further prop.

John Lees, 30, coal getter, Cannel Pit, Knowle, 25th. Aug. 1841. Hand crushed by roof falling.

Robert Seal, 23, waggoner, No.4 Pit Chamber, 9th. Sept. 1841. Toe crushed by coal falling out of waggon.

Joshua Bradley, 20, waggoner, No.4 Pit Chamber, 13th. Sept. 1841. Head cut by stone falling from side of shaft.

John Scholes, 40, labourer, removing timber, 14th. Sept. 1841. Foot injured by log of timber falling on it.

William Chambers, 60, coal getter, Bowling Green Pit, 14th. Sept. 1841. Wrist fractured. Was attempting to stop waggon that was going down the brow.

Thomas Chadderton, 34 coal getter, New Engine Pit, 20th. Oct. 1841. Shoulder hurt by slipping off plate. Was pushing some rails over the plates and they being wet at the time, he slipped.

James Pennington, 29, hooker-on at the bottom, No.4 Pit Chamber, 29. Oct. 1841. Head injured by fall of bolt from cage.

Young Persons.

James Doyle, 16, waggoner, No.1 Chamber Pit, 11th. Nov. 1840. Crushed by roof falling, loins and kidneys injured.

Ellis Jones, 13, waggoner, No.4 Chamber Pit, 20th Nov. 1840. Knocked down by waggon in jig brow and legs hurt.

John Lester, 17, waggoner, Fancy Pit (Werneth), 9th. Dec. 1840. Arm crushed by waggon at bottom. The lad fell as he was taking the waggon to the shaft.

James Simpson, 13, waggoner, Fancy Pit (Werneth), 16th. Dec. 1840. Finger end cut off by the roof falling on edge of waggon.

William Allen, 14, waggoner, No.4 Chamber Pit, 23rd. Dec. 1840. Fingers crushed. In attempting to stop a waggon going down the brow he fell and it went over his hand.

Matthew Jackson, 14, waggoner, No.3 Chamber Pit, 23rd. Dec. 1840. Hand crushed. His hand caught between door place and waggon.

John Jagger, 16, waggoner, No.2 Broadway Lane Pit, 7th. Jan. 1841. Leg fractured by jig chain getting round it. The leg was taken off immediately below the knee by the surgeons the same day.

William Greaves, 16, waggoner, Bowling Green Pit, (Werneth), 17th. June 1841. Leg bruised by waggon running down brow.

Abraham Taylor, 13, waggoner, New Engine Pit, 7th. Aug. 1841. Knocked down by waggon in brow and cut by the wheels in the loins.

Thomas Bowden, 16, waggoner, No.3 Chamber Pit, 4th. Sept. 1841. Ankle injured.

William Newton, 15, waggoner, Fancy Pit (Werneth), 10th. Sept. 1841. Knee injured by stone falling.

Rowland Ashworth, 13, waggoner, No.3 Pit Chamber, 21st. Oct. 1841. Three of his fingers hurt by a waggon against the roof. Owing to the rail being broke the waggon being thrown upwards.

John Andrews, 17, waggoner, No.4 Chamber Pit. 6th. Oct. 1841. Knee injured by falling on rails, Fell while pushing a waggon.

Moses Taylor, 17, waggoner, New Engine Pit, 6th. Oct. 1841. Hip crushed and other bruises in the hands and legs. Lamed by roof falling.

Joshua Crompton, 18, waggoner, No.3 Pit Chamber, 11th. Oct. 1841. Three of his fingers hurt by a waggon against the roof. Owing to the rail being broke the waggon was thrown upwards against the roof.

Eli Jones, 14, waggoner, No.4 Pit Chamber, 16th. Oct. 1841. Fingers crushed between waggon. crushed between the waggon wheel and rail while lifting up the waggon.

John Thompson, 17, waggoner, 19th. Oct. 1841. Killed by the roof falling on him while at work. Worked with his father.

Children.

John Raisbrick, 11, waggoner, Cannel Pit, Knowle, 31st. Oct. 1840. Run against waggon down jig and bruised his leg.

David Gartside, 9, waggoner, New Engine Pit, 14th. Jan. 1841. One of his fingers cut off.

William Clough, 12, waggoner, Cannel Pit, Knowle, 23rd. Apr. 1841. Crushed by waggon on brow. The slipper got off the waggon that was following him and crushed him.

James Horrocks, 12, waggoner, No.4 Pit Chamber, 11th. May 1841. Fingers crushed between two waggons.

Benjamin Taylor, 11, waggoner, No.4 Pit Chamber, 21st. May 1841. Fingers crushed between waggons.

John Elliott, 11, waggoner, No.4 Pit Chamber, 29th. May 1841. Leg fractured by a stone falling from roof.

Thomas Yearn, 12, waggoner, No.1 Pit Chamber, 14th. July 1841. Thigh fractured and other bruises. Cleaning the waggon road when the shale fell from the roof.

Joseph Lees, 12, waggoner, No.1 Pit Chamber, 11th. Sept., 1841. Leg crushed by roof falling.

Character of these accidents.

These accidents have occurred in the pits which, according to the testimony of the colliers themselves, are worked in the most liberal manner known in the district. They consist almost wholly of cuts and contusions received in the rough labour along the roadways, either by portions of the roof falling without warning, by collision with the top, sides, waggons and rails or by casualties in the jighbrows and inclines, where the violent exertion and often hazardous position of the waggoners seems to demand some further application of mechanical ingenuity to facilitate the descent. Some of the adults, also, appear to have been seriously injured in these localities, but the accidents occurring to getters, it will be seen, chiefly occur in the bays where they are at work and arise from the natural dangers

of their occupation and their own inadvertence combined. The number of these accidents was:-

To adults	27 of which 2 were fatal.
To young persons	17 of which 1 was fatal.
To children	8 of which none were fatal.
Total	52 of which 3 were fatal.

Comparison with the fatal casualties in the whole district in 1838.

The proportion which the fatal accident mentioned here bear to the other deaths by casualty in the Superintendent's Registrar's District of Ashton and Oldham, may in some small degree, be estimated by the following abstract of those occurring within limits in 1838, as recorded by the Registrars:-

Deaths by Casualty in the Superintendent Registrar's District of Ashton.

Burnt, ages, 1, 2, 2, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 5, 7, 7, 10, 17, 42, 45.

Scalded, ages, 1, 1, 1, 2, 2^{1/2}, 3, 3.

Drowned, ages, 1, 2^{1/2}, 5, 8^{1/2}, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 26, 33, 40, 51, 61.

Suicide, ages 6^{1/2}, 7, 16, 38, 39.

Fell into stone pit, age 55

Explosion of gas in coal pits, ages 16, 21, 60.

Stone falling down the shaft, age 27

Drawn over pulley, ages 9, 11, 20.

Fall of earth in coal pit, age 32.

Crushed in coal pit, age 13.

Machinery, ages 14, 16, 20, 22.

Crushed by carts, waggons &c., ages 1, 21, 27, 48, 51.

Drinking, age 65.

Miscellaneous ages 5 weeks, 5 weeks, 11 months,

1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 13, 1, 7, 21, 25, 28, 29, 36, 44, 45, 46, 52, 52.

Character of accidents as described by witnesses.

Several witnesses, it will be seen, mention the case which occurred a very short time before my visit, in which four persons were killed at one blast of the firedamp, entirely through the negligence of one of the sufferers (Nos. 3, 4, 39) and others allude to falls down the shaft, improper drawing of props, improper removal of coal, breaking of gearing &c. (Nos. 10, 11, 20, 21, 22, 39.) The whole of the evidence on this subject given by Mr. Joseph Wild, the Chief Constable of Oldham (No. 39), is worthy of your attention. The tempting of death to which the men are drawn in 'robbing the post wood,' and the exposure of children alone in the mines to incur all its casualties, are, as he describes them, peculiarly reprehensible.

Employment of children as engineers.

"There is also a class of accidents," states this witness, "of which children employed at coal works in this neighbourhood are the cause to persons of all ages. These occur in the winding up by steam machinery of all persons out of the pit. It is a general system here to employ mere children to tend these engines and stop them at the proper moment and if they be not stopped, the two or three or four or five persons wound up together are thrown over the beam and down the pit again. The inducement to employ these children in circumstances where life and death depend on their momentary attention is merely that their services can be obtained for perhaps 5s or 7s. a week, instead of the 30s. a week which the proprietors would perhaps have to pay a man of full years and discretion. There have been people wound over the Oldham Edge, at Werneth, at Chamber Lane, at Robin Hill, at Oldbottom and on Union Ground here, within the last six or seven years of recollection. I do not know of a case in which children were not the engineers and though he cannot speak of all of them being such, it was generally the case in all these instances. The coroner's juries having to give verdicts in cases where such young people were concerned and in which to attribute gross neglect would be subjecting them to a charge of manslaughter, have always leaned to the side of extenuation, but have expressed their dissatisfaction with the master employing children in

such a service and for so indefensible a reason and on one occasion he was desired by the coroner and jury to go to the master and tell him so. Three or four boys were killed in this way at the Chamber Lane Colliery of Messrs. Jones, two or three years since, by the momentary neglect of a little boy, whom he thinks was only nine years of age (others say ten), and who had heard, after the worst was over, had turned away from the engine when it was winding up, on his attention being attracted by a mouse on the hearth, In this case as deodand of £100 was levied on the engine, and returned to the coroner to the Court of Exchequer but it was never recovered from the parties.”

This employment of children as engineers appears to excite universal reprehension. The chief viewer of the largest company in the district, whose works I have had occasion to praise in other respects, says, “there are no engineers under 10 years of age, perhaps not under 12.” (No.5.) And although it was one of the children employed by this firm to which the Chief Constable’s evidence alludes (No.39) their employment on a regular system of promotion at wages increasing from 7s. up to 20s. a week, as they get up to 18 or 20 years of age, as it were, serving an apprenticeship for ultimate employment at the factory engines.

X - PHYSICAL CONDITION.

Health and habits.

The most remarkable personal characteristic of the colliery boys is their great muscular development about the shoulders and chest and it appeared to me that this was accompanied by rather a deficiency in height and as they progress towards manhood and middle age, they generally lose all traces of florid health, and acquire a wan complexion. The colliery children, generally, however, present an appearance of robust health. If the parents be among the best conducted, the children are well fed, and have a change of clothes for Sunday. Cleanliness and comfort characterising their cottages, which were solidly built. On the other hand, the description given of his own treatment and condition of James Taylor (No.10) is an example of the privations, physical and moral, to which the children of ill-conducted parents are a subject. The dinner of the colliers taken in the pit, must be regarded rather as a lunch, which they devour at any opportunity in the course of their labour and if this abrogation of the dinner hour be designed to lessen the time spent underground, and give increased comfort to be more plentiful evening meal at home, it is the choice of a lesser evil. But the hours of labour appear to be irrespective of this arrangement. A thorough washing of the body weekly seems to be common among all the children. I saw no instances of malformation resulting from labour in the mines but several young people crippled for life by accidents, from which very few wholly escape.

Accidents and insufficient provision against their results.

Indeed accidents are the most important element in estimating the probability of life for a colliery worker, if we may judge from the testimony of the chief agent of Messrs. Jones and Lees, who says, “he never hears, scarcely, of a collier dying, though of some being killed, for when they can work no longer they go about their business.... Many of the old colliers turn coal carters but as for colliers dying of sickness, the subject never before occurred to him” (No.4). Bronchial complaints generally hasten the period at which the collier ceases any longer to be qualified to pursue the labour of getting coal. In most of the large works the men unite in a friendly society for mutual assistance while disabled and for defraying the expenses of funerals, sometimes of the members only, in other instances those of any member of their families. The young people are admitted into these societies, paying half contribution, and receiving half pay when on the books. These societies are limited in some instances to burials only and owing to the bad constitution of many of the

neighbouring societies to which colliers subscribe, their contributions are often fruitlessly sacrificed.

The physical condition of the young people is seen to depend much on the religious, moral and intellectual character of the population generally.

XI - MORAL CONDITION.

Testimony to low moral condition.

For a brief description of the moral condition of the colliery population and of the means employed for its evaluation, I must refer to the interesting and important testimony of the ministers of the Established Church in the several parishes or ecclesiastical districts which comprise the town of Oldham (Nos.40,41,42), to that of the collier members of the little Primitive Methodist congregation in the outlying village of Knott Lanes Nos.28,29,30,31,32,33) to that of the Chief Constable of Oldham (No.39) and incidentally to that of the witnesses Nos.4,8,10,13,14,15,16,17,18 and 19.

Rudeness in some places amounting almost to barbarism.

From this testimony it will appear that the colliery workers are, in manners and habits, the rudest portion of a dense population proverbially rude and ignorant, one almost influenced, morally, by the example of the labourers of any higher class and one for the moral and intellectual cultivation of which there is, in reality, no public provision. This population is proportionately prone to exhibit instances of ferocity and of gross self indulgence and yet the universal testimony is to the improvement which has already taken place upon the manners of the passing generation. To see so much animal vigour, and such extensive resources for comfort, or even enjoyment, still misused by so many, is very painful, left as they are, in a moral condition little raised above that of brutes. But a considerable number of the colliers are men of better habits, attached to the ministry of the Church, or to the several Dissenting congregations.

Insufficient means of moral reformation.

The three Church ministries in the town and the various Dissenting preachers, are sufficient to the moral reformation of so vast a population. The Sunday Schools, unhappily, instead of being merely an ecclesiastical organisation for the religious instruction of the young, are regarded as 'the schools' and are mainly relied upon for secular instruction. (No.42.)

XII - EDUCATION.

Absence of day schools.

There is only one public day school in the whole parish and neighbourhood for the labouring classes, except an infant school, the only other day schools being, with few exceptions, petty-dame schools of the poorest description, to which the children are sent to be out of the way and the factory schools for the children between nine and 13 years of age, employed in the factories, which are no better, considering the more advanced age of the pupils.

Reliance for instruction on Sunday Schools.

But the only schools which the dense population of this recently wild district have been accustomed voluntarily to frequent, engaged as the children are in the mines and factories, during the week, are the Sunday Schools, commenced here in 1793, and greatly extended about 1800. Habit has caused these schools to be regarded as the legitimate and sufficing source of all knowledge of letters and the whole of the juvenile population frequent them, excepting those whose parents are too poor or too dissolute to clothe and send them.

Former secular character of these schools yet in part retained.

In their origin they rapidly acquired an entirely secular character, the instruction being in reading, writing and accounts, without any attendance at a place of worship and this character is still retained in many but the clergy have of late years, refused to permit instruction to Sabbath to extend beyond reading and Scripture lessons, in the schools, two nights a week, to impart that knowledge of writing and accounts which it was formerly made the business of the Sabbath to cultivate. The Sunday Schools and the evening schools attached to them, are equally supported by subscriptions. Instruction in them is therefore gratuitous and this circumstance contributes, with the universally low appreciation of the value of instruction, to make them exclusively relied upon. For the results of this system, I must refer to the minutes of the evidence, especially that of the Rev. W.F. Walker, (No.42.)

Sunday School of St. Peter's.

The only Sunday School which I was enabled to inspect, during the time of its lessons, was that of St. Peter's, in the town of Oldham, held in a large building designed as the National School and erected to be used as such, had it been found possible to procure the weekday attendance of scholars. It occupies a room of remarkable size, extending the whole length of the first floor and divided into two equal portions by a wooden partition, screening the boy's from the girl's school, although both are equally commanded by the superintendent's desk, placed at one end of the screen. It has 800 children on its books, and is never attended by less than 600. In a large room on the ground floor is a Sunday infant school for those under five years of age, attended by about 200 of the children, part of whom also attend the infant school held in the same room on the week days.

Management and plan of instruction.

Two members of the Visiting Committee and one of the two district ministers, who take this duty alternately, are in weekly superintendence over this school, the active direction which develops, under a committee of management, upon a superintendent, at present a book-keeper to a colliery, who was himself instructed solely at this school. His lessons are taken in the following order, at the word of the superintendent, the passages of Scripture for reading and for committing to memory being previously selected by the minister and stated in a card for the half year.

ST. PETER'S SUNDAY SCHOOL PLAN.

Morning	Order	Time allowed	Time ceasing
1/4 past 9	Call registers	5 min	20 m past 9
20 m past 9	Singing and prayer	15 min	25 m to 10
25 m to 10	The appointed Lesson, which has been perfectly committed to memory and also if time permit, some additional reading.	30 min.	5 m past 10
5 m past 10	Call Registers. Classes prepare for Chapel	15 min	20 m past 10
20 m past 10	Singing and Reading Lessons with questions and explanations. If time permit, Catechism or a Spelling Lesson to be introduced	60 min	20 m past 11
20 m past 11	Singing and a short Address from the Superintendent	25 min	15 m to 12
15 m to 12	Singing and Prayer	15 min	12 o'clock

Afternoon

2 o'clock	Call Registers	5 min	5 m past 2
5 m past 2	Singing and prayer	10 min	15 m past 2
15 m past 2	Call Registers. Classes prepare for Chapel	15 min	30 m past 2
30 m past 2	Reading Lesson with questions and explanations and if time permit, a little Catechism.	45 m	15 m past 3
15 m past 3	Singing. Spelling or an interesting Story at the teacher's discretion.	30 min	15 m to 4
15 m to 4	Singing and Prayer.	15 min	4 o'clock

Instruction in school and attendance at church alternately.

The space in the church being limited, only half the children of the upstairs school go to the chapel at once, and none of those in the infant school, The classes of the upper school form two divisions for the purpose of attendance at the public worship. While one division is absent the other pursues the plan above stated, forming graduated classes throughout the rooms on the national school system. Owing to the great deficiency of teachers, these classes are too large but in the girl's school especially, valuable assistance had been afforded by the members of families of the richer classes. The numbers assembled, the earnestness of their labours, their purpose and the time and manner of its pursuit, were all remarkable and not the least impressive when all these young people united their voices in song with the tones of a harmonicon, the work and gift of a former scholar.

Evening schools to which the former secular branches of Sunday School instruction are now adjourned.

Although the rules of this school premise that "no instruction but what is of a decidedly religious character shall be given to the children," yet, in accordance with the popular habit of the district, they proceed to say that, "at the same time, every arrangement which is practicable shall be made to afford the children attending the Sunday School, opportunities of learning those branches of education calculated to promote their comfort and make them useful members of society." And the strictly secular business of instruction in writing, arithmetic and sewing, is adjourned, as it were, to an evening school, held on two week day evenings for boys and two others for girls attending the Sunday School. The school materials are purchased by the pupils but the instruction is gratuitous.

St. Peter's Sunday School Friendly Society.

A supplemental bond of union and feature of unity is given to this school by a Friendly Society in which are voluntarily associated 298 of the scholars and teachers and 90 out-members, formerly such making a total of 388. The members of this society consist of five classes of subscribers. The first scholars from six to ten years of age paying one halfpenny per week. The second, scholars from 10 to 15 years of age contributing three halfpence per week and the fourth teachers from 16 to 35 years of age, paying 2d. per week. The payment to each member of these several classes in time of sickness being 2s., 4s., 6s., and 8s. per week respectively, reducible to one half after 26 weeks receipt, and to one fourth after twice that term. On occasions of death, the payments for the funeral expenses of members of each class respectively, are £1 5s., £2 10s., £3 15s. and £5.

Character of Sunday School instruction.

"As a means of religious instruction it is obvious that schools, composed as these are, must be imperfect in the extreme. As secular schools, they do harm by lowering the people's estimation of the value of secular instruction and making them contented with less than they ought to have. Being gratuitous too, Sunday School instruction is not valued as much as if it were paid for and the interval of six days between each day of instruction delays the attainment of any obviously good result. In many schools, too, the teachers will attend by rotation only once a month and each may be carrying on a separate system. If the Sunday Schools, however, insufficient

as they are, were not to supply something, there is not sufficient desire for instruction among the people to make a demand for teachers at any time or in any form during the week. In the Sunday Schools of the dissenting congregations the same deficiencies exist and the ministers of those congregations neither do nor can pay much attention to them.” (No.42.)

Here synonymous with popular education which is therefore wretchedly defective.

Such is Sunday School instruction, which is here synonymous with popular education, as pursued in the Oldham district of Lancashire. Beautiful and commendable, as these voluntary efforts are, to the extent to which they are carried, the materials and the construction of the Sunday School system are, to the most careless observation, as imperfect as they are described by the ministers of St. James’s and St. Peter’s. What can that education be which is limited to a poor and irregular instruction during three or four hours, once a week, and frequently with intervals of interruption?

State of education among colliery workers according to the masters’ returns.

The following is an abstract of all which relates to education in the returns made by the employers in this district:-

STATISTICS OF INSTRUCTION from the RETURNS made by the Employers of Young People in the Oldham District in the Spring of 1841.

Age 7 to 8 there are 4, 4 attend Sunday School, 100 per cent. None attend day school. 4 regularly attend Public Worship, 100 per cent. 3 can read an easy book, 75 per cent.

Age 8 to 9 there are 12, 9 attend Sunday School, 75 per cent. None attend day school. 4 regularly attend Public Worship, 33.33 per cent. 9 can read an easy book, 75 per cent.

Age 9 to 10 there are 22, 18 attend Sunday School, 81.81 per cent. None attend day school. 11 regularly attend Public Worship, 50 per cent. 13 can read an easy book, 59.09 per cent.

Age 10 to 11 there are 35, 28 attend Sunday School, 80 per cent. None attend day school. 19 regularly attend Public Worship, 54.28 per cent. 27 can read an easy book, 77.41 per cent.

Age 11 to 12 there are 38, 25 attend Sunday School, 65.78 per cent. None attend day school. 17 regularly attend Public Worship, 44.73 per cent. 21 can read an easy book, 55.26 per cent.

Age 12 to 13 there are 54, 47 attend Sunday School, 87.03 per cent. None attend day school. 31 regularly attend Public Worship, 57.407 per cent. 44 can read an easy book, 81.48 per cent.

Age 13 to 14 there are 65, 55 attend Sunday School, 84.61 per cent. None attend day school. 42 regularly attend Public Worship, 64.61 per cent.

Age 14 to 15 there are 50, 39 attend Sunday School, 78 per cent. None attend day school. 26 regularly attend Public Worship, 52 per cent. 41 can read an easy book, 82 per cent.

Age 15 to 16 there are 54, 40 attend Sunday School, 75.92 per cent. None attend day school. 40 regularly attend Public Worship, 75.92 per cent. 43 can read an easy book, 79.63 per cent.

Age 16 to 17 there are 41, 31 attend Sunday School, 75.609 per cent. None attend day school. 19 regularly attend Public Worship, 46.09 per cent. 32 can read an easy book, 78.04 per cent.

Age 17 to 18 there are 39, 28 attend Sunday School, 71.79 per cent. None attend day school. 21 regularly attend Public Worship, 53.84 per cent. 36 can read an easy book, 89.74 per cent.

Of 413, 324, 78.45 per cent. attend Sunday School, none attend day school, 221, 53.51 per cent. regularly attend Public Worship, 315, 76.27 per cent. can read an easy book and 76, 18.4 percent can write

Results which they exhibit.

From this abstract it will be seen that four fifths of the young people are stated to attend Sunday Schools with little difference in the proportion at different ages and that not more than half of them attend public worship, for the most part, it may be presumed, in connection with these schools, while none whatever attend day school. The number who say they can read an easy book is three fourths but this includes commonly all who can spell their way through a few words and consequently the proportion is nearly as great of the younger boys as the older youths who are stated to possess this accomplishment. While the number who can write is not one in five and the truth of the figures which show this may be relied upon. Their proficiency being tested by subscription to the return. This, therefore, is the best test by these returns of the actual ways of the instruction and if the

number of misspelled and illegible scrawls be deducted, the state proportion will be considerably reduced. It may safely be concluded, that those who have not progressed as far as to be able to write, do not read with either pleasure or profit.

Description of the present state of popular education by an employer.

It is not surprising, therefore, to find an intelligent employer* volunteering, in his answers to your queries, the observation that, "Education must be of far more useful and practical quality than what is to be obtained at most of the day or Sunday Schools. There appears at present sufficient attendance upon Sunday Schools to change the character of the people, but generally for obtaining any real knowledge that will be of use to them in after life, they might just as well go to a coal pit as a school. It is very far from his intention or wish to disparage Sunday Schools, of which he had always been an advocate and supporter, but he has long thought them in a great degree void of character of usefulness of which they are capable, if a proper system of education was pursued in them."

Lamentable character positively and comparatively.

The present state of popular instruction in this district is, indeed, not only a positive reproach upon it people of all classes, but disgraceful even as a subject of comparison with that witnessed in the poor and remote village of Leadhills hereafter described.

XII - COMPARATIVE CONDITION.

Comparison of the colliery with the factory boys.

The only comparison which this neighbourhood affords is with the boys in the factories. As more weakly children may be employed in the factories than in the mines, it follows that, in commencing their employment, the colliery lads are amongst the strongest for their age and even those who are not the children of colliers, although their work be harder, are gladly sent to the pits for the higher wages which they will there obtain. Their labour is more violent, their exposure to casualties much greater, and the circumstances of their employment altogether more rude but they are perhaps better fed and their superiority in bodily powers to the factory lads of the same age is generally obvious. But on the other hand, they are more ignorant and more brutal on occasions of excitement, the latter characteristic arising in part from the higher animal spirits than prevail among factory hands (Nos.20,39). The trade of collier, to which the lads generally attain, is severe and dangerous but in times of full employment, pretty well remunerated.

Circumstances of the young colliery workers in the Oldham district recapitulated.

It may be gathered from the preceding details:-

That in the Oldham District, no females of any age are employed underground but that the boys are taken into the pits so soon as they have physical strength to render themselves in any degree useful though in circumstances both dangerous and injurious to those of merely infantile years.

That seven and eight years of age are common periods at which children commence labour in the mines and that, though this appears long to have been a usual age at which to enter, yet that the operation of the Factories Act had been recently rather to augment the number now sent at that age into the pits.

That they are, nearly all, at once employed in the severe labour of thrutching, drawing and waggoning.

That they generally work 10, 11, 12 or 13 hours a day being a couple of hours younger than the adults whom they assist and who leave them alone in the pits to pursue their labour.

*Mr. Thomas Livesey, agent at the Alkington Colliery. June 19th. 1841.

That night work is a regular portion of the colliery system of this district.

That there is generally no time set apart for the hasty meal which is the only one devoured while in the pits.

That the children are hired by the adult colliers but paid by the master at a rate which makes the children's wages a considerable item in the income of a family.

That the habits of the whole of the pit workers are rude in the extreme but that systematic ill-treatment of a young worker is of rare occurrence.

That, in common with the men, they are exposed to casualties of every degree of severity, besides others which are brought upon them by their extreme youth and it characteristic incaution and by the practice of leaving them to work by themselves in the pits.

That their physical condition at home is not generally bad.

That their moral condition is very low, while in manners they are often brutal.

That, excepting a few who go (with little effort) to night schools, they rely, for the little instruction which only a part of them receive, upon Sunday Schools, quite inadequate to their secular education, although this is made their express province.

And that, though in health and strength they may be superior, yet in intellect they are inferior, to the factory lads of this proverbially rude district.

Circumstances which are the source of physical 'evils'

The 'evils' in the nature of the physical injuries, resulting to the young people from this state of things, appear to be limited to those arising from an over early commencement of with the very severe labour, from the injurious system of night work and from the liability to accidents, aggravated by their exceeding youth and their being left alone in the pits and though the very nature of the employment demands and develops a muscular character superior to that of other children, it seems to be a sound opinion of the colliers themselves, that the circumstances here enumerated demand from the young frame an exhaustion which hastens its decay in mature age.

Circumstances which are the source of moral 'evils.'

But if the 'evils' in the shape of moral privations, which seem most to demand your attention, arising from an utter absorption of their whole youthful existence in a labour so arduous as to leave neither time nor capacity for mental exercise, from the ignorance and abandonment entailed upon their parts by a childhood similarly spent and from the utter absence by any means of popular education in the district or of any capacity to appreciate their value, though those means should be supplied.

I have the honour to be,

Gentlemen,

Your most obedient Servant,

JOSEPH FLETCHER,
Secretary,

EVIDENCE COLLECTED BY JOSEPH FLETCHER, Esq.

COLLIERIES NEAR OLDHAM.

No.1. Andrew Knowles, Esq., colliery proprietor and worked. October 26th. 1841.

Quality of the Lancashire coal strata demands no extra-ordinary provision for ventilation.

He has been in the colliery business 45 years and is now working various collieries in the county between Manchester and Bolton and is resident at Little Bolton.

Throughout the Lancashire and Cheshire coal field the strata are of such a quality that they emit very little firedamp and they are so inclined in their dip, that this gas, which is of lighter specific gravity than the common atmospheric air, easily escapes without any danger and without any extensive provision of air-doors, trappers and artificial drafts, which become necessary when the strata pour out more gas and found in flatter strata. Not half the mines in this county have any firedamp whatever. The consequence is that the class of children employed in other districts as trappers are here almost unknown. He is not aware of any mines in which trappers are employed. The Davy lamp also is generally dispensed with, except for trying the different workings before the colliers commence their labour. In mines subject to firedamp, lamps are always provided for trying the state of the mine, but there is not, perhaps, for 10 miles round here (Little Bolton) one used in working. There are a few used in the mines about St. Helens and about Wigan, but it is not generally the case in this coalfield. Around here, in the vicinity of Bolton, there are a good many collieries, but not very large ones. The largest in the county are in the neighbourhood of St. Helens, Wigan, Outwoods, Clifton, Worsley, Newton, Oldham and Ashton.

Children all drawers.

The hands employed in Lancashire pits are adults, or approaching adult age, except the children of the collieries themselves and the children employed in thin seam mines who are all engaged in drawing the coals from the place where they are hewn to the pit's eye, or, where there are horseways, as there are only in a few, to that horseway. The horseways are few, because the coal in this district, not lying very deep, it is less expensive to sink new shafts at short distances than to make an extensive system of ways underground. In some few instances the drawers are employed by the masters, especially in the neighbourhood of Prescott and St. Helens but they are generally employed and paid by the colliers themselves and if members of their own families can do the work, they always take them first.

Improvement in modes of working.

The system of working the collieries in this district had undergone, during his experience, little alteration. There is now more use made of rails in drawing the coals to the bottom of the shaft and of gunpowder in blasting them from the strata but the labour of the collier himself is otherwise unchanged as also the system upon which he employs the drawers. He is paid now, as formerly, according to the quantity of coals which he sends to the bottom of the shaft or horseway, as the case may be, and he may get them as he can. Some draw their own but the general method is to employ children of their own or of others, for this purpose. In some mines they cannot do without children, the seams are so thin. There is one close here which the seam is only 18 inches thick but where the seams are thicker, the colliers prefer older hands for the work, when they want more than their own family to assist them.

Collier's children in the pits before they can work.

As regards the members of their own families, not only do they take them down so soon as they can work but often before they can do so. This is the case in his own pits and it results from regulations among themselves. The pit may be required to produce only a certain quantity of coals, while it is employing a number of hands who could produce from it much more and they then among themselves, adopt a system by which a certain quantity is assigned as a man's proportion, or 'kale' and beyond this they reckon additional proportions of a kale which he may turn out, according to the number and ages of the individuals whom he employs under him and frequently to count merely as parts of a 'kale' and not to work, or to work very little, he takes down young children of his own family, with whose services he could otherwise, and would, dispense.

Combination system and rule by which this is brought about.

It has been the case for many years in this county that there have been too many hands in the pits in proportion to the demand. It was only about the years 1835 that there was any exception to this. The the demand for hands in other employment lessened the supply for colliers and the men got their wages raised, they did less work when more was wanted. A reverse of times had since prevailed and the pits are now sadly overhanded. In 1830 there were also very low wages, as now, while the master had on hand very considerable stocks. But the men when combined together throughout this county, refused to do more than a certain quantity of work until the stocks of raised coal were exhausted and then turned out for an advance of the prices of their labour, which, after they had been out about 12 weeks, they got advanced about 30 per cent, and at this advance they continued to work just enough to meet the demand, without accumulating stocks. But the influx of hands was not limited. Some masters who resisted did all they could to introduce new hands not in combination and the prices came down in less than a year. For a short time, however, they got a complete mastery and even fixed the selling price of coals and regulated who should be employed and the Newcastle colliers were at the same time pursuing the same system. Combination, whenever the men think that they can get an advantage by it, is part of the system of the trade in this district. The men can organise themselves in a week and there is no resisting them for the moment for the country cannot go on without coals and the coals of Lancashire are of a quality with which provisions against this cannot be made by stocks in advance for they rapidly fall small and bad when exposed to the atmosphere.

(Signed) ANDREW KNOWLES.

No.2 Joseph Jones jnr. Esq., mill and colliery proprietor. Oldham, Oct. 29th. 1841.

Present depression of the coal trade consequent on general depression.

The coal trade of this district is in a very depressed state, insomuch that the proprietors yesterday at their meeting seriously debated whether it were not better to cease working part of the mines, Some factories are completely stopped and others working short time, while the diminished earnings of the people themselves force them to crowd together into a smaller number of houses because of their inability to pay their accustomed rents. There are in this township of Oldham alone about 1800 houses for labouring people, which are now entirely empty although they were a few years ago fully occupied, or nearly so. This huddling of the people together had been going on for some years and had diminished the demand for coal. The colliers already have not full work and there appears to be no chance but to throw a number out altogether. Of course the work of the children is diminished in the same proportion as that of their parents, Oldham is no worse off than other parts of Lancashire, either in its trade or its collieries.

(Signed) JOSEPH JONES.

No.3 Mr. Henry Garforth, aged 37, late book-keeper and cashier for Messrs. Lees and Jones and previously dialling (surveyor) mines. Oct. 28th. 1841.

First, a trap-door tenter in Yorkshire.

He has been acquainted with the working of coal from his infancy, having commenced working at nine years of age in the neighbourhood of Wakefield in Yorkshire. His father was manager of a colliery near Keighley, under Mr. Dawson. He was poor and illiterate until he put himself for three years to a night school and by learning there to read, write and plan, he qualified himself to be an underlooker and take the management of a mine. This was when the witness was about five years of age. Between eight and nine years of age he commenced to work as a trapper, being perhaps the youngest in the pit at the time. He was quite proud to begin trapping, preferring it to play but he soon got tired. Use is second nature and for a year and a half he was a trap-door tenter without feeling any alarm except when we had to go past the place where 'Old Johnson' was killed where the mere dirt behind his feet would make him occasionally feel timid. He had the door nearest the shaft and was always enjoined by his father to caution. He was at it 10 to 11 hours a day. After he had done trapping with which it was usual for the children to begin, he proceeded to the hurrying which he looked upon as a promotion and was proud of. The trappers are made aware that upon their attention, their own lives and those of all the men, depend but he would not like to trust children where there was a great deal of 'sulphur' if he had the ordering of a colliery in which trapper were regularly required. An old man, at a couple of shillings a day would be more suitable and understand it, without the giddiness and carelessness that a young child has.

Colliers past work the proper substitute for children at trapping.

There is many an old collier that is not half a man for work that would be peculiarly qualified for such a job and when it is required equally for the safety of the men and the advantage of the master, what is 12s. a week? By the time a collier is 50 he is becoming an old man for his work and yet he might for ten years mind a trap-door with advantage to all parties, for it is a task which he will both understand and willingly discharge.

Hurrying in Yorkshire.

It was a five foot seam in which he was working as a hurrier and there was good room in the ways in which blackdamp, towards the face of the works, was sometimes very troublesome but not the firedamp. This hurrying was all by thrusting and the coal lay level but the hurrying in this county, called 'waggoning' is different and not to be liked as he liked that. At 13 years of age he left the hurrying in Yorkshire and came to waggoning (which is the operation analogous to that of 'hurrying') at Messrs. Lees, Jones and Company's works in the neighbourhood of Oldham in whose service he has been ever since, until two months ago, a period of nearly 25 years.

Colliery companies in the neighbourhood of Oldham.

The Messrs. Less, Jones and Booth, together with several other gentlemen form, in various combinations, several companies for working coal of this district. The principle companies are, the Chamber Lane Company of Messrs. Jones, Lees and Booth, having their offices in King Street, Oldham and the Fairbottom Company of Messrs. Lees and Booth, having their offices at Fairbottom in the parish of Ashton.

Trade of the district.

Messrs. Lees and Jones and Messrs. Jones and Co. are the largest colliery workers in the coal fields lying to the east of Manchester which not only supply with fuel the numerous works of the cotton manufacture and the great population planted upon them, but send also an extensive supply to Manchester as well by canal as by carts. The latter delivering them at about $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. a cwt, for carriage, in addition to the $4\frac{1}{2}$ d. per cwt. which is the best 'Black Mine' coal costs at the pit mouth.

Character and disposition of the seams.

He has seen most of the principle pits in the district extending from the neighbourhood of Oldham, by Ashton and Staleybridge to Hyde, having been allowed by the company under whom he worked to survey and 'dial' for different parties around. Throughout this district nearly all the same mines are found and those which are worked are four feet (as the 'Black Mine' coal, which is the best in Lancashire) 27 inches and 24 inches in thickness respectively. The 'two feet' mine or 'Mountain Mine' as it is called, is sometimes several inches less than two feet thick. The 'great mine' is, however, five feet six inches less than two feet in thickness of gettable coal but there are in it seams of dross which have to be separated. There are on one estate near Dukinfield, in this district. 15 different workable strata of coal. The pits of Messrs. Lees, Jones and Co., and those of Messrs. Jones and Co., vary from 100 yards to 350 yards in depth and the vicinity of Oldham, in which they occur, is that in which the coal beds east of Manchester are by far the most extensively wrought. Messrs. Lees and Jones and Jones and Co., have now in operation 40 or 50 pits or shafts in the parishes of Oldham and Ashton but all to the north of Ashton. There are two or more shafts to a colliery and about 15 or 16 is the total number of collieries in which they are found.

Drainage.

There is a good deal of water in the pits naturally but they are kept dry by pumping and where his father has had the making of the mainways, he had covered up the water drains running down their lower side by flags leaning against the bed of coal and protecting the boys waggoning from getting wetted at the same time that they prevented the roadway from being cut up and destroyed by the splashing of the water. This method had been commonly adopted in the pits of the neighbourhood where there is much water.

Plan of working in this district.

The coal beds of the parish of Oldham generally dip one yard in four. In Ashton Parish generally one yard in two though of course there are considerable variations in both.

The works have all two or more shafts, one sunk on the dip side and the other on the rise side of the coal to be got, the pit on the dip side being the downcast pit for air and the pit on the rise side being the upcast shaft with a furnace at the bottom to maintain the current. Sometimes the men will 'cough like good 'uns' coming through the smoke of the furnace on a damp day as it accumulates in the shaft. The dip shaft is, of course, the shaft for pumping but both shafts are generally used for drawing both the coals and men and they will sometimes prefer using the downcast shaft to avoid the smoke.

Double pits.

In sinking new shafts before a current is instituted by opening a communication between them, inconvenience is sometimes felt from the firedamp but this is obviated by the use of a ventilator or fan similar to that of a winnowing machine with a pipe attached. Once the communication is established in these coal fields there need no longer be serious danger from firedamp for this current can be directed to the workings in any part to which the getting may be extended.

Double galleries.

The system of working is to push out two galleries about 6 feet apart, one of which will carry out a current of air from the downcast shaft and the other carry it back again towards the upcast shaft so soon as the communication between the extremities is effected by a 'cut-through' which is a transverse gallery only about two yards long. A 'cut-through' is generally made every five yards, more or less, according to the apprehension of danger so that the current may be perfectly free within a short distance of the working. And the chief occasions of explosion which have occurred in this district have been on a small scale in these chambers or galleries before the communication is completed. Occasionally, the fall of a roof in more distant parts of the mine will send forward bad air, where it is not to be expected, in some of the passages and an explosion will occur as was the case at Holebottom Colliery at Oldham only two months ago when his brother, two cousins and a fourth person were killed.

Accidents from 'sulphur.' He has never before known in the whole district four persons to be killed at once by the 'sulphur.' In fact, it was supposed that there was not enough sulphur in the whole pits to have done such a thing. He has known in this neighbourhood one or two at a time to be killed by it but it was by explosion in small distant chambers and not by any great explosion such as effects the whole pit in the Northumberland district. Indeed explosions here are scarcely ever known to extend across the air currents and it is found perfectly safe to work the strata up the 'broo' [brow or rise] above the upcast shaft carrying round the currents of air derived from the lower shaft. The works may on this system, be carried a thousand yards distant from the shaft and sometimes they are carried so far, even where there is most 'sulphur.'

Danger not great and ventilation simple.

Owing to the dip of the strata, the moderate depth at which the coal lies, the system, of ventilating by two distinct shafts, which in this circumstance facilitates and the quality of the coal itself, the strata here are, generally speaking, so little incommoded with 'sulphur' that the Davy lamp is seldom used, though each man has one and the system of ventilation is too simple to require the employment of an express class of children to tend trap-doors. The current is generally kept in its right track by walls of brick and soot and lime across the disused cut-through, except in the mainways, where the waggoners open and shut, as they successively pass, the doors there placed, and which are held by a pulley heavily weighted. Every individual in a pit is closely lessoned by the overlooker as to the precautions to be used, which Messrs. Lees and Jones have printed in a little book for them.

Employment of children as drawers, waggoners and thrutchers.

Almost the sole employment of children is as waggoner, drawers and thrutchers. The name of waggoners so far from meaning that they are driving horses, describes in this locality merely which in Yorkshire is called hurrying, i.e. the loading and pushing of low waggons from a place of getting to the pit bottom. Drawing consists in loading an oblong tub, measuring 27 inches long by 24 wide and 9 high and containing 3 cwt. or a basket and a half, with coals hewn down by the getter and dragging it on its sledge bottom by means of a girdle of leather passing round the body and a chain of iron attached to that girdle in front and hooked on to the sledge. The sledge has to be dragged to the mainway leading to the shaft which is run nearly on the level. To reach this level the greater distance is down, though sometimes up, a 'broo' or incline, of the same steepness as the inclination of the strata. In descending the hill with the tub loaded, the drawer, in front of the tub, where his light is fixed, turns his face to it, that he may regulate its motion down the hill and proceeding back foremost, pulls it along by the belt round his back. When he gets it to the mainway he has to heave it upon a low truck running on iron wheels and then go and fetch a second, which will complete the load for the truck, which he pushes along the iron railway to the pit bottom. Perhaps to enter into a strife for precedence in hooking the tubs onto a drawing rope. Returning with his tubs empty, he leaves the mainway first with one and then with the other to get loaded, drawing them up the hill by his belt and chain, the latter of which he now passes between his legs, so as to pull face foremost. Thrutchers are little boys employed to help the weaker drawers by 'thutching' or thrusting, at the back of the tub or truck.

Women and girls not allowed to work in the pits.

In this district, to the east of Manchester, it is not the custom to employ females of any age in the pits, partly perhaps because of the employment which is afforded them by the cotton factories which abound throughout its extent. The custom, is now so firmly fixed that a man from Wigan, who came to work for Messrs. Lees and Jones, went away again because he was not allowed to work his wife in the pit. At no age whatever are girls worked in the pits. Girls as well as women do work in the pits on the other side of Manchester, but if he had 'the ordering of it' there should be no female children whatever so employed. The postures and the labour and

the intermingling with the men and boys in the dark and ill-governed recesses of the mine, are quite inconsistent with any delicacy of manners or conduct. There is no restraint whatever in a coal pit from the extremist grossness, of which he adduced instances within his own knowledge.

(Signed) HENRY GARFORTH.

No.4 Mr. John Ogden, chief agent of Messrs. Joseph Jones, jun., and Co., of Chamber, Werneth, Hunt Lane and Copster Hill Collieries, near Oldham, commonly called the Chamber Company. Nov. 1st. 1841.

Chamber Colliery
Company's works
Described.

The works of Joseph Jones and Co., employed below ground on the 12th. June, 1841, as shown by the return made to the Commissioners at that date, 286 adult men, 150 young persons between 18 and 13 years of age, all youths and 73 children under 13 years of age, all boys. These working at several collieries near the town of Oldham, which have about 16 shafts in the whole and employ a total steam power of 112 horses. The smallest height of the mainways is 36 inches but the thickness of the seams of coal, though sometimes 42 inches, is in other instances only 18. In these instances the side gates are no more than will just admit the loaded tub or waggon to pass, this would be about 20 inches high. The depth of the shafts varies from 25 to 120 fathoms. There is no protection over the heads of those ascending or descending the pits, The distances from the getting places to the bottom of the pit vary from 20 to 100 yards. By the expensive mode of ventilation with numerous shafts here adopted, all danger of the firedamp is nearly obviated. He thinks there are no children now employed in these works as trap-door tenters. No children in the mines are in the direct employ of the company.

Employment of children
as engineers.

Boys are employed in carting at the top of the shafts and young people are employed as engineers from 12 to 20 years of age. They learn better when young. The company has a regular scale of promotion, of which the engineers themselves are very jealous. They begin at 7s. a week and get up to £1. It is a very particular job to watch the chains and stop at the right moment and if, when a lad is tried at it, he is not a sharp fellow, he is withdrawn from that occupation. As they get older they go to be engineers at factories, where they will get 30s. a week in lieu of the 20s. which they would get here. These collieries are, in fact, a school for engineers from the factories. He has had one accident with a small four horse power engine tended by a lad of 10 years old, who allowed three persons to be wound over. The fear of dismissal and the hope of promotion are sufficient to keep the attention of these young people to their occupation, for which the most alert are selected. There may be a dozen lads under 18 in the employment of this company as engineers and this is the only occupation for young persons on the surface in the company's employment, except the lads employed in carting, of whom there are about half a dozen. The number of adults employed on the surface is 126, all of them are males in various occupations, as smiths, carpenters &c. The number on the surface, under 18 is 25.

Detestation of female
employment underground.

This company has in its employment no females whatsoever in the pits, and it is utterly disgusting for them to be employed in such occupations that they would not allow it, nor would any of their agents nor would the men wish it. They detest the idea of it. The ages of the boys and youths in their employment are stated in the return.

Night and day work.

When trade is busy they work double shifts, that is, night and day, and the children work the same hours as the men but at present work is very slack owing to the mills being some wholly stopped and some working only half time and the people of the whole district in a state of depression. The colliers have been worse off this last summer than they have been for

- along time. They are not allowed to descend later than six o'clock in the morning, for the sake of safety. Before this hour there is no coal allowed to be drawn up and the company will not allow the men to go down while the coal is coming up.
- Usual hours. The engine begins letting them down about five o'clock and it will in some pits take a whole hour to let them down. When the demand is slack they will come up at perhaps 12 o'clock. If they were working full time at this winter season, they would stay until four or five and if the trade were exceedingly brisk, a second shift would go down at six o'clock in the evening and come up about four in the morning.
- Extension in busy times. They will not generally work more than eight hours a day but as they work by quantity, when the demand is brisk they will gladly extend their hours and even go into the pit again after leaving work for the day.
- Turn-out. We have not worked double shifts since last Christmas and after the turn-out which occurred then, and which inflicted a serious injury of the coal trade of this district by breaking up the train of connections with Manchester which were then compelled to make connections with other markets. The men were instigated by the men below Manchester, perhaps backed by the masters there who granted their men an advance and who ultimately profited by the suspension of trade here.
- Meals. As for meals the men and boys get only one in the pit which is frequently sent down to them and they eat it as they choose to snatch a short time while at work.
- Waggoners. The sole employment of the boys and youths underground is in loading and in thrusting the coal tubs from the place of work to the bottom of the pit. During the time of their employment they are also learning to be hewers. The belt and chain are not used now in this company's works.
- System of their work. When the coals have been hewn by the getter, they are loaded by the waggoner into the waggons containing 3 cwt. to 4 cwt., 6 cwt., or 8 cwt., according to the thickness of the seam. Those in the thickness having large wheels and better machinery. The waggoners of the larger tubs are youths of 17 or 18 but boys of a younger age commonly work two together at a waggon. These run upon wrought iron rails for the laying down of which the colliers are paid by the company so much per length and they are brought up to the very working place. From this point the waggons are pushed by the waggoners with hands and head to the bottom of the pit along the levels and where they have to descend from one level into another. This is generally done by a cut at right angles directly with the dip, down the broo' or hill which it makes. Here there is a winch and pinion for jiggging the waggons down the incline, with a jigger at the top and a hooker at the bottom of the plane where it is such as to require these. Sometimes, however, the descent from one line of level into another is by a diagonal cutting at a smaller angle from the levels, called a slant, down which the waggoners can and do in some instances, take their waggons without jiggging by their own manual labour. The waggoning is virtually the apprenticeship of the boys to the getters for whom they work and the parent of a family would generally be glad to put his son to waggoning for a good workman rather than send him into a factory.
- Children sent earlier into the pits since the passing of the Factories Act. Since the passing of the Factories Act, he has had his attention drawn to the subject of the ages at which boys go into the pits. At first by the increase in the number of small accidents occurring among them and he is convinced that the clauses of that Act which prevent the children in the mills from working full time, have made their parents more anxious to get them into the collieries at earlier ages than was formerly customary, whereby they become exposed at an earlier age to the inclemencies and hazards of underground working, instead of being sent during those earlier years to the mills.

Record of accidents.

Of all the accidents in the pits of Messrs. Jones demanding the least surgical assistance, they have a recorded in the duplicates of their notes to the doctors to afford them assistance for which the company undertake to pay, in all cases, however small the inquiry, without any contribution from the men or boys whatever, giving them the choice of doctors in the town, of whom they generally chose Mr. Leach, who is the favourite with the labouring classes and most often employed by them when they seek assistance on their own account. The notes addressed by the company to the surgeons are in a stated form, of which a copy is annexed (No.2). The memorandum on the left hand (No.1) being preserved in the style of those in a cheque book in the book from which it was torn. This record is perfect for the year just passed, from the end of October, 1840 to the end of October, 1841. In a less perfect form it has been kept for some years. He considers the amount of accidents decidedly small for a concern of such extent, their character is generally slight and they are of a nature which they could not by any means prevent. At the Holebottom Pit of Messrs. Lees, Jones and Co., four men, including an overlooker were killed through the carelessness of the underlooker last July.

Use of safety lamps.

They do not generally have Davy lamps in their pits because they are so well ventilated and there is so little of the hydrogen gas that it is not necessary. There are lamps for use whenever suspicious appearances present themselves but there is so little hydrogen gas in the pits that when it was wanted for experiments with some improved lamps it was difficult to find sufficient for the purpose. Some observations on the proper use and value of the Davy lamp were printed by the company last year and distributed to all the men. A copy is annexed (No.3) as also of a placard of rules put up at every colliery (No.4) and enforced by fines stopped out of wages.

Holidays.

The colliers do no work for a day or two at Christmas, on New Year's Day, if it be on Monday or Tuesday, on two days at Easter, two days at Whitsuntide and two days at the Wakes. The children, of course, have the same holidays and the engineers leave the engines. These are the usual holidays in the neighbourhood.

Pay-days arranged to influence men's conduct.

The men and boys are paid fortnightly, half at the end of one week and half at the end of the other. Until four years ago, he paid them all every week but the change was made partly for the ease of the office, partly to throw a slight obstacle in the way of turn-outs, by half the men having always one week's pay in the master's hands and partly to produce some moral effect of the men themselves, among whom the men that are paid find it less agreeable to go to drink at the commencement of the week when half the men are certainly going to work. If the men represented that they experienced any inconvenience for the fortnightly pay they should be paid weekly, but the men profited by it. They did not stop twice as much from work at the end of the fortnight as they used at the end of the week. In busy times their stint would perhaps be five days and half of work a week. They generally make on Saturday a shorter day but as they work by the piece they have great independence with regard to time and take a holiday if they choose, without asking the master, or perhaps even the underlooker.

Policy of keeping the trade overhanded.

He always keeps a full quantity of hands, which it is very easy to do, though they consequently earn less in slack times and then, when a brisk time comes, more coal can be got. This company, with its present hands, could raise double the quantity that it now gets and with the full number of hands, could be assembled at any moment from those out of work, could get three times the quantity. The same policy prevails throughout the trade and whenever the demand is great, double sets, working night and day in alternate weeks, are immediately employed. Though they may be disposed to idle a little at the commencement of the week, they cannot work it up, therefore, by extended hours later, if disposed. Even where there are only

day sets at work this would not be allowed. They generally work harder towards pay day. If a man were to idle when coal is wanted, he would be discharged. That is the rule.

Government of the pits by viewers and overlookers.	The management of each pit is entirely in the hands of an overlooker who has to keep discipline and regulate all the work which would be done wastefully and improperly if he is not 'keep up' to the men. The underlooker, more of less, goes down every day at the times of going to work and afterwards. A good underlooker is not only a poor servant to his employers but much improves the character of the people with him. There are drunken and disorderly underlookers but generally their character is very different. The employer relies entirely upon the underlooker to see everything underground where he is the complete representative of the employer. The treatment of the children and young persons underground could be regulated by the employer only through the means of his agent whom they employ for the purpose of business and not for the purpose of moral discipline. The underlookers under this company do, however, avail themselves of their position to keep the people in the pits in some sort of decency of behaviour endeavouring to repress bad language and disorder in which the better of the men working under them assist them by telling them of delinquencies whereupon they perhaps dismiss the parties whether man or boy if it be thought necessary. If the dismissed party thought he could make out a case of injustice, of course he would appeal to the masters.
Comparative condition.	He thinks the collier children are as robust as those of any of the class of workpeople in the district and they are more robust than the factory boys but he does not know of how much of such robustness arises from the selection of the strongest children for the rougher work. He thinks the muscular exertion favourable to a muscular development which they exhibit. The children are better looking than the men a good deal. He has not made any observations on the effects of night working.
Night work.	The men would rather not speak of night work, they would rather work six days than five nights in a week for the same money. He has ascertained this from several of them.
Treatment.	He has put a stop to any ill-treatment of the children in their works whenever they get to hear of it, by dismissal. There have not been many instances, their parents and friends protect them. He knows of no parish apprentices without such protectors in their pits and would not like to know that there were any there. The worst feature on the making of such apprenticeships of the giving a premium which is a premium to get rid of the lad for another.
Earnings.	It is difficult to say what the earnings of the colliers are being all by piece work. It is, however, much equalised by the regulating amongst themselves. In their employ, in this depressed state of the trade, it averages more than 15s. a week.
Food and Clothing.	Colliers generally are, and must be, well fed. Most have decent holiday suits and those children who go to Sunday School commonly have a change. They have dirty week day clothing. The boys often work naked to the waist but the men are not naked to the waist unless it be very warm. They seldom wash the whole of their body unless it be the children but do wash the upper part of the body beside a mug or earthen pan of water weekly and perhaps daily.
Dying of sickness unknown among colliers.	He never hears, scarcely, of a collier dying, though some have been killed, for when they can work no longer, they go about their business, some having saved something.
Provident societies imperfect.	There is a burying club for the interment of those who die or get killed. Very few die but he does not know what becomes of them. Nearly all the men in this company's employ, are in the burying club. It has no permanent fund but subscriptions, or calls, are made whenever money is wanting. They have for there men no other provident institution except the

share they get in the circulation of the Tract Society's publications. There are many clubs, or sick societies and friendly societies among them. These provide as well for sickness from accident as well as from ill health. One poor fellow who was in such a society was nearly starved to death in consequence. Many of the old colliers turn coal carters but as for colliers dying by sickness, the subject never before occurred to him.

Intellectual character.

There is every variety of intellect among them but their occupation separates them in ideas and habits from the people around them. They are equal to other unskilled labourers in intelligence, there is an equal proportion of sound-judging men. Where there is one fight now there used to be twenty formerly, an improvement which is general.

Moral character.

They are improvident, a great many but there are exceptions to that rule. They will drink on Saturday night, Sunday, Monday and in good times, even Tuesday and Wednesday, chiefly of malt liquor. They will have their drink. There is also a good feeling for mutual assistance in cases of accident or distress though to this also, there are exceptions. The children are rougher in manner. There would be a good deal of fighting in the pits if it were allowed but it is not.

(Signed) JOHN OGDEN.

PAPERS REFERRED TO IN THE PRECEDING EVIDENCE.

No.1 - Check memorandum.

Date	18	Colliery Office, Oldham.	18
Surgeon		Sir,	You will
Name		please attend _____ who has met with an	
Age		accident at our colliery,	
Where occurred		Yours respectfully. For the Chamber Colliery Co.	
Nature of accident		To Mr. _____	
Occupation		N.B. - The Colliery Company, particularly request that	
Remarks	No.	you will not attend to any cases of accident whatsoever	
		on their account unless accompanied by an order from	
		this office.	

No.2 - Note to the Surgeon.

No.3 A FEW WORDS on the Nature and Utility of the DAVY SAFETY LAMP, Addressed to the Coal Miners.

Book of instruction on the uses of the Davy lamp given to all colliers.

The following remarks were suggested on frequently witnessing the indifference with which the colliers, while at work, seem to treat the necessary precautions for their safety, especially with regard to the firedamp.

This gas which is constantly disengaged during the working of coal, was an almost insurmountable obstacle to the working of many of our collieries until the discovery of the safety lamp by Sir Humphry Davy about 25 years ago.*

The safety lamp, the miner's best friend, will briefly be explained by its nature and properties, in the hope that the consideration of it may induce many of you to prize more highly one of the most important benefits that ever humanity derived from science.

The flame of the safety lamp is surrounded by a gauze cylinder, made of iron or copper wire. The spaces between the wires should never exceed one twenty-fourth part of an inch or in other words, there should always be, at the least, 24 of those spaces in the length of one inch in every part of the gauze, for this reason, that the flame or blaze will not pass through the wire gauze at or above that fineness, but through coarser it will. This is the sole principle of the safety lamp and one which the colliers ought always to bear in mind.

* *Discovered 1815.*

Should the gauze be coarser, or of fewer spaces than 24 to one inch, the lamp would be useless as a protection, should the gauze be much finer, sufficient light would not be emitted to enable the miner to work.*

You ask, how it prevents the explosion of the gas outside the gauze? It is because the wire absorbs or takes away the heat of all flame that approaches or comes between them when the flame is divided by a gauze of the above texture but which would not be the case were the distances between the wire greater than those specified, owing to the quality of the flame which would be less divided overcoming the power of the wire to conduct away the heat, consequently the flame or blaze would pass through the gauze and explode the gas outside the lamp.

You therefore see the necessity of taking great care of your lamps at all times from injury, for should there be any hole or aperture whatever larger than one twenty fourth of an inch in size, whether in the gauze or bottom, or any part whatever, you might well go to work with a naked candle as for any protection a lamp in that state could afford you, its efficiency being entirely destroyed by any such hole.

To make the case more clear, a many of you must have noticed that when the safety lamp had been for some time in gas, or firedamp, that would have exploded had a candle been used, that the wire gauze has acquired a red heat from the burning of firedamp inside the lamp, the heat or redness is the flame that comes to the wire gauze, when it is sucked up, as it were, until the wire become so hot as to melt.

Always see that the wire called the trimmer, which regulates your light, fits closely the long socket in which it works and in repairing that, or any other part of your lamp, use either iron or copper wire, as brass or tinned wire will much sooner melt, owing to the quality of zinc in those metals.

Never, on any account, open the lamp while in your works, either for the purpose of giving a light to a fellow workman, or for the sake of smoking a pipe or anything whatever.

Never enter the works in a morning without your lamp, as the gas is more explosive when mixed with common air, in the state you would be sure to meet with it in the roads and works, than at any other time, one-twelfth part only of gas, or firedamp, being fully sufficient to explode on coming in contact with any uncovered light.

Never blame your underlooker or viewers for being strict in enforcing regulations which had only your safety in view.

When you have read these observations, consider whether you have not frequently exposed yourself to the most awful consequences of an explosion? Whether you have not taken your lamp to your work with the same indifference as your hammer or your candle, and used it with more care? Whether you have not many times disobeyed the injunctions as to its use, because you have thought different? And whether you have not, in consequence witnessed, as well as experienced some fearful results, which might have been avoided had you placed a proper value in the efficacy of your safety lamp?

Should any of these questions come home to you, let the impression be lasting. Explain to your children and your waggoners the nature and use of the lamp, as well as its abuse, and the consequences. Prize it as the sole means of enabling you to pursue your daily work, with respect to your greatest danger and examine it before you go to your work with as much anxiety and interest you would by the rope by which you descend. And finally, fail not daily to pray to God's blessing on your perilous labours, without which no human intervention can avail.

These few lines were written in the confident hope that their attentive perusal might be the means of averting, in some degree, those awful explosions, the effects of which deprived many of you of kindred and friends.

A FRIEND TO THE WORKING COLLIERS.

*The gauze of the lamp commonly used contains about twenty-six apertures in the length of one inch, or 676 in the square.

No.4 CHAMBER and WERNETH COLLIERIES

Regulations of the Chamber and Werneth collieries.

The proprietors and managers of these works, in order, if possible, to prevent and render less frequent the accidents from firedamp and their collieries. Have determined to enforce the following Rules and to which all workmen are hereby required strictly to attend and in consequence of their not doing so they will become liable to an immediate discharge:-

1st. Every collier to enter his place of work each morning with a safety lamp, in order to ascertain if it be safe or not, and not to light a candle until he is perfectly satisfied of the

safety and purity of the circulating current of air. No collier to descend the pit unless provided with a safety lamp.

2nd. It will not be considered any excuse for a workman to expose himself to danger of the roof falling upon him, to say that he was in want of a sufficient number of props, because if he is not provided with them he must cease working until he is.

3rd. In order that the coals may be got in a saleable manner, it is necessary that the colliers should be early at their work, the engineer will therefore cease letting the men down each morning at six o'clock.

4th. Waggoners will not be allowed to work except their getters work also.

5th. No collier or waggoner to ascend the shaft upon a full waggon.

6th. Any collier or waggoner taking into their place of work more empty waggons than are allotted as their fair share, or taking a waggon from the bottom of the jiggings-brow, shall in either case pay a fine of 5s.

7th. Any waggoner not obeying the orders of the hooker-on at the bottom of the shaft to pay a fine of 2s. 6d.

8th. No person or persons, excepting the manager, to enter any engine house during the hours of work and the engineer suffering any person to do so becomes liable to an immediate discharge.

Colliery Office, King Street, June, 1838.

No.5 A LIST of the PITS of the CHAMBER and WERNETH COMPANY, and a Return of the Number of PERSONS employed in them. Friday, December 11th. 1840.

Name of pit	No. of children under 13 years	No. of Young Persons between 13 and 21 years.	No. of Persons above 21 years	Total
No.1 Chamber	7	30	37	74
No.2 Chamber				
No.3 Chamber	3	23	34	60
No.4 Chamber	8	29	40	77
Trunley Pit	3	1	6	10
No.1 Knowle	6	5	8	19
No.2 Knowle	6	2	3	11
No.2 Broadway Lane	3	9	6	18
Little Pit Broadway Lane	2		6	8
No.2 Hurst Lane	4	10	11	25
No.3 Hurst Lane	5	11	17	33
No.4 Hurst Lane	9	11	23	43
No.5 Hurst Lane	5	5	10	20
No.6 Hurst Lane	4	3	5	12
Fancy Pit	7	24	21	52
Bowling Green	9	18	22	49
New Engine	6	9	18	33
Total	87	190	267	544

No.5 Cornelius Backhouse, head viewer to Messrs. Jones and Co. Nov. 1st. 1841.

The stronger lads selected for the pits.

Weakly children are only generally put into a pit. In a general way, good strong lads are required for coal pit work though there may be exceptions to the rule in which weakly children are brought down. Some fathers would take a child into the pit, however weakly he was, if he could produce a few shillings a week, while others would not. The increased use of rails and other contrivances had improved the character of the children's labour and somewhat lessened its amount. The underlookers interfere when they learn of cases of ill usage of children by the men.

Protection of the weak.

They feel it part of their duty to protect the weak from the strong among those under them and to reserve decency and order as much as they can in the pit. The abused party will complain to the underlooker, which brings

the matter before the head viewer, who has the general management of the pits.
Children as engineers. There are no engineers under 10 years of age, perhaps not under 12. Several are married men.

(Signed) CORNELIUS BACKHOUSE.

No.6 Emanuel Morris Edwards, 42 years of age, underlooker for the Fairbottom Company at two of their pits on the Ashton Road. Oct. 129th. 1841.

Knowledge of pits. His father's father and his father were lead miners in Wales and his father came from the lead mining to colliery work at Marple, Cheshire. He began work himself at Marple where his father was steward, as a door tenter at 6d. a day, being about seven years old. He has been at work for Messrs. Lees from 19 years of age and had been an underlooker under them for three years, having now two pits under him, those at the Wood Park Rise Pit and Wood Park Deep Pit.

Ages of children. He has two children in the pit and both commences at the age of seven years. One was first driving the gin, he was then jiggging and then he left the jiggging to be a waggoner. He has a third by going on seven who is at school.

Schooling. He sent them all to a school for a year or two before they went into the pit and he teaches them himself at night and they all go to Fairbottom Sunday School at Alt Hill towards the building of which he gave 5s. himself as did many other colliers while some at lower wages gave 2s. 6d. It is a Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School in which he was himself a teacher but his oldest son, now going on 17, is teacher in his place. The land and some assistance were given by Messrs. Jones and Booth and the colliers and others in the neighbourhood subscribed to build it and others in the neighbourhood subscribed to build it.

Ages. The children may generally be eight years of age or so before they go into the pits. They generally begin with air-door tenting, then they go to jiggging, next to taker-off at the bottom of the incline and lastly to waggoning, from which they generally go on to getting. The Fairbottom Company have air-door tenters in various parts of the mines paid by the employers themselves. There are at this moment in reparations in the pits under his care for the employment of trappers after Christmas.

Trappers, jiggers and takers-off. The jiggers let the waggons down the 'broos' or inclines, being stationed for that purpose at the jig or winch and takes the loaded waggons down and draws an empty one up. The takers-off are boys of 12 or 13, who take the loaded waggons down the jig gear ready for the horse driver (where horses and takers-off are employed) to harness the horse to it. One horse takes four and sometimes five waggons but in some pits, and especially those newly commenced, the waggoners waggon all the way to the shaft. A single waggon load is 4 cwt. of coal, but double wagons are also used which a boy can manage but these thin seams, from the depression in the coal trade, are nearly abandoned for present working and only the 'Black Mine Coal' which is the best quality in the district, and one of the thickest, is now mainly worked.

Waggoners in thick seam mines. This mine is about four feet thick and in working it, two-load waggons are used, carrying properly 8 cwt. and actually carrying nearly that. It takes nearly a man's strength to manage a double waggon. It will take a youth of 16 or 17 years of age. His eldest son is working now as a getter but the younger one, who is in his 13th. year, is working with another, going in at 14, at double loaded waggons. It is easy work for two but the easiness makes them thrive. It is common for two to work together in this way and they share between them according to strength. These two boys earn 3s. a day and divide it equally.

Drawing by belt and chain.

They push the waggons on iron rails on which they run on wheels. This is the case in the company's pits throughout. The belt and chain used formerly to be in universal use to draw the loads with rails or only part of the distance. This plan is still used in the small Mountain Mines and in various of the others, such as Mr. Wrigley's at Low Side but it is entirely abandoned in the larger and deeper mines (at least in those of the Fairbottom Company) for the more extensive use of horses, rails and machinery.

Hours.

They work from eight or nine hours a day but for lads the time is nearly eleven hours, from about seven to six, to get out the coal hewn by the men.
(Signed) EMANUEL EDWARDS.

No.7 Samuel Walkden, collier in the employment of Mr. Wrigley, at the Low Side Mine, for between 18 and 20 years. Oct. 29th. 1841.

He will be 65 years of age next March and has been a collier all his life, at first at the Duke of Bridgewater's works at Walkden Moor, he has worked in Bolton and in other parts of the country and has worked up in the neighbourhood of Oldham for 23 years. Two bits of lads working with him have to draw the tubs of 3 cwt. each down the 'broo' for 40 yards dipping about two yards in seven on sleds.

Sledding with belt and chain.

In some places in the same pit, the coal will dip one yard in two. When the lads get the tubs into the mainways, one by one, they load two on a waggon body and push that on four wheels on the rails to the bottom of the pit. The tubs are sledded down to 40 yards incline by belt and chain. The two lads working for him will be one of 13 years of age next Christmas, the other is going on 15, to the first he is a grand father. The first had been in the pit three years and other may have been six or seven years in the pit but he cannot say.

Commencement of labour.

They bring their children of about nine years of age to receive wages at 9d. or 1s. a day. Where there is a great family they will bring them down from their cradle if they can. They bring them to earn a bit at first and see how the lads get on and then they begin thrutching till they are bald with wearing the hair off their heads. Is himself an old 'fellow' who works at easy places that yet require judgement to get no more than is required from the pillars without letting them down and requires two boys to take away his coals.

The only women who entered a pit compelled to leave the district.

He never knows more than one woman in this district who was at work and this was at Squire Greaves's for a week where he was himself underlooker but the men said they would leave work if she continued and so both she and the husband had to go. They gave her 14s. out of the club to carry her off. But down in Worsley district, under the Duke's, (now Lord Francis Egerton's), women work in the pits common enough an little girls too, heaving up with belt and chain. The men send them anywhere for something to eat. When in full work the lads in the pit where he is at work are at it for 12 working hours. The men can come out a bit sooner, an hour or two sometimes. They regularly work double sets, night and day and have done that for six years or more.

Hours of day and night sets.

The night set goes down about seven, sometimes they are up by five but sometimes not till after seven. The day set go down between seven and eight regularly and they come up, the men at four or five but the lads will not until between seven or eight. The night set one week is the day set the next week, except that the old men like himself work only on the day set.

The children, when bed time comes on them, begin to be drowsy and sleep in the night and the only way to keep them awake is to give them a good sowse on the side of their head, kick their ****, or give them a good shake.

Night and Sunday work.

When the demand is very busy, the Saturday night set have worked on until Sunday morning 'cheating the Lord as they thought.' But generally the men who finish their night shift on Saturday morning go next into the pit as the day shift on Monday morning. But if there is work to be done, or

must be done, Sunday or workday. A return of the number of children had been made to the Commission, by the proprietor of the pit in which he works. They are now making only four days a week or three and half in summer time and yet are working night shifts and day shifts.

Earnings.

Men are making less than a pound a week, a full day's work reckoned at 5s. His two lads get 3s. a day, one having 1s. 9d. and the other 1s. 3d., all according to their strength.

Treatment and care.

If you ill use a child in our pit, you must take up your tools and be off. The underlooker will allow neither swearing nor fighting. "Them as is religious would tell the underlooker, ay, by George, sure." The lads are mostly well done to at home, else they would not follow the work. They seem to be well fed as well as the wages will allow.

Early ages at which children are brought.

It is certain parents bring children earlier into the pit than they did since masters began 'bating their wages, Some are sent to the factory first and then brought into the pit after. Even if the children can merely sit down and keep rats from their dinners, they will bring them down. Children cannot see their own danger, but their parents take care of them.

his
(Signed) SAMUEL X WALKDEN
mark.

No.8 James Warrener, 69 years of age. Oct. 19th. 1841.

Women and girls were never employed here in the pits.

He has worked as a collier in the Oldham district for 55 years and never saw women or children or girls at work in it all his life. He commenced in a colliery in Yorkshire between six and seven years of age as a trap door tenter and from less to more he has kept doing in the coal pits till three years ago, since when he has been carting with a little bit of cart and getting a living as he could.

The worst thing that he has ever been brought about against the colliers is the masters employing little boys of lads as engineers. The best thing you can do is to look after these engineers to see that they have men of age and reason to know the value of a man's life. Let anyone look and see a child left in the care of a man's life, and more the pity. The man who left you just now is a worthy man, but he is overlooker in a colliery and dare not mention this subject to you. Do you think that a bare lad, who thought he could thereby play him a day, would not let a misfortune come? He really believes it and therefore, until a man has come to maturity of age and to know the price of a man's life, he is not to be trusted with the management of an engine.

Denunciation of the employment of the children as engineers.

The worst encroachment that ever came on collier men in this time has been for children to manage engines. He is one of the oldest colliers in Oldham and has children and grandchildren in the pit and would like to know them in safety and if this can be put a stop to, may the Lord send it! Anything (of a boy) that they could teach and get for the least wages, they would employ, without valuing men's lives. If any man of wisdom and knowledge will go to the pits around and see the children in charge of the engine, let him see if they are fit to have care of men's lives.

And of early employment of children in the pits.

And the children who are taken into the pits are taken at an age when they can know nothing of the danger they go into and if anything is to be stopped, this ought to be. They will go in at seven or eight. A child of six or seven or eight had better be transported than sent into a coal pit for it does not know danger when he sees it and any man that has a child at that age ought rather to send it to a school than at 5 o'clock in the morning into the pit. There ought to be inspectors to go round and not allow such danger to men's lives or such slavery to children.

A subject of general complaint.

He is positive that ignorant and bad lads have in this district produced many misfortunes. The steward dare not speak the truth but himself is not muzzled. The engineers sometimes got killed themselves from being so little. It is a general complaint among the working colliers that children so

young are employed as engineers. They grumble both going in and coming out. But if the men complained they would be turned out of their employment and might work no more. He was once kept down himself by a lad whom he had beaten the night before for his carelessness and he let the tub in which he was going down at such a rate that the wheels were broken and he saved himself only by running up as much of the loose rope with his hands as he could. No youth ought to have charge until he were 20 or 21. But if the masters can get such duty discharged by a boy to whom they give 5s. or 7s. a week it is so much gained to them upon the wages of a man, whom they ought to employ.

Want of inspection overgearing.

There is nothing equal in goodness to Messrs. Jones gearing, though they have a great many engineers that are quite unfit to tend the engines. But many a one of the lesser masters want examination. They will not renew a rope in proper time, there have been instances of their breaking with the weight of only an empty tub so entirely have they been worn out and in the temporary concerns the gearing is commonly altogether bad. There ought to be inspectors to see to them if there are inspectors for anything. There are children as engineers that are not 13.

Protection required for collier's children more than for factory children.

He has no observation to make about the underground work of the men but no child ought to go into the coal pit under 13 or 14 years of age for a child to go into danger and not know it. No man ought to take a child under that age. Why should not the collier's children be protected as much as the factory children? Their parents are not allowed to taken them into the factory and their parents ought not to be allowed to take them into the pit. Some of the colliers would, and some would not, object to this but some would care for nothing so that their own needs be fitted. They went themselves into coal pits so early that they would not know their own duties. There are drunken blackguards that would not mind at what ages they took them, making them draw at the bottom worse than dogs with nothing on them but their cap and belt. If there be justice for collier's children as for factory children, God send it may come. His own son, who is a collier, did not go into the pit until he was 13 but his grandchildren, two of them, went into the pit between six and seven years of age because his son was very poor. Others may make the same excuse, but if it be prevented by law, some compensation will be made by the higher wages of the older workers. There ought to be inspectors at the pit mouth or in the pit and they could not find out the taking of children into the pit, at least a fine ought to be ordered and the neighbours would some of them inform. He would himself, and he hopes to see collier children yet protected as well as factory children. They are 'fitter to be looked to.' Colliers have been brought up in the coal pit and have not natural sense towards eachother, or knowledge of their Creator. They are brought up in darkness and will remain so if God will let them. Many a hundred men will speak as he speaks and if he says thousands he will say true.

Education.

Colliery children are brought up to nothing but swearing and curse. They know nothing.

his
(Signed) JAMES X WARRENER.
mark

No.9 John Walkden aged 37 and son of Samuel above examined. Oct. 29th. 1841.

Confirmation of previous evidence.

He agrees in every respect with the preceding witness having been at work in the pit himself ever since he was nine years old. He is now working at Low Side for Mr. Edward Broadoak. Whenever sledge tubs are used wheeled tubs with rails might be used and pushed so as to abolish the use of belts and chain.

(Signed) JOHN WALKDEN.

No.10 James Taylor, alias Lump Lad, going on 11. Oct. 31st. 1841.

- Ages.** The old colliers call his father Old Lump and so they call him Young Lump. He is going on 11 years of age and working at Messrs. Evan's pit up Royton Road at Robin Hill Pit. He has just begun to work there but has been waggoning for two years at Messrs. Lees. Before that he was in the pit two years with his father, playing and helping to load the tubs for his father at Hardy Field's Pit, one of Messrs. Lees in the 'Black Mine' there a yard thick. He had not then any wages. "Him and James Broadbent now makes a waggoner."
- Earnings.** He is not working full time any more than the men, if he were, the two men would earn their stint of 3s. 6d. a day for which he would have 1s. 3d. being the least of the two. He has been earning 2s. 8d. and 4s. a week. Two of the lads in the pit where he was working were younger than him, one going on 8 and the other 10. There's 24 waggoners in that pit. Some on 'em are big 'uns, one was a getter.
- Hours.** When he was last working he used to go at half past five in the morning and thought it early if he got out at six at night. The men come out about four and if one waggoner had done before another they helped one another and if they played it was quietly and not long. He was working full time there but was forced to leave because his butty or leader, went away, on his brother, for whom they waggoned, thrashing him in the pit.
- Effects of night work.** He used to work at the pit he was last in (Twaymark, on Oldham Edge, one of Abraham Lees's) in the night shift when it was his master's turn but commonly on the day shift one week after another. He went at six o'clock at night into the pit and stayed until eight in the morning but the men got out at six. Him and the other lads stayed to waggon out the coals they had got. He liked working in the day set best because when he had been working at night he could not sleep by day, not more than two hours, and then he ran a-playing him. He felt when he slept as though he was waggoning and dreamt that the waggons were all coming on't butty and him, that the roof was tumbling or that George Whitehead, the butty, was 'puncing' [or beating] him. He was a wicked lad and one time would not let him eat his dinner. Then he got up to run about th' loan [lane] after t'other lads, he felt queer and kept shuttin' his een and runnin'. He could not feel well after working all that neet and could not keep awake all night constantly working but if he stopped work he would go to sleep and then he would have a clout about the mouth.
- Food.** He used to take his dinner down with him when he had any and eat it as he could, working. He never had anything but butter cakes [bread and butter] to his dinner. Many a time he has gone without both breakfast and dinner together and felt sickly like, and mazy. His mother had nowt to give him because she could get na' gat nowt. Hur said hur had nowt for him. Hur said if hur could get a bit for him hur would do but his father, who was a collier, drank a good deal of his wages.. His father used to give his mother about 20s. a fortnight. He has three younger brothers and three were buried. They are all little ones, the oldest going on seven. He'd been i' th' pit now if he'd been worth aught but he is na' so strong as himself was at that age and would na' ha' th' sense to get out o' th' road if aught fell. If he'd been worth aught he would a' been doing' i' th' little mine [some narrow seam]. He oftener went to the night set without his butter and cakes for supper than with them and he felt sickly and maze then. He was working for David Whitehead, "an' ye know him." He never axed if he'd come without his butter cakes an' he never tou'd him. He ne're gied him nought. The waggoners, neither, wouldn't gie one another a bit o' butter cake if they were calmm'd to dead. It was only at times he had to work in the night set because the engine was not going in the night and it was only a night's work for one collier in turn, with his drawer, to fill the empty tubs.

Labour in waggoning.

He now thrutches the waggons with his head and hands as in the common fashion. The waggoners hold three baskets [6 cwt.] and are filled by the biggest waggoner. It was 800 yards to the pit bottom that he had to thrutch where he was last working and has now to thrutch 1300. He would bring a waggons 16 times the 800 yards for a full day's work but did not do that oft, about a day in a week, Sometimes he would do only a quarter or a half, or three quarters of those journeys according as coal was in demand. In the Robin Hill Pit he has now to go about 400 yards of the distance over the clog tops in sludge and water, The main road is a yard and six inches high and there are no jigs but slants [inclines] where he puts a thrasher to one wheel of the waggon, which locks it. He has still to pull back a little. The big lad goes in the front with his 'yead' to the waggon and, walking; backwards, to keep it coming down too fast. They work only in their clogs, stocking, trousers and cap.

Accidents.

He saw a lad run over at Black Ridings Pit by a waggon and have his leg broke but he has never had an accident himself. He was once at Robin Hill Pit, going to Tommy Farrer and knocking at th' sounding rod to let the tub down, when a man, who had been wund oert' pulley, fell down t' pit close to him, almost on him. He were kilt before he leet [alighted or reached the bottom]. He was only a big lad, though they called him old. Old Frost wound him o'er. He ran out o' the engine house whooam, but th' master fetched him back. He went on winding there till th' morning when he was taken to the Waterloo Pit, under the same firm, where he is now winding. The waggon broke two of his fingers by going over them and had to play for a fortnight with 'em but did na' think much about that.

Holidays.

He has no holidays by Christmas day unless work be slack.

Pay.

Him that he waggons for draws the money for both and then comes to pay him. He gives it to his mother but it does na' pay for his keep.

Home.

His father lives in Lord Street, Oldham. There are two rooms i' th' house, the chamber and th' house. The chamber is above the house. They all sleep in the chamber which has one bed in which all four children sleep with their father and mother. There is one chair in the room besides, but nothing else. In the house there is nothing but one chair and two stools. His father is just out of work, as a collier, and nothing lately has been sold away. He had an accident from being buried in earth from the roof falling. Mother does nought for him when he gets home but give him something to eat if she has it. He washes his hands and face every day and his whole body once a week. He has only one shirt, one pair of stockings and the ragged and dirty coat, waistcoat and trousers he has on.

Play.

When he has something to eat he runs into the street and plays and always finds someone to play with and can play at aught as they can. He plays 'trinnil' and 'th' hammer and block', these oftener than aught else. He goes in home early because he has to get up early and goes in about eight o'clock then sleeps sound, without dreaming until he gets up every work day at five o'clock.

Food.

He has porridge and treacle to breakfast when he as any, bread and butter cakes to dinner, if he can get them and porridge and milk when he comes home, never any potatoes or any bread but what is in his bread and butter cakes. He has never been kept from work by illness but has often felt sick.

Education.

He goes to no school and has never been to a day school He went to the Methodist Sunday School five months ago but his father took him off three months ago because he and such ragged clothes. He went before for a week or two to a Sunday School i' th' Bunk [Bank]. He cannot say his letters. [Adds a few smaller numbers but has no notion of subtraction.] He has heard of hell in the pit when the men swear but has never heard of Jesus Christ and has never heard of God, but has heard the men in the pit say, 'God damn thee.' He does not know what country he is in and has

never been anywhere but here, i' th' pit and at Rochdale. He had never heard of London but has heard of the Queen but dunnot know who she is.

his
(Signed) JAMES >< TAYLOR..
mark.

No.11 William Mason, going in October 31st. 1841.

He is a waggoner in the Royley Mines of Jesse Ainsworth assisted by another younger than himself and working to George Wright, who is a getter. He has no mother but lives with his aunt who washes, his father having been killed by a stone falling on him out of the roof at the Pit Bank Colliery. He went into the pit when he was going on seven when his father was living. It was the Royley Mines and he helped a lad to waggon.

Wages.

After two months he got 6d. a day on the pit bank and now gets 7s. a week but is doing only four day's work a week.

Hours.

He goes to work between six and seven o'clock in the morning and comes out from six to seven, sometimes later. It is 12 or 13 hours a day work. He gets his dinner while waiting to hook on. It is sometimes bread and cheese and sometimes butter cakes.

Labour.

The waggons carry three baskets of 6 cwt. and are jiggged down the inclines by the drawers and pushed by them to the pit bottom. The lad going with him is going on 11. Some days there is a good deal of time to play. He has not worked night shifts. It's not all strongness that does for work, it's knowledge and sharpness and so he reckons himself equal to others of his age.

Accidents.

He had a brother killed by the breaking of the pump rods in the shaft in which he was coming up and another man was killed and a third has his arm broken.

Schooling.

He has never been to day school but he has been for four years to the Methodist Sunday School and he can read a bit but never reads aught for his own amusement.

his
(Signed) WILLIAM + MASON
mark.

No.12 Robert Tweddale, going on 14. October, 31st. 1841.

Age.

He has worked in a colliery ever since he was in his seventh years commencing as a thrutcher for a big lad that was learning him at Scouthead near Saddleworth. He then began to draw and liked it very well when he got learnt. He worked in his clogs, shirt, stockings and a cap to thrutch wi'. It was a thin mine, sometimes 18 sometimes 14 inches thick. The getter he thrutched for was a wicked old fellow named Charles Hill. He once bit him in the thigh and lifted him to the roof in his mouth. Many a time he was hit on the side of the head. He worked with him a year and has been with him four times over. He bit him because he had na' the strength to lift the tub on the rails when it came to them by the mainway. Because he cold na' could work with him gradley [kindly] he left him. He is now waggoning by thrusting. There were plenty who went into the collieries, up and down, about the same age that he went in.

his
(Signed) ROBERT >< TWEDDALE
mark.

No.13 Joseph Gott, aged 53, underlooker, Nov. 4th. 1841.

No.14 Richard Barker aged 46, a labouring collier 4th. Nov. 1841.

Age. A great many goes to pit before they be fit to go. Richard Barker went into the pit at five years old himself and had in the pits four sons who all went in under six years old. They first went into thin seams but not in the mountain mines. It is not the general rule for children to go quite so young but children must have something to put in their belly.

Clubs. All go to Sunday School and are good children. He is in the Druid's Club but there's naught for sickness or accident, only for burials, they are so poor. There are some sick clubs amongst colliers but they break so. He can think of nothing but free trade with all countries to benefit the colliers.


Earnings. Richard Barker is averaging about 15s. a week in his earnings. Bad workmen are making nearly as much as good ones.

Why young children taken so young. Distress obliges a collier to take his children at a young age into the pit rather than starve them to feed an older child of someone else's. The colliers that do think at all want free trade but with most of them they are pricked and they do not know from what side. They cursen everything and wish to be better off.

Children should not be engineers. Children should not be employed so young as engineers, many a man has been killed by it.

Sunday Schools. There are Sunday Schools for them as wishes to send their children but the children of some has got so low in clothing and shoes that they are not fit to go and they don't send them. There are some that do not care about sending them. If the children go to live in hardship they had better be brought up for it, for those s that are accustomed to better times are very discontented.

Ages. Joseph Gott is an underlooker in a mountain mine near Rochdale where the children will come about seven years old. The parents who are often weavers, come and beg to thrust their children in, really before they are fit to go.

(Signed) JOSEPH GOTT
his
RICHARD  BARKER
mark.

No.15 John Gordon aged 35, Nov. 4th 1841.

No.16 Edmund Stanley, aged 34, Nov. 4th. 1841.

Both are miners in the employment of Mr. Abraham Lees, at Stoneywell Lane near Oldham. Gordon commenced underground work under Messrs. Jones at seven years of age when he was made a waggoner, to push behind the waggon and both helped to thrust and load.

Sex. He has never seen females in the pit nor has this ever been the practice nearer than the neighbourhood of Worsley.

Age. He thinks there is little difference in the ages at which lads have begun in his childhood and since. His own lads have gone into the pit at from seven to eight years of age. They are three in number and this is a very common age at which to take them into the pit. Edmund Stanley, also a working collier at the same pit, sent his boy between six and seven and he is now working in the same pit with him as also are John Gordon's boys with him.

Hours. They are generally in the pit about six a.m. and if the winders are prompt they can get out by four o'clock, it will often be five but very commonly it is six or seven before the children get out and sometimes late as eight, when they have to waggon down to the pit a good deal of coal gotten by the men. Have not either of them worked very lately constant night work but only occasionally. They would have liked to keep their children out of the pit where they are worse than transports and think they ought rather to be in school till they are 13 but as things are now this is quite impossible.

Earnings. John Gordon and his three boys have not, for the last six months,

averaged 30s. a week, of what they have got, his own earnings have been one half. Edmund Stanley has 24s. a week but there are very few that have this and he has himself a wife and three children besides the boy at work. In good times and with full work, John Gordon might himself be getting the same or perhaps 30s.

Education.

John Gordon, if he could have afforded it or had times been good, would have sent his children to school instead of taking them into the pit and if others had proper feelings for their children they would, under such circumstances, do the same. Some, however, do seem to be without proper feelings and without judgement, so that in good times they might not do this. Some are entirely wasteful even in the best days. Edmund Stanley took his boy into the pit at a time when he was making only 2s. 6d. a day and thought 4d. a day which the lad earned would be a useful addition.

Effects of limitation of ages.

To limit the labour of children in the mines, to the ages at which they should commence labour, would be to reduce the income of a family while its expenses remained the same. The wages of the older waggoners might be increased but to throw away years of the ages of younger children would be a greater loss in money than could be made good this way.

Desire for schooling.

It may be that a great proportion of the colliers do not know the value of instruction and therefore would not, even in good times, avail themselves of the opportunity to give their children time and schooling but for himself (John Gordon) would give it to them and there were many others who would do the same but that they were prevented by the scantiness of what they earn and he has himself paid for the day schooling of his children, each for a short time, when he could ill afford it. He thinks there are more people than formerly there were who would make sacrifices to get 'learning' for their children to make them a comfort in their old age and not merely an advantage for their youth, without any obedience of comfort which might be gained by the other means. A man with understanding knows how to govern himself and man without understand doesn't. Shore Edge is a place chiefly inhabited by colliers taking their children to work at the earliest possible ages and into the mountain mines of thin coal even as soon as six years of age.

Bad chance of a place wanting it.


It has long been noted as a nest of disreputable characters and no fewer than seven were taken up at once in the last Ashton Wakes week. If the colliers, thus brought up, have no perception of the importance of improving their children, knows not how it ought to be brought about for the advantage of the children.


Instruction.

George Gordon is a member of the Primitive Methodist Society and sends his lads to the Hollenwood Sunday School and the two biggest to a night school also four nights a week, for which he pays 4d. per week to the master. Edmund Stanley is in no religious society but his boy goes to the Primitive Methodist Sunday School in Oldham.

Ages of engineers.

There is a good deal of firedamp in the Honeywell Lane pit at times but there have been no fatal explosions. He thinks that such young boys should not be instructed as engineers, with the lives of a lot of men as they are, they are not 'stayable' and no one under 18 ought to be instructed with such a job. This is a general opinion among the men themselves.

his
(Signed) JOHN  GORDON.
mark.

his
EDMUND  STANLEY.
mark.

Schooling.

He does not know how old he is and works at Broadway Lane Pit where he waggons. His butty [older waggoner] is 'Jack'. It is hard work and he likes it. He cannot read or write. Two and two makes four and two more makes five. He is the son of Edmund Stanley.

his
BENJAMIN >< STANLEY.
mark.

No.18 Arthur Gordon, going on 9. 4th. Nov. 1841.

Work.

He is going on 9 and gets up about six. His butty [old waggoner] is William Gordon, his brother. He does not know what he earns, his father takes it [his wages]. He has been at school since four years old but can scarce go through the alphabet. He is the son of John Gordon.

his
ARTHUR >< GORDON.
mark.

No.19 William Gordon, going on 14. 14th. Nov. 1841.

Schooling.

He is a waggoner in the same pit as his father but he does not know how far it is to the further end. He has been there 30 times a day. "All his life since he started", he has been going to the Sunday School. He has been to night school six or eight months. He has been working in the pit ever since he was eight years old. "Can read nut not so weel. Can read a bit in Testament. Canna write. Canna count much."

No.20 William Dronsfield, going on 18 4th. Nov. 1841.

Accidents.

He has been in coal mines ever since he was going on nine and commenced work at Mr. Wrigley's pit at Low Side. He is now out of work and has been to all the pits around and failed in finding any.

Schooling.

He saw his father killed in the pit by a fall of coals crushing him against a post and has since been afraid of his own life in the pit. He scarcely ever went to Sunday School before because he has had to work a deal on Sundays. He was like to work on Sundays because he had to "wind t' water out o' t' men's way agen Monday." He cannot read or write.

Earnings.

If he had a full weeks work he would make, as a waggoner, 10s. but he only once made so much and lately made 7s. 6d.

Belt and chain work.

He was at Ryley's for about five years, working with the belt and chain, in his trousers, clogs and cap. bringing the sledge-boxes along the mainway to the pit bottom. They work there still in this way, although it is a Black Mine [a thick seam]. He has since worked at several places, first trying the Mill Bottom Pit of Mr. James Clay's at Pauldin Wood, about two miles from Oldham, on the Saddleworth road where the seam is about 21 inches thick. This was so small that he could not work in it. They take children there at the ages of six or seven, they do so in all them mountain mines. The drawers in these pits are perfectly naked, but the thrutchers have their caps so their heads may not be galled in pushing the tubs with them. The ways are generally two feet and a half and three feet high and the bays only the same height as the seam. The Mill Bottom Pit is very wet but the lads are merry. They "jumpen about like cats" when in the pit and like their rest days when out of it. Some are so young that they go in their bed gowns, some in jacket and trousers.

Desire of children go into the pits.	They like to go i' pit, they are proud on't. He cried himself many a time to go with his father, now he could cry to get out on't. In the thin mines as at Mr. Clegg's, the men work perfectly naked, lying on one side.
Hours.	He has worked at Wrigley's once, from between six and seven in the morning till ten o'clock at night, sometimes till nine, very often till eight. The pits are not so very dry either.
Fatigue.	He has often been so tired that he could scarcely stir. His thees [thighs] felt as though they were broken and very often felt so in week times. He was sore and tired with the long hours he would drop a sleep the moment he was in an easy position.
Night work.	He worked night sets in Mr. Wrigley's pits which were regularly worked by alternate night and day shifts for the same money. He feels always quite muzzy and sleepy in the night when working. He felt just heavy at first in the morning after, but later in the day would get quite hearty.

his
(Signed) WILLIAM >< DRONFIELD,
mark.

No.21 John Buckley aged 49, Nov. 4th. 1841.

Age.	He is the assistant banksman at Thomas Broadoak's Pit at Friar Ground, being now unfit for underground work, which has given him, as he supposes, the oppression in his breathing, which now never leaves him. He went to work in the narrow mountain mine pit when he was going on six. He worked naked as the last witness described and worked with his father. He went on to be a collier working in those pits but he was listed as a soldier at 18 and was in the army for seven years. It is now seven years since he worked in any of the mountain pits. When he last did there was what the last witness describes.
Limitation.	It is bad to take children in to the mines so young. If they kept out till 10 to 12 years of age they would get some learning but they "would na break down to it half so well as if they go at eight," that is in the thicker mines 12 years old would be soon enough.
Earnings.	He now gets 5s. a week himself. He is not fit for strong work and has a wife and boy to keep.
Accidents.	He had one boy killed in drawing props in the pit and a half brother and brother-in-law killed by being jerked down the pit on the rope partly slipping from the whimsey.

his
(Signed) JOHN >< BUCKLEY,
mark.

No.22 Mr. James Clegg, proprietor of the colliery at Pauldin Wood, near Oldham. Oct. 29th. 1841.

Hours.	The children's present hours of labour will not be more than seven or eight. There are about 30 children and young people, all males, employed in these works. Children could only perform some of the labours, the only seam worked here begin about 18 inches thick, these are drawers by the belt and chain, or thrutchers behind the coal tubs. These tubs hold 3 cwt. of coal each and run on wheels which are on trams along the mainway, but run on the floor nearer to the working. The incline to the mainway is about one yard in five or six. There are three pits and the whole mine from these is well ventilated. Besides this mine there are others in the neighbourhood mentioned below.
Girls.	The only desire to employ girls was when there was a scarcity in a time of good trade but he objected to their employment and no wish for it has since been expressed.
Hours.	The general hours of work of the boys will be from seven to eight. The

boys stop for dinner. The pits are 40 fathoms deep. The children are children or relations of the colliers with one exception, who is an apprentice from a parish to a collier working in the mine. At present the colliers commence work about eight o'clock and leave from about five, stopping for an hour for dinner, from half past 12 to half past 1. The engine winding is stopped during this hour. The mine is perfectly well drained.

Accidents. One life has been lost by the roof falling in upon a lad whom his father had left to work in the pit and who made an error in taking away coal which he ought not. Two others fell from the top to the bottom of the shaft one while incautiously playing and the other in stepping into the basket at an improper time. The pit has been at work for six years. The minor accidents are trifling. The men work piece work and the proprietor has nothing to do with the boys in any shape or form. Work is at present slack, which is rather inclined to attribute to the new supply thrown into Manchester by railway and other means than to an absolute decline in demand. The colliers work principally for Manchester to which place the coals are conveyed by land carriage. The children generally go to Sunday School with some few to evening school. It is possible to work seams so thin as this without young children from 8 to 14, even at 10 they will not bend to it. They may shut up their works if they are debarred from employing children two years younger.

(Signed) JAMES CLEGG.

No.23 John Jones, Oct. 29th. 1841.

Age and work. He has been in the pit for a year or more and he thrutches with 'Neddy'. He goes with 'Neddy' every time he goes to the pit bottom. He thrutches with his hands and head.

[He is able to answer aye and no to most questions. He could not be got to hold a pen to make his mark, though his own father endeavoured to make him.]

No.24 Thomas Jones, Oct. 29th. 1841.

Age. He is the father of John Jones and went into the pit as early as he. He went so early because he liked it. His brother went in when he was just four years old, "went into sic like mine as this, as thin o' coal." an the child did not go in so soon, he would na make so good a collier. He would not do as well if he were out of the mine till nine years old.

Labour. The drawer he now has is going on 13 years old and he gives him 5s. 6d. a week, that's Neddy. He reckons his own by a learner to Neddy. It is common for a child to go down for twelve months or so before he is put to regular work. He goes every day up and down with him.

Hours. They go to work about seven o'clock and gets to work sometimes between eight and nine and stops just long enough to eat his dinner. Working no regular time and comes out o' th' pit between four and five or so. They seldom work longer hours. He thinks it did him good to go down the pit so soon.

Place of work. The mainway is a yard and six inches high. The workings are about two feet high or 26 inches. In these narrow seams, a lad, if getting too big for drawing when he is 14, he then begins to draw. At present they all have too many holidays, working only about three days and a half week.

his
(Signed) THOMAS <> JONES..
mark.

No.25 James Jones. Oct. 29th. 1841.

Age. He is going on 13 and has been five years in the pit. He is drawing for William Burgess and has been drawing for about three years. He first thrutched for one of George Mile's lads when he got 3s. 6d. a week and 4s. He was paid by George Hewitt or Buckey Hewitt, the man Miles's lad

was drawing for. He had wages after three weeks in the pit. This was at a pit of Messrs. Lees's and Moorside. He has worked in several other pits before he came to this, where he has been two years. His father is a joiner, about a quarter of a mile off.

Meals.

Hours the same as stated by Thomas Jones and he stops just long enough to eat his dinner. It 'comes' [is sent] and is sometimes bread and butter cake [wheaten bread and butter] and he gets his breakfast before he comes of oatmeal porridge and oatcake. He will have his porridge and oatcake as soon as he gets home now, when he has just left work and some bread and butter cake before he goes to bed at nine o'clock.

Clothing.

He

He works in his shirt and cap and needs no 'plodding' to cover his back. works with a belt and chain but it does not hurt him. About a week ago it hurt him but it does not now. The pit is as dry as pepper and warm too. He couldn't abide to have aught else on him while working, it would be too hot. He has thrutching for him, his little brother, Henry Jones who is going on six and has been in the pit three months.

Earnings.

He gets 1s. a week and he himself gets 5s. a week. It is sometimes 16 yards from the working into the main road and it is more than 200 yards to the bottom of the pit. He goes sometimes fourteen times a day. To go fourteen times tires him, if he plays to. He plays a good deal, about three times a week and plays at Knurr sometimes, football and marbles. They never lick him in the pit, some they do and sometimes the lads deserve it. They get a piece of cord and hit them on the *****, holding them with the other hand. Sometime the lads do it to one another, sometimes they fight at the pit bottom about hooking-on or in the railroad because they don't go fast enough. He has no other clothes besides the very dirty and ragged ones he has on but nevertheless he goes to Sunday School. Some go wi' waur clothes na' these. It is called Shaulver Lane Sunday School. He will wash himself all over on every Sunday morning, standing besides a tub of water and rubbing himself 'as white as snow'. If he did not, his mother would beat him. He goes sometimes to night school

[After exhibiting some impatience, he here exclaimed that he wanted to go 'whoam for his porridge,' and ran off as fast as he could in the dark.]

No.26 Henry Jones. Oct. 29th. 1841.

Age and work.

He is going on six and thrutches with his brother. He works with his clothes on and he has not yet doffed them.

his
(Signed) HENRY ~~X~~ JONES.
mark.

No.27 John Jones. Oct. 29th. 1841.

He is the brother of the last two and is going on eight. He is thrutching and gets half-a-crown a week. He works in the same place and for the same hours with his brothers. He never went to school and does not know his letters.

his
(Signed) JOHN ~~X~~ JONES.
mark.

No.28 Samuel Hall, late book-keeper at Mr. Abraham Lee's colliery.

No.29 James Urmson, collier.

No.30 Edward Taylor, collier.

No.31 Robert Grimshaw, collier.

No.32 Benjamin Jackson, collier.

No.33 Abraham Taylor, collier.

Members of the Primitive Methodist congregation, Knott Lanes and the three first also members of the school committee for the management of the Sunday School there. Oct. 31st. 1841.

Sunday Schools.
for

The Sunday School is held in the chapel which is let in the week days

a private day school, the master of which may now be clearing 20s. a week. The congregation of society meet for worship every Sunday evening at six, except about twice a quarter when they meet at three. All the earlier part of the day the building is disposable for the school. The school hours are from half past nine to twelve and from half past one to four. They take any children that will come and look after those that will not, to get them to come. They pay nothing except 1d. a year for fire. The books are bought by a congregational collection made every years. They uses Bibles, Testaments and spelling books. The scholars come from about a mile round, within which compass there is one factory and a number of collieries in which the parents of the children are chiefly employed and a large proportion of the children themselves. The number of scholars on the books is about 150 and they attend pretty well. They teach them reading and writing and as much religious instruction as can be given them in the time. First they give out a hymn and sing and then they have an extempore prayer by one of the congregation. There are two superintendents of the school, appointed by the school committee which, (to be done orderly), should be appointed by the quarter day Board of the Oldham Circuit of Primitive Methodist Connection. It is, really, however, appointed by the committee themselves who are the proprietors of the school and the chapel. The building cost about £250 nine years ago and of this sum, £130 is yet unpaid. Mr. Harrop gave £20 in the price of the land and there were some smaller gifts but the money has been chiefly raised by contributions of the congregation itself, of whom a majority are labouring colliers. Owing to the present bad state of the trade these can now do very little. The children of members of the society are regular at the Sunday School generally and some of the colliers and others send their young children to the day school also, and 1s. for grammar and geography in addition. But time are so bad that the number now sent is much decreased because of the difficulty in finding the 6d. for each scholar. There is a new schoolmaster and he has very few children.

Desire of parents for
education of children.

Plenty would send their children if they could afford it and it grieves their minds that they do not. We believe it is a general desire in the parents here, if they were earning good wages, 25s. a week, to send their children to the day school till 12. This is soon enough for any child to go to work, especially in the bottom of a coal pit. It is a worse place than a factory, because of the wet, cold, firedamp and other dangers. Before 12 they are sure that a child is not properly able to care of itself in a coal pit. Edward Taylor went down at four years and a half old into one of the thin seam mines and has been in the collieries ever since. James Urmson went into the pit at seven into a four feet seam, to thrutch but in such a seam the coal is now waggoned. Benjamin Jackson went into the pit at eight years old, at once to waggoning with another boy. It is the opinion of all these that children under the age of 12 are unable to take care of themselves in a coal pit. If they could afford it they would rather have their own children at school till that age. This would be the general feeling of the colliers of this neighbourhood but they are now making on average not more than three or four days a week. In this immediate neighbourhood they are now getting 15s. a week. In good times they would make 25s. sometimes more but for the last two or three years time have been much worse both with factories and collieries. When the factories fail, the collieries fail.

Ages as early as ever.

The children are now going into the pits as quite an early age as the witness above named went in. One of them (Benjamin Jackson) has a very little child indeed working close to him in the pit. His master called upon him to return the age of the waggoners in the pit, saying it would be a good job if the regulations of the Factories Act applied to colliers. They are sure

Limitation expected.

that the men would not be alarmed about it, for they expected its being brought about at that time. They cannot say how they would like it if nothing were to be done for the schooling of the children excluded. It would be better something were done, and is sure they think so. They would give it the children themselves if they had the power.

If they had the privilege to send their children, they would gladly let them be kept out of the pit till 12 years of age. They are sure they would not be so sorry to see them entirely kept out till they are 12 years of age. I have heard them say so and believe it to be the opinion of the great body of the colliers. They think that generally the colliers are a kind hearted body of men and it is hard to take a child at the early age now customary into the bowels of the earth, so that he hardly knows what living on the top is. They are sure that the masters are not alarmed at the idea of any restriction. and that the children have no business to go into the coal pit under 12 years of age.

Ignorance.

What is wanted in the country at this present day is to be improved by the means of teaching. There are plenty of married grown-up men about here of 30 to 40 years of age, who cannot tell a word in the Bible, nor reckon the wages which they have to receive and it is they who are the worst characters, they will swear very heavily and drink terribly, drink what their families should have. Some of these declare their disbelief in a future state, and their opinion that they will die like a dog when they be done wi'. When they miss Sabbath school and weekday school too, they become hardened and they canna' believe, and will na' believe. Such men are dirty in their habits and degraded in conversation delighting nearly in bawdy talk. They say their fathers disbelieved and did as they do and this is true and from some causes that are affecting the poor children now.

This chapel and school are the only effort made in this immediate neighbourhood to go out of the darkness that there is about here, and it has pleased God to prosper it. Mr. Harrop has been very good and is not the principle creditor of the society.

Destructive effects of night work.

One of the most destructive things to the health of the colliers, and the children working with them as well as their well-being in mind, is the night work for which they are forced. I wish to God that this were put a stop to. The Almighty ordained the night for rest and not for work. I think it would be a very great 'privilege' to colliers to put a stop to night work which would make their habits both of body and mind more healthy. A collier that has been working regular night and day shifts alternately will not live so long by many years. I object to the system altogether. It would be a grand thing for this country if the night work were put a stop to. A collier that has been at work in the night cannot sleep in the day and cannot feel healthily awake the night through. From twelve to one he is chill and drowsy and the weariness of his body which comes from it is dreadful but the necessities of his family drive him on. The weariness from night work robs a man even of his religious habits and feelings and if it have this effect on the men, what must it have on the children. Of those who would go to night school, there is only one week in two when they can go and it must be a child of very persevering mind that can take up its lessons at intervals this way. They fall asleep at their wok, thence exposure to constant danger not only to themselves but to others and they suffer from headaches and other distempers. They are quite dull and sleepy and are all sure that in childhood or manhood the night work undermines the constitution, and decreases health and strength.

(Signed) SAMUEL HALL. EDWARD TAYLOR
BENJAMIN JACKSON. JAMES URM

his his
ROBERT X GRIMSHAW ABRAHAM X TAYLOR
mark. mark.

No.34 Joseph Byrom, bookkeeper to Messrs. Stanley and Schofield, Broadway Lane Colliery. Nov. 3rd. 1841.

Age of engineers.

The engine employed in these works is high pressure and managed by an adult. He is upwards of 30. It is not because the engine is high pressure that an adult is employed but because of the danger in employing young people that they may overwind the coals and the men. This applies equally to low pressure engines. A person under 16 or 18 years of age ought not to be at such occupation at all judged from his own feelings. The men themselves think little about this or any subject until an accident happens but they will sometimes turn out against an engineer or banksman who they think does not do his duty. The engineer has 18s. a week and his predecessor had 24s. and these wages are paid entirely for safety in preference to employing children and young persons as is the case with other employers. These, if they are to save the cost of wages, ought, at all events, before they employ such very young engineers, to be required to provide some mechanical means of saving from destruction such persons as may be over wound in consequence.

(Signed) JOSEPH BYROM.

No.35 Moses Mills, underlooker at the Hunt Lane Mines. Nov. 4th. 1841.

Age of engineers.

Formerly, if a child could but learn to manage the engine they did not look at what age he was. He thinks it has been the case that some might be no more than 10 or 11. They were not so particular as they are now. It is now a rule not to give the management of an engine to any lad under 14, maybe two months is long enough to learn. The seams worked here are underneath the Oldham slack mine. One seam is 1ft. 7in. and the other 2ft. 5 in. in thickness. They are worked on the same plans as Chamber Lane Pits and a return of their young hands has already been made.

(Signed) M. MILLS.

No.36 James Woods, engineer at one of the Hunt Lane Pits going on 16 years of age. Nov. 4th. 1841.

Engineer.

He is going on 16 and has been an engineer for about four years. He is now working at Hunt Lane Collieries at the Hor Lane Pit. He is busy at his work and is reckoned attentive. In winding he has wound tubs of coal over twice but has never wound men over. He was appointed in place of a lad who wound over three men and killed them. This was at Trudley Pit one of the Chamber Lane Pits and about two years ago. He gets 9s. a week. He cannot read or write.

[It is impossible to interrupt him from his work to get his mark.]

No.37 Thomas Whittaker engineer at one of the Hunt Lane Pits, going on 17. Nov. 4th. 1841.

Engineers.

He is going on 17 and has been an engine for about 4 years, he learned from John Mills who is now turned 18 and was with him a month while he learned. After he gave over driving the horses engine. He has wound coals over twice but never men. He gets 7s a week for six days and 8s. 2d. for seven days which he is now working. The engine works night and day with a double shift of engineers. It is both a drawing and pumping engine. He can read a bit but not write.

[Cannot be interrupted to sign his evidence.]

No.38 Cyrus Taylor, engineer at one of the Slibber Pits, going on 13. Nov. 5th. 1841.

Engineer,

He is past 13 and has been five weeks next Saturday learning to be engineer at Slibber Pits of the company of Messrs. Jones. [He is this hour winding coals by himself also one cargo of a boy and three men.] He was working at the bottom but got two fingers cut off [showing the stumps on the left hand.] He winds men as well as coal. The proper engineer is Samuel Taylor, no relation of his, and who is somewhere about, mending waggons. Samuel Taylor always comes into the engine house to be with him when he is winding men. He is about 18 years old. Learned to read at Sunday School but cannot write.

No.39 Mr. Joseph Wild. chief constable of Oldham. Nov. 1st. 1841.

Accidents and their causes.

He has been chief constable of Oldham for nearly six years and ten years altogether a constable in this neighbourhood. The children are taken down about seven or eight years of age generally. It is chiefly in regard to fatal accidents that his attention is directed to their occupations in the mines having to collect witnesses for the coroner in all cases occurring in the township of Oldham. The neighbourhood of Oldham is the most fruitful for the coroner of this part of the county, Mr. Dearden, because of the number of the population and the nature of their employment in mines and factories. There have already been a good deal of accidents to children and young people as well as to the men, in the mines here during the past five or six years. The chief accidents are from firedamp and from the falling in of roofs or roof stones from the roof, the former chiefly through incaution on the part of the men or the children and the latter from the ignorance of impracticed getters or a stinginess in the smaller employers as to their supply of wood for props, a cause which is more general than is usually made to appear at the coroner's inquests, because of the feelings and interests of the witnesses tend to conceal it. Parties, after giving their own account of accidents in conversation, could not be got to depose the same facts before the coroner.

From deficient outlay
by the masters.

A common thing is for the master to leave his men to 'rob the post wood' as it is termed, to supply for the wants of their hewing, or in other words, to fetch away the old wood from old workings to an extent which, in the want of any other supply, has been carried out in great danger. This has repeatedly been given in evidence before the coroner. It is more grown-up men that are killed this way than children who are for the most of the time in the mine and securer ways of the pits drawing, thrutching an waggoning.

From firedamp.

Many accidents have occurred from firedamp. About 12 months ago two young brothers named Taylor, aged about 11 and 13, were burnt to death by firedamp in Evan's colliery on Oldham Edge. He saw them himself. Three years ago three or four young people were similarly burnt to death and others much injured in Messrs. Jones's colliery at Werneth. In this same colliery there were two other serious explosions about that time, one after another. There were numerous occasions in which one may be killed and one or two seriously injured but those already mentioned are the occasions on which the greatest number of young people he recollects to have been burnt at once have lost their lives. There have been many instances in the neighbourhood of two or three persons of more advanced years being burnt together of whom some would die and some recover. In the case of Werneth, the fathers of the children (it being Monday) did not go down to work but sent the children down to clear the roads and get the places ready and it was while they were doing that, in their ignorance and incaution, they incurred death. On the 3rd. July last, in the Holebottom Pit close to the town, four men including the underlooker were killed, This was through the wilful carelessness of one of them who had been duly cautioned, by his fellow workmen before he went in. There are scores of cases in which individuals are badly burnt who do not die but are made cripples for life.

Children ought not to be left alone.

Mere children are not to be trusted where such casualties may occur in a moment's thoughtlessness. It is probably the younger and most inexperienced getters who are most injured by the firedamp.

Accidents from children being employed as engineers.

But there is a class of accidents of which children employed in coal works in this neighbourhood are the cause of persons of all ages. These occur in the winding up by steam machinery of all persons out of the pit. It is a general system here to employ children to tend these engines and stop them at the proper moment and if they are not stopped the two or three or four or five persons wound up together are thrown over the beam down into the pit again. The inducement to employ these children in circumstances where life and death depend on their momentary attention, is merely that their services can be obtained for perhaps 5s. or 7s. a week instead of 30s. a week which the proprietors would perhaps have to pay to a man of full years and discretion. There have been people wound over at Oldham Edge, at Werneth, at Chamber Lane, at Robin Hill, at Oldbottom and on Union Ground here within the last six or seven years to his recollection. He does not know of a case in which children were not the engineers and though he cannot speak to all of them being such, it was generally the case in these instances. The coroner's juries having to give verdicts in cases where such young persons were concerned and in which to attribute gross neglect would be subjecting them to a charge of manslaughter, have always learned to the side of extenuation but have expressed their dissatisfaction with the masters employing children in such a service and for so indefensible a reason and on one occasion he was desired by the coroner and jury to go to the master and tell him so. Three or four boys were killed in this way at Chamber Lane Colliery of Messrs. Jones, two or three years since, by the momentary neglect of a little boy, who he thinks was nine years old and who, he heard, after the worst was over, had turned away from the engine when it was winding up on his attention being attracted by a mouse in the hearth. In this case a deonand of £100 was levied on the engine and returned by the coroner to the Court of Exchequer but it was never recovered from the parties.

Callousness of the public and of the colliers themselves in regard to accidents.

It is certainly observable in the case of colliers that there is a great amount of rude callousness on the subject of accidents among them and their families. They are quite an uneducated set of people who go to the cockpits and races and fights and a great many are gamblers and drinkers. In a day or two's time, among such people, even their wives and children seem to have forgotten it. They will say at the time, "Oh, I am not a bit surprised, I expected it, I expected it!", and it soon passes by. There were so many killed that it becomes quite customary to expect such things. The chiefest talk is just at the moment until the body gets home and then there is no more talk about it. People generally feel, "Oh, its only a collier!" There would be more felling a hundred times if a policemen were to kill a dog in the street. In different neighbourhoods here there would be more bother and talk, is sure there would, about killing a dog than killing a collier. The colliers, even among themselves say so, so that they learn *which* it is that is killed. That is all they think about.

Maltreatment of children.

There have been cases of maltreatment of children in collieries brought before the magistrates, perhaps once or twice a year. The maltreatment was always according to barbarous rules among the workers themselves, inflicting punishment on supposed delinquents, generally by holding the head fast between the legs of another and inflicting a certain number of blows on the bare posteriors with pieces of wood called 'cuts' about a foot long and an inch in diameter used as tokens to distinguish one man's tub from another. However the one punished may cry, they stick to him and in the last case, where a hungry lad had stolen a pit dinner, they mangled his body seriously. In other cases the injured parties could not work at all for some time. In the case mentioned, the offenders were made to placard the town with an apology, to render some compensation to the party and promise not to follow any such course in future. There have been a very

Moral character of colliery as compared with factory lads.

few instances of parish apprentices to colliers ill used by their masters and in one case the magistrates cancelled the indentures.

The collier lads are a wickeder race than the factory children, swearing and cursing. Children as well as men appear to have superior muscular power about the arms and chest and the collier children generally beat the factory children in apparent health and strength. It is a healthfuller job, if they get their belly full of meat but they are a rougher set. If they come to fighting, they have no mercy in punching even in the face or biting to 'damping' [throttling] or anything else. They have no feelings for others as the factory lads do, compared to them. The fighting here is at any advantage but fighting is nothing to compare with what it used to be. Where there is one fight now there used to be a hundred and every case that comes to the knowledge of the police is brought before the magistrates. The factory lads are 'neisher' [more delicate] than the collier lads, who are altogether more robust. As they grow up they get very rough. They marry more often before than after they are 20 but the factory people marry altogether sooner. Of late years the colliers have not neglected their work, when they could get any, because it has been scarce but formerly they used to drink everything. They would not go to work on Monday but only send the lad into the pit to clear it and go themselves to cockfighting to a race or keep to drinking. The most improvident would often continue drinking as long as they had anything to drink. They have much more vigour than the factory people and if angered by any of these, when in liquor, drive all before them.

Imperfection of provident institutions voluntarily supported.

The colliers have had a friendly society with a stock in the master's hands to pay the funeral expense of a comrade, 1s. for every collier and 6d. for every waggoner. The only other club into which they enter are lodges of the Foresters, Shepherds, Druids, Odd Fellows and other societies, including members from other occupations, but the articles of which they are commonly not enrolled. These are subject to much abuse by the parties in trust, who get bye-laws passed to suit their own purposes and the magistrates are debarred from many means of rendering justice to a dissentient individual. The colliers, at the turn out last winter, although they gathered in large numbers, exhibited a surprising peacableness of demeanour. There were threats to individuals quarrelling with them but there was not a single special constable sworn or required.

(Signed) JOSEPH WILD.

No.40 The Rev. John Fallowfield, curate of St. Mary's, Oldham. A parish comprising four townships of great population, through ecclesiastically under that of Prestwich-cum-Oldham. Oct. 29th. 1841.

No females in the pits.

He knows of no instance in this district in which females, whether women or girls, are employed in coal pits but very young lads got down the coal pits.

Moral character of colliers.

The colliery population of this neighbourhood is very numerous and remarkable for a sailor-like disregard for danger and rude carelessness of character, supposed to result from their occupation, otherwise they are not morally distinguishable from the mass of people.

Rudeness and want of educated classes.

The character of the people in the whole of this portion of the kingdom is rude and uncultivated and Oldham has a smaller proportion of educated people of the wealthy classes resident among its population than other portions of it. But though its people are quite as rude, they are not quite as vicious as their neighbours, if their character be estimated by the number of cases supplied to the New Bailey at Manchester.

Transition to manufactures.

The old gentry are driven by manufacturers from the country, and the manufacturers are not, in cultivation and character, persons to produce ameliorating influence upon the vast mass of people whom they employ. These were formerly quite as rude as they now are, but they are far from simple in habits and more moral.

Health.

The place is peculiarly healthy, typhus seldom makes its appearance. The town is high, the soil is dry, and the mountain air pure and keen. The cholera was very slightly felt but influenza, several years ago, very fatal. Deaths are of most rapid occurrence in a time of good trade after in depression. The history of the whole is an alternation of prosperity and depression.

(Signed) J. FALLOWFIELD.

No.41 The Rev. William Lees, curate of St. Peter's in the parish of Oldham. Oct. 29th. 1841.

Extent of the parish.

The four townships which form the parish of Oldham and also the parliamentary borough, contain, besides the parish church, the chapels of ease of St. James and St. Peters, each having its own district, in the township of Oldham. Each of the three townships of Chadderton, Crompton and Royton, forming the rest of the parish, has also its chapel and minister. The total population of the parish is upwards of 61,000.

Public day schools.

In this parish the principle means of public daily instruction is a school endowed with about £40 per annum called the Grammar School but conducted on the national system and attended by about 60 children of both sexes, besides a Blue Coat School for the board and education of about 100 children from the whole of the manufacturing district around. The Grammar School is the only *public* school, except Sunday Schools, in which therefore the great mass of the labouring population acquire such daily instruction as they receive. There are, of course, a great number of private day schools but of the quality of the instruction conveyed in them is perhaps impossible to speak favourably. They are nominally available for the children in the labouring classes under the requisition of the Factories Act.

Sunday Schools of St Peter's.

In this district of St. Peter's, in the centre of the town, there is a Sunday School with 800 children on its books and never attended by less than 600. The district of St. James's has also a Sunday School not quite so extensive but perhaps equally efficient. These schools have evening classes four evenings in the week, two for boys and two for girls, to learn writing and arithmetic and some few even reading, but trading together with religious instruction, is principally the labour of the Sabbath. The Sunday School is supported by voluntary contributions, amounting last year but one to £150. last years £120 and already, in the recent years to £94 3s. 7d. The scholars themselves make no payment whatsoever beyond providing their own books. A master is paid a small sum for attendance at the evening schools but the Sunday instruction is all voluntary. In the St. Peter's district, the evening classes average about 50 in number. Each of the outlying townships has its Sunday School in like manner, nearly well attended as that of St Peter's and these are, indeed, the only sources of instruction to which the poor can resort.

Four other superintended by church clergy besides others attending the church.

There are besides, in the parish, four Sunday Schools not expressly superintended by ministers of the church because the latter will not countenance the teaching of writing on the Sunday, in which their conductors persist. Their members, however, attend the church, notwithstanding that they have expressly withdrawn from its schools on this account.

Dissenters Sunday Schools.

The dissenting congregations have also each their Sunday School. The Sunday Schools are generally well attended, they resort to them being the prevailing habit throughout the youthful population. They are exceedingly well supported by both the church and the dissenters. They contain a great number of collier children and indeed in the country beyond the town, towards Ashton-under-Lyne, the great body of the population are attached to the collieries. In the village of Alt, within the parish of Ashton, though not more than a mile and half from the town of Oldham, is a Sunday School, to which the main resort must be from the collieries, though it is feared that many of the collier children attend no place either of instruction or worship. There are some worthy men in the St. Peter's congregation

from among the colliers but generally speaking they are a much demoralised population apparently from something in the nature of their occupation.

Barbarous and improvident character of many colliers.

They generally absent themselves from places of worship and no set of people are so given to intoxication. They seem almost half barbarous, especially in those outlying places to which the labourers of the few church ministers cannot well penetrate. Nevertheless they are better than they were some years ago and he knows not what to attribute it, unless it be the influence of Sunday Schools. The people of this district generally are very rude, but they are very kind hearted and they are not as rude as they were some years ago.

Education causes of the Factories Act.

The education causes of the Factories Act are perhaps inoperative in regard to the labouring classes for though the children do go to schools, the quality of these schools cannot be good.

Present depression tending to demoralisation.

Oldham was never in a worse state than it is now through want of work. Two and three families together are emigrating, chiefly mill workers, and principally to Australia. It is said that several hundreds have gone this summer. There has been a great congregation of the working people also into smaller house room, as he has personally observed. At the same time that this movement is proved by the great number of empty houses. This assuredly tends to a decay of morals, through the circumstances of indelicacy which the crowding together in insufficient house room must produce.

(Signed) Wm. LEES,
Incumbent of St. Peter's, Oldham.

No.42 The Rev. Wm. F. Walker, curate of St. James's Oldham. Nov.5th. 1841.

Ignorance through early employment, a main cause of the prevailing low moral condition.

He cannot say much of the conduct or intelligence of the population by which he is surrounded, their deficiencies in these respect being too small to those of people engaged as they are generally. One of the main cause of deficiency is their want of education, resulting from their early employment. Some good has been done by the Factories Act in limiting the ages in which the children shall be employed in factories but the sending of older children to the mill as soon as they can legally be admitted leaves a number of little domestic offices which would, in other circumstances, have been discharged by them to the younger children, who are thus nearly as much restrained from school as ever, the difference being that they are at home or at some work from which they are not legislatively restrained, instead of being in the factory. There is no Act compelling them to attend schools unless they be at the time actually working in the factories.

Failure of endeavour to maintain a day school.

There is in this district no public day school whatever. He has made several attempts to establish one but in vain. He has had the assistance of the National Society and from the parliamentary grant to establish a public day school and a good building has been erected, containing a large school room and two smaller, one designed for an infant school and the other for more advanced classes. An attendance of scholars cannot be got so as to pay a master and it is four years since all hope of this was for the present relinquished. One of the rooms has, however, since been let to a person to keep a school on his own responsibility but three have successively attempted it without success, the last having given it up last week, saying, he could get plenty of scholars but he could not get paid. When the school was first established, the master was encouraged to learn and try the system of the Sessional School at Edinburgh but he could not get scholars to pay him and there was neither endowment nor subscription to supply this deficiency.

Ignorance of the value of good instruction.

The want of support for any decent day schools arises from the indifference of the parents to the instruction of their children, resulting from their own ignorance of its benefits. It does not arise from any religious or sectarian jealousy or prejudice, the earnings of the population around here are amply sufficient in prosperous times to pay for the

instruction of their own children, the parents, even in these times, will themselves support nothing but an infant school for week day instruction. Sunday School instruction they will take, because it does not interfere with work, nor did it cost anything but when the children to about seven years of age they are too useful to be allowed to come to school during the week and many even go out to nurse or hire as young as five. So soon as the children can nurse a child, push a coal tub, or perform the least service, immediately they are employed in the eagerness to profit by their labour on good times to meet the necessities of a family in bad ones and the prevailing want among the parents of any appreciation of the value of instruction when there is any appreciation of it whatever they think that the necessity is sufficiently met by Sunday Schools.

Dame Schools.

The only day schools voluntarily supported by the labour of the working classes are the little dame schools which they use, as they would an infant school, for the sake of getting their children out of the way in a sort of nursery. There are a few schools for children up to about 10 years of age which are frequented by the children of those who are among the best off, the most provident and the most intelligent of the labouring classes. The master of one of these had made money on his avocation.

Low character of schools under the Factories Act.

The schools which answer the requirements of the Factories Act, in regard to the children working short time between the ages of 9 and 13. commonly masters appointed by the factory owners themselves, who, in making the appointment, are more influenced by a feeling of charity towards some dependent, than by ardour in the cause of instruction. The school fee is generally stopped by the master out of the children's wages and he pays the master. At all events the teacher can always appeal to the master for payment. To show the light in which such things are regarded, yonder house at the corner has under it a cellar and in that cellar is kept the school for the enormous factory on the other side. The Act requires an attendance of only two hours, and the instruction is such as the conscientious feelings of such persons as appointed may prompt. There are some evening schools, including one at the Lyceum, to which a small proportion of the youngest people resort but the mass of the labouring population in this town and neighbourhood look to the Sunday Schools as the great source of instruction.

Sunday Schools regarded as the schools and in great part of secular character.

Formerly all the Sunday Schools here are of an entirely secular character, for the teaching of reading, writing and accounts and generally the children went to no place of worship, unless in a very few instances they should go in the evening and with one exception in which they went both morning and afternoon. This is still the character of the majority of the Sunday Schools and the habit of looking to them as 'the' schools still remains in full force. It is about 12 years ago since the secular character of Sunday School instruction was first broken into by the Church and Independents which have been partly followed by other congregations in their refusal to teach writing and accounts, except on week day evenings so as to gain more time on Sunday, not only for the art of reading but for religious instruction and scripture reading. But there are many Sunday Schools in the town which teach also writing and accounts on the Sunday, some of them in connection with any religious society.

Includes even infants.

One effect of this reliance on Sunday School instruction is, that it brings into Sunday Schools large classes of children so young as to be fit only for infant school. To an infant school in the St. James's district, which had an Independent minister for its treasure, the witness was secretary and a subscription of about £10 a year was made to the master's salary sometimes about £1 5s. a week never less than £1. The school fee was 2d. for each child and when trade some years ago was very good, and the parents amply able to pay, it was raised to 3d. and at this rate the school answered until the commencement of the present depression in trade. When its attendance fell off, and it has ceased to exist. The children who might have been sent to this school are now receiving their main instruction in the Sunday Schools of the district. The ages assigned were

from one and a half to seven years, but some continued their attendance a little later.

Favoured by all classes.

For Sunday School instruction, large subscriptions can be got for the higher classes and large attendance from the lower, a partiality for Sunday Schools which prevail throughout the district as in Rochdale and Ashton. There are some Sunday Schools in Oldham township, perhaps seven, which do not give instruction in writing and arithmetic on Sundays but give such instruction of week day evenings to such portion of the scholars as choose to attend. At the Church Sunday School of St Peter's and St. James's this is two nights a week for boys and the other two for girls. In St James's district the minister himself gives instruction. The Sunday School instruction is wholly gratuitous.

Of little value for want of better voluntary instructors.

The greatest difficulty felt in the Sunday Schools, by those wishing to make them instruments of as much good as possible, is the want of teachers. Some are very good but they are few. Some few persons of the higher classes have come to teach in them especially in the girl's schools but in the boy's schools it is difficult to find any to be teachers who have received other than Sunday School instruction equally as bad as that which they are alone qualified to convey. He has often felt, with the boy's school, "I am doing no good." Owing to the facilities afforded by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, the supply of books for St. James's Sunday School does not cost more than 12s. per year and the children by their own Bibles and Testaments, hymn books and prayer books.

Failures as well for secular as for religious instruction.

As a means of religious instruction it is obvious, however, that schools, composed as there are, must be imperfect in the extreme. As secular schools, they do harm by lowering the people's estimation of the value of secular instruction and making them contented with less than they ought to have. Being gratuitous, too, Sunday School instruction is not valued so much as if it were paid for and the interval of six days between each day of instruction delays the attainment of any obviously good result. In many schools the teachers will attend by rotation only once a month, and each may be carrying on a separate system. If the Sunday Schools, however, insufficient as they are, were not to supply something, there is not sufficient desire for instruction among the people to make a demand for teachers at any time or in any form during the week. In the Sunday Schools of the dissenting congregations the same deficiencies exist and the ministers of those congregations neither do nor can pay much attention to them.

(Signed) Wm. F. WALKER.

Sunday Schools in Oldham.

CHURCH.
St. Peter's.
St. James's.

INDEPENDENT.
Greenacres, two.
Hope Chapel.
Providence.
Queen Street.

PRIMITIVE.
Grosvenor Street.

INDEPENDENT METHODISTS.

George Street.
Hill.
Moorside.

MORAVIANS.

Salem.

BAPTIST.

Manchester Street.
Yorkshire Street.

WESLEYAN.

St. Domingo Street.
Side of Moor.

NEW CONNEXION.

Union Street.
Gledwich.
Heap Street.
Femeybank.
Top of Moor.

WESLEYAN ASSOCIATION.

Lord Street.

Unitarian

Roman Catholic

Socialist.