

**CHILDREN'S EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION
1842.**

**REPORT by ELIJAH WARING, ESQ.,
on the Employment of Children and
Young Persons in the Collieries and
other Works in the Forest of Dean, 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.*

Acknowledgement

Ian Winstanley and Picks Publishing Would like to thank Mr. David Hardwick for his expertise and local knowledge in the preparation of this document.

I.G.W.

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Children's Employment Commission.

REPORT by ELIJAH WARING, ESQ., on the Employment of Children and Young Persons in the Collieries and other Works in the Forest of Dean, and on the State, Condition, and Treatment of such Children and Young Persons.

TO HER MAJESTY'S COMMISSIONERS.

GENTLEMEN,

Bristol, July 4, 1841.

HAVING personally visited the most important mines, and other works, in the Forest of Dean, for the purpose of inquiring into the nature and effects of the employment of children and young persons in those concerns, I have now the honour of laying before you the result of my observations.

This woodland district, though comprising an area of only 22,000 acres, is so much isolated in its character and local customs from the rest of the county of Gloucester, that it presents a field of more than common interest to an inquirer into the habits and condition of its population.

Customary laws and usages, of ancient date, are always regarded by the people who possess them, with jealous attachment, as ancestral privileges, and an inheritance to which their children have an indefeasible birthright. The Dean foresters are strongly characterised by this feeling, and still term all persons 'foreigners' who have the misfortune to be born out of their boundaries.

Until the Act of July, 1838, their numerous mines of coal and iron ore were regulated only by the old laws and customs already alluded to, at once indefinite and arbitrary, rendering the tenure unfavourable to the investment of capital, and therefore injurious to the Crown, in which the whole property of the Forest merges. It is evident that the general prosperity of the district must have suffered from the same cause.

An improved system was not, however, established without some disapprobation on the part of the old 'free miners,' whose peculiar privileges were acquired by being born within the hundred of St. Briavel's, and having worked a year and a day in one of the Forest mines.

In one instance that came under my notice, the son of a gentleman who had acquired a beneficial interest in some extensive veins of iron ore, worked out his freedom, having been born within the hundred, by labouring during the stipulated period in his father's mines, thus qualifying himself to become a mining proprietor under the Crown.

Besides the abolition of this exclusive system, other changes were made, by the recommendation of the Commissioners appointed to investigate the subject, at which it is only necessary for me to glance, such as the substitution of a fixed royalty per ton, instead of the old usage of one fifth of the net proceeds paid to the Crown. Some alterations in the terms of galeage or conditions on which the right to work certain specific veins of coal or ore is granted and certain powers to open air-shafts within the royal enclosures, for the purposes of ventilation.

Galeage. - It may be in the recollection of Edward Machen, Esq., deputy surveyor of the Forest, to whom I am indebted for many courteous attentions, and who holds the important office of *Queen's Gaveller*, that my curiosity was much excited about the derivation of the terms, gale and gaveller. Not having been able to obtain any satisfactory explanation of their origin, in the Forest, where they are constantly employed, I will venture to record here my own etymological suggestions on the subject.

Gale appears to be a contraction of gavel, which is a Saxon word (gapel) signifying *tribute, custom, yearly rent, or revenue*. The composition paid by the miners to the Crown is called the *king's gale*.

Gavel-kind was an ancient tenure, vesting equal shares of the father's land in each of his surviving sons or dividing those of a brother, dying without issue, among the surviving brothers.

in like manner. Thus gavel or custom was taken by the kind or kin of the deceased, by this common participation in his property.

Gavel-cester was a measure of ale formerly payable by the stewards and bailiffs of manors belonging to the see of Canterbury. This was a gavel or customary tribute to the city.

Gavel-erth was the service of ploughing a certain quantity of ground for the lord by his tenant.

Gavel-med was the similar service of mowing grasslands, and gavel-rep of cutting corn, for the lord.

Corn-rent paid in lieu of money by the tenant was called *gavel-read*.

In all these instances the payment made, or service rendered, is called *gavel*, i.e. tribute or *custom*. Again, gavelling-man, or, in old law Latin, *gevelgilda*, was a tenant paying toll or tribute in addition to a reserved rent.

The above illustrations convince me that the office of *gaveller*, is in fact that of a *collector of tribute*. Hence part of his duty in the Forest of Dean, is to take care that one-fifth part of the mine produce be secured to the Crown—now commuted for a fixed royalty—and when a miner applies for a *gale*, or leave to open a mine, he asks, in point of fact, to pay a *gavel* or tributary sum for that privilege and therefore, in the local phraseology, he ‘*demands a gale*.’

But how did the contraction come about? In some old writings *gale* is spelt *gaul*, or sometimes *gawl*, and as it clearly implies an excavation in order to come at the minerals. this orthography might lead us to the same derivation as Mr. Ludlow has suggested for *scowl*, an old Forest term for an iron mine, viz. *ceawl*, a British word denoting a cave or grotto. I adhere, however, to the first derivation as more probable, from the inseparable connection of the *gale* with the office of *gaveller*. It is well known that our ancestors used the letters *u* and *v* indifferently and were also prone to indicate their vowel sounds by a little stroke over the emphatic consonant. Thus *gaül* would often be written *gaul*, and in transcription readily become *gawl* but the word thus spelt, in either case, could not but become *gale* in the mouth of the Foresters, who reject the open sound of the initial vowel, as in *water*, always pronounced by them *weater*.

The fixed royalty places the proprietor and tenant on a footing of mutual confidence, by reducing the amount claimed and rendered, to a simple question of weight and measure, easily checked by both parties.

On the old plan there was a reserved option on the part of the Crown, to put a man into the mine as representative of the royal interest, in working out the fifth share, a mode of proceeding not often had recourse to, and never found to answer in practice. The modern system appears likely to obtain general acceptance.

I make this prefatory reference to these circumstances, as being intimately connected with the extension and general promotion of those undertakings, which furnish employment to so large a number of the class, whose interests are contemplated by your Commission.

The former state of things, in this neglected but beautiful district, was calculated to foster ignorance and prejudice, the natural concomitants of separation from the usual modes of instruction, and from the habits of a more enlarged community.

An improved state of society, has happily broken down the outworks of both ignorance and prejudice, which are gradually giving way before free intercourse, and amalgamation with ‘foreigners’, and the silent but irresistible progress of knowledge.

Such a change must necessarily be progressive, and being of comparatively recent date, it cannot surprise the well informed inquirer, if he have some obstacles to overcome, or obscurities to dispel, in the course of his investigations among the native population.

I have great pleasure in stating, that these difficulties proved far more trivial than I anticipated. A short course of observation on the character of the foresters furnished me with a ready key to their good will and I record it to their honour, that they required only to discover that the information I asked had a kindly object in view, to be prompt and unreserved in communicating it.

Of the courtesy, and truly friendly attentions, which I received from the clergy and gentry, as well as the proprietors of the works I visited, it is impossible to speak too warmly. It is not too much to say, that all classes appeared to appreciate the wise and benevolent objects of Her Majesty’s Government, in appointing the Commission which I had the honour of representing.

With regard to the grand object of my inquiries, the occupations of the boys and young persons in this mineral district, my labours were much simplified by the absence of complexity, and the prevalent sameness in the operations, upon which my remarks were to be made.

The employment of females in mines and collieries, is happily almost unknown in the Forest. One instance only of a female employed in filling the waggons came under my notice so that I encountered no such repulsive objects there, as the degraded and almost unsexed

beings I have often beheld, with mingled horror and compassion, among the iron and coal works of South Wales.

A large portion of the juvenile foresters find employment with their fathers in the woods, whilst many others are engaged in the numerous quarries, from which vast quantities of excellent building stone, as well as grindstones, troughs, rollers, and other useful articles, are supplied to various parts of the kingdom.

Mr. Mushet, of Coleford, a gentleman distinguished for his scientific acquirements, and minute acquaintance with the mineral statistics of the Forest, estimates the quantity of wrought stone annually exported, at not less than 10,000 tons.

The boys who assist their fathers in this work, do not earn, on an average, more than 1s. a day. Quarry men's wages do not exceed 15s. to 18s. per week when in full work, and the demand is fluctuating and precarious.

Charcoal burning is another branch of juvenile occupation and, as it is easy to keep on the windward side of the noxious effluvia, no other injury arises to those employed in this work, than may be inflicted by exposure to inclement seasons under the open cope of heaven. The charcoal burners, however, generally contrive a snug hut for shelter during rough weather arid at night.

EMPLOYMENT IN THE COLLIERIES.

The great majority of boys in the Forest, are doomed to earn their bread by underground labour. The proportion of miners to woodmen, quarrymen, &c. being about three-fourths.

In most cases, the boys are taken into the mines by their fathers or elder brothers, as soon as they are capable of earning the lowest rate of wages, by opening and closing doors in the pit, for the transit of coal waggons.

This precaution, as you are aware, is requisite to maintain a sufficient current of air through the works as without free ventilation, the carbonic acid gas, or choke-damp, copiously exhaled from the coal beds, would accumulate so as to endanger life.

The forest mines are happily exempt from that more perilous gas-because not so readily detected in its progressive accumulation, the carburetted hydrogen, or firedamp.

The average wages of the door-boys, who are usually from 8 to 10 years of age,* is 3s. per week. The work is of the easiest description, but wretchedly dull, it must be, for an active mind. I was at a loss to conceive how they occupied the intervals of their gloomy janitorship, till I observed them enjoying rides on the coal waggons as far as the door nearest their own, where they are ready to ride back with the returning train, and perform their office as soon as it is required.

The next stage of colliery labour is hodding, or carting, according to the mode in which the pit is worked.

Hodding varies in the amount of toil required, according to the circumstances of the pit, and the construction of the hod in which the coal is drawn into the horseway, or road leading to the bottom of the main shaft.

When the passages are high and tolerably level, or inclining downwards, the posture in which the hodder works is not much constrained and when the hod is mounted on trucks, technically called trollies, a considerable weight is pulled without extraordinary effort. The hods are frequently mounted on slides only, when from 1 cwt. to 1 1/2 cwt. is the ordinary load.

The harness by which the boys tug these loads, is a convenient apparatus of leather straps for the shoulders and breast, attached by a chain and they draw the hods much in the same posture as hobbler on a towing path, when tracking a vessel.

Where the seams of coal are very thin, and the passages consequently limited to a space just sufficient for working out the coal, the attitude of the hodder is almost prone, and in some instances crawling on hands and knees is indispensable. (No.31) This certainly a wretched

**The cases of boys, as young as from six to seven years of age, taken by their fathers into the mines, are so few as to form exceptions to the general practice rather than a feature of it. The employers commonly discourage such very premature labour.*

and slave like mode of labour but stern necessity and habit have reconciled these children of poverty to all its fatigue and inconvenience.

Carting is performed by two lads pushing the coal waggons out of the stalls into the

horseway, the wheels running on iron plates, in fact on a tram-road. In some coal pits the horseway goes quite up to the stalls.

At these two branches of labour, the wages vary from 7s. to 18s. per week, according to the age and strength of the lads. The highest rate is rarely earned by under 18 years of age. A stout boy will frequently earn from 12s. to 15s. a week.

These rates of wages imply full work, or six days in the week, which the state of trade unfortunately will not always permit.

The most sprightly boys appear to take a pride, in the extra quantity of work they can perform, proportioned to their age and some youngsters of 13 excel their seniors by two or three years in physical energy and despatch of business.

There is only one other employment for boys in the coal mines, except occasional jobbing about the roads, and carrying in pit wood, and that is driving the waggon horses. In this vocation the driver, or "jockey-boy," sits on the front of the foremost waggon, immediately behind the horse, a position of considerable danger, in case of a sudden jolt from a loose plate or other cause but accidents of this kind are so rare that I did not hear of a single case.

In the collieries at Howlet's Slade, I observed a commodious dickey, or moveable seat, attached to the front carriage by strong iron grappels, being readily unshipped and transferred to another waggon when required. This seat was devised for the safety of the boys, by the considerate managing proprietor, Mr. John Trotter Thomas, of Coleford.

On the whole, I was most impressed with the idea of danger to the heads of these young charioteers, from their almost constant proximity to the rugged roof of the mine and so nicely did they adapt their posture to the space above them, that their woollen caps brushed a distinct line of transit along the moist surface of the rock, whenever it was low enough to touch them, showing that another inch of elevation would have seriously endangered their skulls.

These boys are fond of driving at a rapid pace, when going into the stalls with the empty train of waggons, and they like especially to show off in this fashion, when they have a visitor to convey into the interior. I can testify that a good litter of dry fern or hay at the bottom of your waggon, is neither a despicable nor a need-less substitute for cushions, under this dispensation of subterraneous posting.

The jockey boys earn from 6s. to 10s. per week, and appear to have the least laborious post, with the exception of the little door-keepers.

EMPLOYMENT IN THE IRON MINES.

The principal difference between the modes of juvenile labour in the coal pits and iron mines, is in the conveyance of the ore out of the narrow workings, which is done in baskets or boxes, placed on 'billies,' a kind of saddle strapped to the shoulders.

The billy was originally an accredited Forest measure (vide Mr. Mushet's Evidence, No.37.) It now carries from 1 cwt. to 11/2 cwt. The former is the usual load, and a boy of 13 will manage this, after another has assisted in lifting it to his back.

The iron ore usually running in ascending diagonal veins, often at an angle of 60 degrees, greatly facilitates this mode of conveyance, by giving the boys a descending path to the place where they deposit their loads.

Where the nature of the passage will admit, the ore is conveyed to the horse-way in wheelbarrows.

Young boys, of from 8 to 10 years of age, are sometimes employed in picking stones out of the ore before it leaves the mine but very few are employed at so early an age, except in the small mines carried on by working men on their own account.

The rate of wages for billy boys and drivers is 1s. a day. The fillers and wheelers earn from 1s. 4d. to 2s. a day.

There is something very remarkable in the distribution of the iron ore among the limestone, which forms its matrix. It lies in 'churns,' or 'pockets' as the miners term these deposits and as these are cut away, natural pillars and arches of limestone are left, supporting the roof in a variety of grotesque forms and combinations. The contents of the 'churns' vary both in quality and quantity, which produces a picturesque irregularity in the mine works, strongly contrasting with the even courses of the coal strata.

In the Upper Oakwood Level, carried on by the Cinderford Iron Company, a number of young lads were pursuing their labours, at the sides of a remarkably precipitous gallery, which I was told ran up through the superincumbent hill quite to the surface.

An immense heap of pulverescent ore, said to be of superior quality, was collected in the tipping place, at the foot of this steep, which forms an admirable ventilator for the mine. Just on

one side of this long and narrow vein, a vast mass of ore was excavating, leaving a lofty dome of magnificent dimensions overhead.

Great advantages must have been derived, by the labouring miners, from the introduction of capital, in the various branches connected with their trade; the old method of raising ore being, incomparably, more tedious, as well as more laborious, from the absence of levels, or other facilities for the work, unattainable without considerable cost.

I visited some of the more primitive iron mines, called scowles, still worked on a small scale, near the village of Bream. The entrances to some of these grubbing places are more like rabbit burrows, or fox earths, than the mouth of a mine. An insignificant aperture, generally beneath a crop of limestone rock, admits the miner, who descends, almost perpendicularly, either by notches cut in the rock, or wooden pegs driven into the soil, taking with him a light ladder, by which, at some stages in his progress, he lets himself down to his working place.

The ore from these little mines is carried to the surface in billies, on the backs of young boys, who crawl along the galleries and climb into daylight, with the address and activity of monkeys. These concerns are now carried on solely, on a small scale, by old free miners, assisted by their own families, some of whom perform this toilsome work at the too early age of six years.

PHYSICAL EFFECTS OF MINE LABOUR.

Under this head, my observations and inquiries have alike issued in the conviction that the general health and vigour of colliers and miners, are nearly on a par with those of other labourers, employed under circumstances apparently more favourable to both.

The more hale complexion, and fuller development of manly growth, in the latter class are very observable but in point of ability for enduring fatigue, and in average duration of life, there is less difference between them and their underground brethren, than is commonly supposed.

The colliers who have been habituated, from childhood, to work in pits where veins of coal are thin, and the workings consequently contracted, have certainly a remarkably stunted appearance, and the boys are commonly of low stature for respective ages but among the great numbers whom I saw and observed attentively, I did not detect a single instance of spinal curvature, or other deformity.

I could not discover that the health of the children, even of seven or eight of age, was materially affected by their daily sublimation of eight or ten hours. Their eyes exhibited no signs of inflammation or weakness and though pallor of countenance is prevalent, it is by no means universal among them.

On the contrary, many of the boys have a robust and even ruddy appearance, after clean water has performed its office on their grim visages. Their general demeanour is cheerful, and they generally profess themselves satisfied with their employment, though always ambitious of advancing to a higher class in the pit, and higher wages.

To some lads of more delicate fibre, and active intellect, underground labour is confusedly irksome and I could not but feel a painful sympathy with several of this description, whose hard fate gives them little hope of any change.

A striking proof that the human constitution becomes reconciled to severe its hardihood, is found in the absolute impunity with which some of the hod boys in ill-drained pits with narrow galleries, continue dragging their loads, day after day, for eight or ten consecutive hours, on hands and knees, along what is, in fact a water drain, though the water may not be more than an inch deep.

John Knight (No.31) is a good illustration of this fact, being a fine hale and stout lad. He declared he never felt any inconvenience from this slavish work, after he had got it over, though the condition of his hands and knees, besmeared with clay and coal dust, sufficiently indicated the sort of pathway he is doomed to traverse, in performing his daily task.

Nothing impressed me more with the idea of vital danger to the health of these laborious children, than the sudden transitions they make from the uniform temperature of the mine, to the external atmosphere, under all its variations. They often emerge, bare chested and bare throated, in a state of copious perspiration, into an atmosphere many degrees lower than that they have been working in, and never seem to think of any precaution. I have observed them hovering, for a few minutes, about a fire near the pit's mouth, as though sensible of a chill but they appear neither to apprehend nor experience any ill effects.

Probably their practice of diligent ablution, after arriving at their homes, the healthy action of the pores, and prevents diseases which might otherwise supervene, even in their hardy constitutions.

The men employed in cutting down the coal are subject to inflammation of bursæ both in the knees and elbows, from the constant pressure and friction on these joints, in their working postures.

Where the seams are several feet thick, they begin by kneeling, and cutting away the exterior portion of the base. They proceed, undermining, till they are obliged to lie down on their sides, in order to work beneath the mass, as far as the arm can urge the pick, for the purpose of bringing down a good head of coal.

In this last posture the elbow forms a pivot, resting on the ground, on which the arm of the workman oscillates as he plies his sharp pick. It is easy to comprehend how this action, combined with pressure, should affect the delicate cellular membrane of the joint, and bring on the disease indicated.

The thin seams of coal are, necessarily, altogether worked in a horizontal posture.

Among the boys glandular affections of the neck and throat are reported to be prevalent and a medical gentleman at Cinderford, Mr. Heane (No.23), considers this form of disease peculiarly frequent, with the young lads in the iron mines and foundries.

Another highly respectable practitioner, Mr. Batten, of Coleford (No.36), considers this tendency to strumous enlargement of the glands, rather endemical to the Forest, than peculiar to any class of employment and, certainly, among many of the more delicate looking boys, whom I examined for the purpose, I met with no very marked case. One of them told me, "our thrawts do swell sometimes, but they do always get well again."

Mr. Batten instances several cases of excessive nervous relaxation in young boys, eager to perform their parts in work of too stern a character for their tender years. One case of epilepsy, from over exertion, was on his list and it is melancholy to notice the death of another boy, only seven years old, from *hæmorrhæa purpurea*, produced by excessive and premature labour in the collieries at Parkend.

It must be borne in mind that these painful and fatal cases, appear to be solely attributable to the excitable and energetic temperament of the patients, not sustained by adequate muscular powers. It is impossible, nevertheless, not to censure the carelessness, or want of feeling, in parents who suffer the natural desire for increased comforts to their families, in the shape of wages, to risk such unnatural sacrifices of health and life.

The poor little boys are eager enough to begin the great business of their lives, earning their daily bread but there ought to be peremptory restrictions against such an undue taxation of their powers, however voluntarily incurred on their part.

Asthmatic, and other bronchial affections, are common amongst the more elderly colliers and miners, which they generally attribute to the use of gunpowder in blasting, and the fine stone dust evolved in the process of boring and sinking.

It is a prevalent opinion among the iron miners, that their work is more healthy than that of the colliers. They are less frequently exposed to deleterious gases, and are generally able to use their limbs more freely in their labour.

The jockey-boys are occasionally exposed to a good deal of water in the iron levels, which dyes their skin and garments of an ochre red. I have seen it quite up to the axles of the waggons but as the boys ride behind the horse, it is only when obliged to jump off, in consequence of some obstruction, that they have to wade through it.

The principal inconvenience suffered in the iron mines, arises from the gunpowder smoke. In the Oakwood mine, from the continual blasting of the rock, the candles were scarcely visible at intervals and on quitting the interior, after passing the principal door, I observed the smoke issuing from the mouth of the air pipe, as from a flue. The miners appeared altogether indifferent to the smother.

Fractures, dislocations, and contusions, are casualties apparently inseparable from mine-work. Habituated to dangerous positions, both young and old acquire a heedless disregard of danger, not more striking to an observer, than unconsciously to themselves. It is true that precaution could not always avert accidents but I have no doubt, from my own observation, as well as the testimony of numerous managers and overlookers, that at least three-fourths of the injuries sustained in collieries might be avoided by the exercise of common prudence.

Though there is an unlimited supply of pit timber, cut into proper lengths for propping or shoring up the heads of coal, during the process of 'under' cutting them, this simple precaution is continually neglected. Perhaps after a recent death, from the sudden fall of the impending mass, the survivors are more cautious but the impression soon passes away, and you see the collier, stretched at his full length, cutting away beneath eight or ten tons of coal, without a single prop, at the risk of its sudden separation by what is termed a *back-crack*, when he knows he must inevitably be crushed to death.

If any mode of legislating effectually on such details could be devised, it would be a most

philanthropic act, that should render the uniform employment of props under coal headings, imperative upon both workmen and masters.

Inattention to the state of the winding rope or chain, and the other apparatus for ascending and descending the shaft, is inexcusable on the part of the overlooker and dangerous places in the roof of the pit, are usually palpable enough to any eye accustomed to inspect them. Still fatal accidents have occurred from gross negligence in all these respects, though no recent case of a rope or chain breaking, when men or boys were suspended by it, has come to my knowledge.

With regard to the painful practice of boys drawing hods, on their hands and knees, there are few instances in which it is necessary and in some of these, perhaps, economy may be suspected of narrowing the feelings of humanity towards the boys, who might easily have more headway provided for them, by a small additional expense to the employer, in removing part of the superstratum, and stowing it away at the sides. (See Mr. Mushet's evidence, also Mr. Davis's, No.43.)

EMPLOYMENT IN THE IRON AND TIN WORKS.

In the iron works, the earliest employment is at the smelting furnace and casting house, where young hands are variously engaged, from the simple occupation shovelling cinders, and carrying ore to the furnaces, to the more elaborate operation of preparing moulds for the metal.

In the manufacturing branch of the trade, boys find ample employment in the smith's forge, as assistants in the hammer and rolling mills, and in performing various subordinate duties suited to their strength and capacities.

At these various employments, they earn from 6s. up to 10s. or 12s. a week. The smallest boy I saw in either of the iron works was nine years of age, and his business was merely picking up cokes, which had fallen from the waggons, in passing from coke-bank to the furnace.

Some of the senior boys are able to earn nearly men's wages, in departments where manual skill is called into action.

The Forest of Dean iron has, at length, acquired a good reputation, after Mr. James Broad, the furnace manager of Messrs. Crawshay and Alloway at the Cinderford works, lays claim, I believe justly, to the merit of being manufacture a supply perfectly satisfactory to the trade.

The manufacture of tin plate employs a large proportion of boys, and furnishes almost the only exception to the absence of female labour, in the various Forest establishments.

Boys are principally employed, in opening or separating the iron plates after being cut to their proper sizes, attending the furnace doors, and dipping, or drawing the prepared plates through the molten grease and tin metal. They also attend occasionally at the shears, and assist in scaling, or beating off the scales from the iron plates after their last heating, which is performed by seizing a number of them, adhering together with a pair of long clippers or tongs, and striking them forcibly upon a flat block.

Their wages vary from 2s. up to 8s. per week, dependent on their skill and dexterity being wholly paid by the piece.

The women and girls rub the tin plates with bran or sawdust, to remove the grease. This is performed in troughs or bins filled with the scouring material, and is by no means a laborious though a very dusty employment. The finishing process is a quick wipe with a piece of woolly sheepskin, and is usually performed by one of the youngest girls, who turns over the plates with astonishing rapidity, piling them in regular order as she proceeds.

The wages of the females average from 5s. to 7s. weekly.

In the iron and tin works, the stated hours of labour, are from six in the morning to six in the evening, with half an hour for breakfast, and one hour for dinner. There is night work in the iron works, from six in the evening to six in the morning with the same periods of respite.

PHYSICAL INFLUENCE OF EMPLOYMENT IN IRON AND TIN WORKS.

There is little, in any part of these trades, calculated to affect either the growth or general

health. Though the young labourers are often exposed to a degree of heat, they work either in open or well ventilated buildings, or where the ambient air is everywhere around them.

The only process in the tin manufacture productive of unpleasant effects to the boys, is that of dipping, or drawing, which keeps the mouth and nostrils over vessels filled with boiling grease, the effluvia of which is more offensive to some than to others (*vide* Nos.3,4,5, and 7), and is certainly very likely to offend the nerves of delicate or dyspeptic stomachs.

This effect is most probable where animal fat is employed but palm-oil has long been extensively used in this process, and its fumes are far less unpleasant. There is, however, some objection to it, on the score of economy, in consequence of its evaporating more freely than animal oil and a combination of the two is now commonly adopted.

The work of the females does not appear capable of doing them any harm, provided they observe common cleanliness, in washing off tile dust that clings to their pores, when they leave work.

Their appearance indicated the common average of health. Some of them are handsome and well formed girls, and when dressed to advantage in their holiday trim, bear comparison with the most blooming of the peasantry.

Accidents in the iron and tin works, consist principally of burns and slight contusions. The shears, which are worked by powerful machinery, sometimes curtail the fingers of careless operators, who look another way whilst laying the plates under their edges. The loss of one or two finger tips, generally operates as a sufficient warning for the future.

I did not remark any gross inattention to fencing off the more dangerous parts of the machinery but there is more precaution in this respect, at some works than at others.

MORAL CONDITION.

On this branch of my report, I must crave permission for a little discursiveness, by way of retrospect at the past, as furnishing a contrast with the present, and grounds of anticipation for the future.

The old Forest laws and customs previously alluded to, and the habits growing out of a secluded and clannish life, naturally led to peculiar notions and misconceptions on various points of moral economy.

The loose manner in which the crown property was formerly protected, led to encroachments, by parties who settled themselves and their families in cottages and enclosures of their own allotting, and who, in the course of years, considered possession quite equivalent to title deeds.

The Forest deer, and sheep also, were regarded as something like common property, and no compunction was manifested at the appropriation to either venison or mutton, when an opportunity occurred.

A common and very ingenious mode of deer slaying, described to me by an old forester, is worthy of relation. A man took a small bundle of sweet hay under his arm, and scattered it at the foot of some umbrageous tree near the haunts of the deer. The caitiff then climbed into the tree, taking with him two or three heavy stones and concealing himself among the branches, silently awaited his prey. No sooner did the unsuspecting deer, attracted by the fragrant bait, commence his feed, than the stone was let fall, with unerring aim, directly between his antlers, stunning him instantly, when the man had only to descend, complete the slaughter and bear away his victim at nightfall, without having incurred any risk of alarm.

But this freebooting for the larder was not the only indication of obscure perceptions, as to the distinction between *menum and tuum*, formerly too prevalent in the Forest.

The royal timber was considered fair booty, to any man who could get possession of it without detection, particularly if a good tree happened to be blown down by a high wind.

As legal punishment could not be inflicted without proof of the timber having been stolen, ingenious methods were not wanting to guard against such a contingency. It was customary to saw off a piece of the butt, before removing the main trunk, and throw it into an old pit or quarry, to be split up at leisure into barrel staves, or wheel spokes, while the most valuable portion of the timber was conveyed away on a carriage.

If encountered by any of the Forest patrol, after the timber was fairly on the public road, a battle was generally the consequence, and broken heads were often exchanged, with no better result than the adventurers bearing off the prize and even if they were overpowered and recognised, both parties were perfectly aware that the stick could not be identified with its parent butt, for want of the corresponding piece which had been concealed, as before related.

Another mode of obtaining an oak or two on occasion, was often successful. One party

of men repaired to a distant part of the forest, making some equivocal demonstrations likely to attract the whole vigilance of the woodwards, whilst a confederate party, proceeding in an opposite direction, were doing the actual mischief by cutting down and carrying away the desired timber without observation.

Such habits must have encouraged very imperfect notions of other moral requirements, besides respect for the property of others. Their very existence absence of either religious instruction, or educational restraint, though indicative of shrewdness and enterprise, capable of being directed to valuable objects.

Is it not surprising to find, that at this period of Forest history, concubinage was a prevalent substitute for marriage, and that illegitimate births were of too common occurrence to attract notice.

The religious observance of the Sabbath was scarcely thought of rural games or vicious revelry, being the regular occupations of the sacred day and a profound ignorance of all moral obligations, pervading a majority of the population.

Churches there were none, except on the extreme outskirts, the great area of the Forest being extra-parochial, though very populous. Schools were almost unknown and the Dissenters, whose Christian zeal had long before supplied the means of religious instruction to various other neglected districts of the kingdom, have done little for this, though the pious exertions of their occasional missionaries into the Forest, deserve honourable mention.

To the pastoral office, with all its watchful, kindly, and holy influences, of the Forest of Dean was a stranger, till within the last thirty years. There was neither invitations to public worship, nor accommodations for worshippers.

A cherished jealousy of all 'foreigners,' confined the social sympathies of the Foresters within their own contracted borders while their hearty contempt for all practices and opinions differing from their own, contributed to the formation of a rugged and untractable character.

Notwithstanding these unfavourable circumstances, the rude Foresters of that day to have ever cherished the same feelings of brotherly kindness towards each other, which continues so honourably to mark their character. They were a brave and a generous race, as far as their social sympathies were permitted to expand by the ungenial influences which surrounded them and some of their local observances, show that they were no strangers, even to the finer affections of our common nature.

I may instance amongst these, the beautiful commemorative practice of decking the graves of their relations, every Palm Sunday, with the choicest Spring flowers disposed in a variety of fanciful, and often tasteful forms. This is surely an amiable custom, and has always been preserved unimpaired.

It was my good fortune to witness these flowery tributes to the departed, in many burial grounds but I shall not soon forget the churchyard at Berryhill, where I went to worship on that day, and was not less delighted by a touching and instructive reference to the practice, in the sermon of my excellent friend the clergyman, than by the poetry and the picturesque of the custom itself.

I fear I may have digressed from the main business of my Report, quite as far as the Board may be disposed to stretch its indulgence. I will, at all events, but come at once to the present moral condition of the Foresters as furnishing a gratifying prospect for the Commission, and for all others interested in the welfare of this interesting people.

Instead of a region nearly destitute of Christian privileges, the Forest is now adorned with three free churches, and their respective school houses. The first was built on Berryhill, in the year 1812, by the Rev. Matthew Proctor, the incumbency of which is now in the Rev. T. R. Garnsey. The other two are at Nailsbridge and Parkend, the Rev. H. Berkin being incumbent of the former, and the Rev. H. Poole of the latter.

A fourth public school has recently been built and endowed, by the liberality of Mr. Protheroe at Cinderford, where a fourth church also is about to be erected, on a spot of ground presented by the same benevolent gentleman.

At Cinderford and Bilson, much religious benefit has been conferred on the population, connected with the mines and iron works, by the labours of the Wesleyan and Independent Dissenters, who are numerous and influential on that side of the Forest. On its south west border, or nearly the opposite side, the Baptists prevail, and at Coleford particularly, constitute a large, respectable, and very useful body, several of the most opulent coal owners being of that persuasion.

Chapels of ease and schools have been established at Coleford, Clearwell, and Bream, the first and second in connection with the parish of Newland, and the third with the extra-parochial church of St. Paul at Parkend.

English Bicknor National School, on the skirts of the Forest, instructs many of the

children from the coal district near Lydbrook, and those employed at the tin works in that village. It has in connection with it two of those valuable but much neglected institutions, infant-schools, to which the rector, the Rev. Edward Field, directs much of his attention.

At Lydney, Whitecliff, and Stanton, there are other national schools. Lydney, however, is not comprehended in the Forest boundaries, and Stanton, though the mother church of the district, stands on its extreme verge, and is quite out of the way of the mining population. The national schools within the Forest borders, altogether offer accommodations for about 1500 children, and actually educate, at this moment, about 850.

In all these schools a sum varying from 2s. to 2s. 6d. per quarter is paid for each child, the parents having the benefit of a 'sliding scale,' unlike that of our corn laws, always descending, in proportion to the number of children they send to be instructed.

These schools are all regularly inspected by the clergyman of their respective localities, who superintends the religious instruction of the children. Bream School forms the only exception. The laborious clergyman of St. Paul's, to which it is an adjunct, having so large a compass of pastoral duty, that he cannot give this school the regular attention he would wish.

The teachers appear to be, at least, as well qualified for their duties as the generality of their class. I could point out several of them as decidedly superior to most I have met with but I am persuaded our public schools will never attain their full utility, till they are universally supplied with teachers more perfectly and systematically trained for their important occupation.

It is a fact by no means encouraging, as regards the desire of parents to make these schools available for their children, that the plan of payment in advance is frequently resorted to, as the only mode of securing the regular attendance of a scholar for a single quarter.

The truth is but too evident, that many parents do not attach due value to the advantages of education, whilst aversion to restraint, natural in all children, gladly seconds the indifference of the parents, and thus the beneficial purposes of these schools are very partially realised.

I was not able to discover that disapprobation of the Church Catechism formed any obstacle to the hearty espousal of their advantages. Indeed, the Forest, properly so called, is so mainly indebted to the Established Church for its religious training, and so strongly attached to her services, that the reasonable objections, made elsewhere, to the compulsory adoption of this manual in our national schools, are rarely to be anticipated here.

Large allowances must be made for parents taking their children from school, at an early age, and setting them to work, under the pressure of poverty, which renders every shilling, and penny, that can be earned by a member of the family, an object of real importance.

Mothers with young families are also under a pardonable temptation often to detain an elder girl from the school to lighten their domestic labours.

Notwithstanding all these hindrances, the leaven of better principles is gradually working through the mass and the old people represent the change in morals and manners, within the last 30 years, as truly thank worthy.

To this effect, the establishment of Sunday-schools has latterly been contributing a large share, by furnishing instruction to many young people who are employed during the week, and who have been put to work at too early an age, to have had any opportunity of acquiring the merest rudiments of knowledge by other means.

These excellent institutions are now found, in every part of the Forest where there is a place of worship. All the churches have them, of course, and the several denominations of Dissenters abound in the same good work.

With one exception, instruction in writing appears to be altogether over looked, in connection with Sunday-school teaching. At Ruardean, and Mitcheldean, the teachers give the children copies, which they write out at home on week-day evenings, taking their copy books to school every Sunday to be examined.*

As nearly as the imperfect returns I have been able to obtain, assisted by my personal inquiries, enable me to calculate, there are about 250 boys under 13 years of age, and about

**A very small proportion of boys employed in the collieries are able to write. Those who have had the advantage of attending a national school furnish the majority of instances. See Mr. J. T. Thomas's Evidence, No.39.*

500 youths over 13 and under 18 years of age, employed in the mineral works of the Forest. Of these somewhere about 200 attend Sunday-schools and as only a small proportion of them have had any education previous to commencing work, it is evident that there remains a great deal of ignorance to remove, and reluctance to be taught still to be overcome.

Thus congratulation at improvement, on the one hand, is encountered by lamentation at indifference to it on the other, as I had occasion to remark, in my various conferences with

Sunday-school teachers and their friends.

Certainly, the uncouth speech and behaviour of the most untaught boys, is very characteristic of a semi-barbarous condition. I could not induce some of them to come near me, others replied to my questions, however good humouredly put, with sullen abruptness and now and then a very wild one fairly took to his heels, as though afraid I was going to kidnap him.

The better taught class, on the contrary, were at once frank and respectful, though perfectly rustic, in their replies, and seemed pleased that 'a gentleman' should take so much interest in their affairs. In the deepest recesses of *Vellet's Level* colliery I met with a young lad who has become a well qualified teacher in the Sunday-school he attended.

No observant man can pass a few weeks in the Forest of Dean, without perceiving, that religious teaching and educational training are gradually working out great advantages, despite the obstacles which confusedly exist. The congregations at the several Forest churches are large and attentive, and there are many communicants at every celebration of the Lord's Supper.

A peaceable obedience to the laws, and respect for the orderly usages of society, are fruits not to be called into question, however imperfect their development.

One great obstruction to the progress of good morals in the Forest, has emphatically pointed out to me by many laymen as well as every clergyman I conversed with. I allude to the beer shops, which abound in every populous nook.

On this head I beg particularly to direct the attention of the Board to the evidence of Mr. Mushet, Mr. J. T. Thomas, and the Rev. John Horlick. Also to a letter on the subject from Mr. Peter Teague, which I transmitted with other minutes from Coleford.

I felt it imperatively my duty to go into this subject, from the disgusting excesses of juvenile intoxication which were related to me. The Rev. Henry Berkin, the incumbent of Trinity Church, who has grown old in the service of the Forest population, declared the beer shops were doing more to counteract his religious labours, than any other source of evil. He mentioned having seen boys 12 years of age 'staggering drunk', an outrage on decent morals unheard in the 'old times,' with all their defects.*

Perhaps the want of resources for unoccupied time, is one incentive to the rural setting so justly reprobated. Mr. Thomas (No.39) observes, that '*the Forest freeholders rarely encourage these places, preferring to stay at home after they come from the mines, and cultivate their own pieces of ground.*' A wider diffusion of education, would open many new resources, calculated to dispel the seductions of these tipping houses.

It is remarkable, that neither over their ale, nor on other occasions, are the Foresters addicted to political discussions. The Monmouthshire Chartists discovered this, much to their chagrin, when they sent a deputy in 1839 to make converts among the loyal miners, for he was received so ungraciously, that he thought it expedient to decamp 'without tuck of drum,' or loss of time.

The recent Act of Parliament for settling the titles of the small free holders, by confirming the most ancient encroachments, and legalising others on the payment of easy sums, has given great satisfaction and the arrangements now in progress, by the Mineral Commissioners, for deciding the boundaries of mines, promise to be equally acceptable.

These beneficial applications of modern legislation, are calculated to add force to other impulses, in the direction of moral and social improvement.

**On this subject the evidence of Mr. Goold (No.14) has the appearance of conflicting with that of the above named gentleman but it should be borne in mind that Mr. Goold chiefly refers to a set of workmen in an extensive and well disciplined concern, forming a community located around the residence of the manager.*

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

The ages, numbers, and employment of the children were, in all cases, perfectly open to my inquiry and observation. The only jealousy appeared to be on the part of the parents, who, particularly when the ages of children attending the Sunday-schools were inquired into, occasionally manifested a vague apprehension, that Government had some design either of drafting the young foresters into the army or navy, or sending them out on some colonisation scheme.

There is a great uniformity in the nature of employment, hours of work, and time for meals. Where the coal lies in very narrow seams, a longer time is required to get out a given quantity. Night work is not very prevalent, and where it occurs the same set of hands never work by day.

Sunday work exists only in the iron works, and at charcoal burning in the woods. The difficulty of obviating this undesirable practice, in the process of iron smelting, is stated to be insuperable (vide Mr. Alloway's evidence, No.22). On extraordinary emergencies, there may be a few hands sometimes employed on Sunday in the mines, but this is an exception to the general practice.

The wages of the children, and younger lads, are generally paid to their parents but many of the older lads, as soon as their wages reach 9s. a week, choose to receive their own wages and maintain themselves.

I found it was not uncommon for them to return to the parental roof, after trying other quarters, and discovering that their economical mothers made the money go further, than they could do themselves.

In some cases, it is clearly for the moral benefit of the young, that they should live separately from their parents, where the latter are ignorant and immoral, whilst the son knows his duty, and has a religious wish to discharge it. It is to be feared, however, that the more common motive for seeking another home, is to escape from wholesome restraint.

The payment of wages in the Forest appears to be regular in its periods, and generally in money, which the receiver may spend where he pleases but truck shops still exist in connection with some of the works, and are by no means popular, though no specific case of unfair charges was named to me (vide Mr. Mushet's evidence).

There can be no doubt that one great inducement to the practice of paying wages in articles of food and clothing, has been a paucity of capital, which can be advantageously eked out by obtaining credit for goods, so readily granted on personal faith, whereas credit for cash, is to be had of the banker, only on available security.

The adults in the Forest, have mostly grown up in the occupations they still follow. Some boys, who have disliked underground labour, watch their opportunities to catch at some other employment, and are found in after life, either in the woods and quarries, or iron works.

There is no perceptible difference, between the relative condition of the youth in all these various employments. Their modes of living are similar, and their decent appearance on Sundays is much alike. As a matter of course, some families are more remarkable for their cleanly and orderly habits than others.

Some few wretched beings, belonging to deeply impoverished families, I saw without any change of clothing. These are mostly the sons of widows left with other small children, and little to depend upon for their subsistence, beyond the scanty earnings of these poor ragged lads.

It is matter of astonishment, how many of these poor people contrive to fill so many mouths, and to cover so many backs, at a period of depression in trade like the present, when the colliers are not permitted to work more than three or four days in the week.

I have a few more remarks to offer on the subject of public instruction, which does appear to me, after a somewhat intimate acquaintance with the state of things in the Forest, to be by far the most valuable agent, for its further advancement on the scale of moral improvement.

At the national schools, the usual routine of reading, writing, arithmetic, and needlework, only is taught, with the exception of that connected with the parish of Newland, at Whitecliff, where the elementary principles of grammar, and an explanatory spelling book, also English history in the first class, have been introduced with advantage.

A few evening schools exist in the Forest, and some of the juvenile miners attend them after their work. As they are rarely later than three or four o'clock p.m. in returning to their homes, ample time is afforded them for such introduction I am inclined to think, if a few evening schools, with well qualified teachers, under a proper system of remuneration and supervision, were established by authority, they would attract scholars, and have a most valuable influence in forming the character of the rising generation.

It is a gratifying and encouraging fact, that some of the colliery boys who attend the Baptist Sunday-school at Coleford, are in the habit of walking three or four miles to it, taking their dinners with them, that they may have the advantage of attending in the afternoons as well as mornings.

The national schools of the Forest, would be rendered more effective than they are, if better sustained by funds, out of which suitable rewards for merit might periodically bestowed, to a greater extent than is now practicable. These extra-parochial schools are of vast importance to a great mass of population, and the burden of them is thrown too much on a poorly endowed

clergy, who can ill bear the drain of continual demands on their benevolence, and whose useful labours far transcend those of any rich pluralist I ever heard of, though their highest stipend not exceed £120 per annum.

When the substantial benefits conferred on the Forest population, and on patriotic cause of public peace, and social order, by these 'faithful men,' present themselves to my view, contrasted with their narrow temporal resources, I know not whether most to venerate their disinterested zeal and Christian charity, or to regret that their finances are not more commensurate, with the wide circle of their truly pastoral beneficence.

I will now close this summary of facts and observations, derived from the sojourn in this district, to which the duties of my appointment introduced me. A review of the period so occupied, only strengthens my original impression, that Her Majesty possesses, in the Forest of Dean, one of the finest mineral districts, and decidedly the most picturesque woodland region, in this fair isle, peopled by loyal and kindly, however uncultured, natures, that the industrious miners require only the natural operation of enlightened improvements, in the laws affecting our commercial relations, to be made happy with a sufficiency of life's needful arts and that the young Foresters stand in need of nothing so much, as educational training, to prepare them for the rational enjoyment of a better condition, which I trust awaits them and to raise them into a thriving community of thinking men, good Christians, and faithful subjects.

I have the honour to remain, Gentlemen,

Your most obedient servant,

(Signed) ELIJAH WARING.

EVIDENCE COLLECTED BY E. WARING, ESQ.

FOREST OF DEAN.

LYDNEY TIN WORKS.

March 16, 1841.

No.1 John James, Esq., carrying on Tin plate Works and Rolling mill at Lydney under the firm of John James and Son.

We employ about a dozen children under 13 years of age, the youngest eight or nine years old, say a dozen lads, and as many girls, above 13, and under 18 years of age. The hours of work are from eight in the morning to six in the evening for the girls, some preparation being necessary before they can begin their labours. The men and boys work from six to six. There is no night work and they are allowed half an hour for breakfast and an hour for dinner. They usually take those meals in the works, except a few who live close by. The boys open iron plates after shearing, draw and list tin plates, attend furnace doors, and act as sledge boys in the smith's forge. The girls scour and rub the tin plates. I do not consider any part of the process injurious to health. One boy was killed, about seven years ago, by incautiously and needlessly coming into contact with a rolling mill. Fingers, or fingers ends, are occasionally amputated by the shears whilst the boys are heedlessly looking away from the work. No boy under 13 is allowed to oil the gudgeons, or attend to any machinery while in motion. We never have had an accident from the practice. All our work is job or piece work. Some of the youngest boys do not earn more than from 2s. to 5s. a week. They earn money in proportion to their skill and quickness. Boys over 13 earn from 5s. to 10s. a week, the girls earn from 5s. to 7s. a week. We have no girls under 13 in our employ. The wages are always fixed by ourselves, but they are paid by the men who employ the children under them. We admit of no corporal punishment. It is a rule with us never to receive back any individual who has been discharged for bad conduct. I consider the general health of the children quite equal to that of the population at large. There is a national school at Lydney under the patronage of Mrs. Bathurst, of Lydney Park. There is also a Sunday-school held in the town hall, at which my son always attends, and one of our clerks is the master, regularly conducting the children to church. There are numerous dame-schools, and two adult schools, in Lydney, at low charges. perhaps 6d. per week. I should think not more than a moiety of the children, and juniors in our employ, attend the Sunday-school.

Mem.- Only two processes in the tin plate manufactory appear to me at all likely to affect the health. One is the pickling of the iron plates in a strong infusion of sulphuric acid, the fumes of which sometimes affect the eyes and the stomachs of men employed in that branch. Boys are never so employed. The other is dipping and drawing the plates through boiling grease, preparatory to tinning. At this the boys frequently work, and the fumes are certainly offensive, particularly where animal fat is employed. When palm oil is used, unmixed with tallow, the smell is not unpleasant but the greater volatility of this oil, when heated, is said to render it less economical than tallow, or an admixture of the two. In either case the free circulation of air, through the open sheds in which the work is carried on, must materially correct any injurious tendency of these evaporations. I have not discovered that any but boys of delicate constitutions, suffer more than a temporary inconvenience from them.

No.2 Mr. Charles Hathaway, aged 85, Manager of Messrs. James's Tin Works at Lydney, also superintends the Church of England Sunday-school.

I have been in the works from my boyhood. I do not observe any permanent ill effect on the health of the boys and girls employed in our works. For a few days, when they first come, they appear to suffer a little from the dust and heat, but it soon goes off by habit. Whenever the children use profane language, I reprove them severely for it, and reason with them on its

sinfulness. The girls use quite as much bad language as the boys and the girls are too frequently unchaste in their conduct. Illegitimate children are not frequent. One young woman has lately been dismissed on that account. I am sorry to say there is too general propensity to stealing coal and wood from the works.

The children do not manifest a disposition to avail themselves of the Sunday-school to the extent I could wish. Their parents often send them, but they play truant on the road. Books are given to the more diligent scholars, as rewards of merit.

In most cases they are cleanly in their habits, some are contented with being always dirty. We have one whole family belonging to the latter class. There are two sets of privies in the works, originally appropriated to the separate sexes, but it is difficult to make them mind this distinction. I never heard of the boys and girls using them at the same time.

No.3 Samuel Pritchard, aged 14 next April.

He has worked four years in the Lydney Tin Works and says the smoke from the grease pots makes him feel sick so he cannot eat his dinner one day in two. He has not mentioned this to the manager. He was quite healthy before he came into the tin works. He went there at his father's desire. His father is a labourer in the works, earning 12s. a week. When at full work earns 6s. 10d. a week. He has 21/2d. for every three boxes. He draws the plates out of the grease. He reads and writes and goes to the Sunday-school and to church. He is never struck by the overlookers. Mr. Hathaway, and all, treat them very well always.

Mem.- This boy appears to have delicate stamina, but is well grown.

No.4 Edward Jones, aged 12 last February.

He has worked one year at the Lydney Tin Works and likes his work very well. He is a lister, i.e. melts off the ridge of molten tin collected in the lower edge of the tin plate after dipping. He earns 5s. 6d. a week. He can read and write and went to a boarding school at Aylburton. His father is a sorter in the works, and earns from 30s. to 40s. a week. He has a class of little boys at Mr. Nicholson's Sunday-school,* and goes to the Baptist chapel. He is very healthy, and does not find the smell of the hot grease disagree with him. He thinks the boys in the works who do not attend the school are not so diligent as those who do.

**Mr. Thomas Nicholson, of Lydney, is the principal agent of Edward Protheroe, Esq., and honourably distinguished for his general intelligence, usefulness, and benevolent Christian character. I am much indebted to him for many kind attentions.*

Mem.- This is a superior kind of boy, in manners and person, and appears remarkably healthy.

No.5 Samuel Whittington, aged 14 next May.

He has worked in the Lydney Tin Works about three years and draws the plates out of the grease. He likes his work and does not find the smell of the hot grease make him sick. He earns 6s. to 10s. a week. His father is a roller in the works. He reads a little and goes to the Sunday-school and to church.

Mem.- This is a very robust, ruddy-visaged boy.

No.6 John Jenkins, aged 16 last November.

He sorts the plates before they are pickled and has been at this work three or four months. He worked with his father in the scaling room for four or five years. He earns 5s. a week and earned the same in the scaling-room. He is paid by the week. The boys who work by the piece earn most money. I take my wages to my mother, father's dead. I have one brother earns the same. There are five little sisters at home. He can read and write and goes to Mr. Nicholson's Sunday-school and to chapel regularly. He thinks the boys and girls who have not learnt to read, and do not go to the Sunday-school, are more idle and 'more wickeder' than the rest.

No.7 John Turner, aged 15 last October.

He is a lister in the Lydney Tin Works, and earns 5s. 6d. a week. He would rather work out in the yard, because it agrees with him better. He does not like the smell of the hot grease and cannot eat his dinner very well after it. He has worked at listing two months and was four years in the scaling room. Some of the boys never get used to the smell. He always ate his victuals very well before he worked in it. He goes between four and five in the morning to get the pots ready, i.e. to light the fires and put in the grease and begins work at eight, and leaves off at six. He has an hour for dinner. He reads a little and attends Mr. Nicholson's Sunday-school and chapel.

Mem.-This boy's appearance is delicate.

HOPWELL and MILES'S COLLIERIES, near COLEFORD.

March 16, 1841.

No.8 David Davies, Esq., of Althorpe House, Sydney, Lessee and Worker of the Hopwell and Miles's Level Collieries, near Coleford.

He employs about a dozen lads, from 13 to 18 years of age, the youngest is about 13 years old. Their first work is to open and shut doors in the levels, at 6d. a day. They next drive a horse, at 1s. a day, and 1s. 6d. a day when on the bottom stage, having two sets of trams to manage there. Their hours of work are from seven to four, with one hour for dinner. They eat their dinners in the pit, where there is good spring water. There is no night work. They are generally smokers. The pits are well ventilated and firedamp is unknown in the Forest, and there is very little chokedamp. The wages are paid by myself. The parents generally receive the wages till they exceed 1s. 6d. a week. The boys have good health.

There is good provision for their education in national schools, at Parkend, and at Breme. All our boys go to the Sunday-school. He supplies the Breme school with coal, and Mr. Protheroe* supplies that at Parkend, both gratuitously. The parents generally encourage the children to go to school. Some parents have learnt to read themselves, since these schools were established.

PARKEND COAL WORKS, carried on by the PARKEND COAL COMPANY.

No.9 Mr. David Gethin, Clerk to the Works, son of Mr. Hiram Gethin, Manager, who is from home.

He has been engaged nine years at these works and employs no girls but has from 100 to 150 boys. The youngest is from six to seven years old. The youngest boys mind doors in the pit. There are from 60 to 80 lads over 13 and under 18 years of age. The hours of work are from six to six. Night work is carried on occasionally, perhaps 10 or 12 times in a year. Half an hour at 10 for breakfast and an hour at dinner are allowed for meals. Those who work underground take their meals there. The workings are well ventilated. Water is abundant, which we pump out with three steam engines of 50 horse power each. These keep the workings quite dry. There is no effect on the eyesight is produced by the long exclusion from daylight to which the colliers are subjected. The boys are generally healthy. Not one fatal accident has occurred here since eight or nine years ago, when a man was killed by the fall of a heading of coal. Other accidents, such as fractures, dislocations, &c. have all happened from the same cause or portions of the roof falling. It is always the men's own fault if the headings are not well shored up, and the roof also, wherever it is dangerous, as they have an unlimited

**Edward Protheroe, Esq., of Newnham, the most spirited and persevering as well as the largest, mineral proprietor in the Forest, who must have embarked an immense capital, in his various undertakings.*

supply of timber for such purposes. Young boys are never employed to attend to the machinery. The wages of boys and young persons vary from 7d. up to 3s. a day, the latter sum

is only earned by lads of 18 or near it, who haul out the hods of coal into the horseway. These hauliers are paid by the headsmen, the others by the company. The younger boys have their wages paid to their parents. After the age of 15 they generally like to be independent of their parents. They generally remain with their parents, allowing them a price for their board, till they marry, or go to work elsewhere. We allow of no beating or ill treatment towards the boys. There is a national school here, under the special superintendence of the Rev. Henry Poole, perpetual curate of St. Paul's, to which Mr. Protheroe contributes, and supplies coals gratuitously. There is another school at Breme, where many of our boys live, also under Mr. Poole's superintendence. There is no other day school, but there are Sunday-schools both here and at Breme. I should say that from 50 to 100 boys attend the Sunday-school here, besides those who go to Breme. They are taken to church regularly. There is a surgeon's club in the works, to which the married men subscribe 9d. and the single men 6d. per month. This entitles the whole family to medical aid, except in cases of midwifery, for which 10s. 6d. is paid in each case. There is also a subscription among the underground workmen of 1s. per month, for the benefit of those who meet with any disabling accidents in the pits. The boys are too much addicted to the use of profane language.

No.10 George Wintle, 10 years of age.

He has worked in the Parkend Colliery not quite two years, dares say a year and a half. He minds the pit's mouth, tackling up, that is pulling the chains through the rings in the empty trams going down. The trap doors over the pit are always shut when this is done. Has worked at hodding. He used to haul the hods, down a steep way, easy enough and likes to work underground better than at the top. It's always warm underground. Earns 6s. a week, which is paid to his father. He cannot write, but reads in the Testament and goes to the Sunday-school and to church. He eats a good dinner underground, as good as on the top. He has bread and cheese for dinner, meat and tatures for supper after work is over.

Mem.- This boy is a good specimen of a hearty colliery boy. The general appearance of the boys in these works is healthy.

PARKEND IRON WORKS, carried on by the FOREST OF DEAN IRON COMPANY.

March 17, 1841.

No.11 Mr. John Broad.

He has managed these works since last December and has been a manager ever since 1821. He has been engaged in iron works for 28 years. There are no girls employed, only five or six boys under 13 years of age. Their employment is unloading coal, filling mine boxes for charging the furnace, filling cinders, and assisting the moulders. There are about as many lads over 13 and under 18. The boys under 13 earn from 6s. to 13s. per week. The older lads get from 10s. to 14s. per week. There is nothing injurious to health in their employment, excepting working by night, and they never work two nights consecutively, rarely exceeding 12 hours altogether in the 24, when so employed. He has worked at nearly every branch of the work himself and never felt the worse for it. Of course accidents will happen sometimes, but they are generally the result of carelessness. We have had one accident lately of a peculiar character. Our furnace sometimes slips, i.e. the load in her slips down, and, falling on the blast, a rebound is occasioned by the elasticity of the compressed air. This forces a large volume of flame out at the top of the furnace, which endangers every person standing near it. Two men, one a workman of ours, the other a stranger, have been thus severely burnt within the last three months. They are now recovered from their injuries. With this exception, no serious accident has occurred here within my knowledge. The hours of work from six to six. Some of the boys and lads attend the Sunday-school. I cannot say they go to a place of worship very regularly. He thinks they are mostly able to read. They are, generally speaking, mild and steady boys, very attentive to their work. He thinks evening school would be beneficial to the boys engaged in the works of this neighbourhood. He considers the parents, generally speaking, inclined to encourage their children in attending school. The whole number of hands in these works is about 50.

No.12 James Birt, aged 14 years.

He works in Parkend Iron Works and helps father throw the cinders. He has worked here two years and likes his work very well. He has bread and cheese for dinner, and taters and meat for supper. He cannot read and does not go to the Sunday-school, because he and his father work every Sunday half a day one Sunday in the morning, and the other in the afternoon. He goes to church every other Sunday, when they have no morning work. He would like to learn to read.

No.13 John Lewis, aged 12 last October.

He dares say he has worked a year in the Parkend Iron Works. Works at moulding with his father but has no wages, but merely helps his father. He can read the Testament and does not go to the Sunday-school. He does not attend any place of worship. Is circumstanced on Sundays like the last examinant. He never says his prayers at home but thinks it would be more proper to do so. He repeats the Lord's Prayer correctly.

Mem.- These boys are generally very bad chronologists, and can rarely give a very distinct account of the time they have been employed, or at school previously. Few of them can tell their age precisely.

The Sunday work appears to be an evil, to a great extent, inseparable from iron-works. The manager of this concern is a religious man, and laments the necessity, but does not see any remedy for it.

COAL WORKS and IRON MINES at BILSON, &c., carried on by the PARKEND COAL COMPANY.

March 18, 1841.

No.14 Mr. Aaron Goold, Manager of Coal Works and Iron Mines at Bilson, carried on by the Parkend Coal Company.

He has conducted these works ever since the year 1824. They employ about 700 hands, about 40 boys under 13 years of age and about 200 between the ages of 13 and 18. Their employment is the same as in other mines. Our main vein is thicker than at Parkend, which enables us to use trollies, small trucks upon wheels, which eases the labour of the hod-boys. In other veins the work is the same as at Parkend. The boys are very healthy. The hours of work are from six to six, but they often do not come to work till seven. At one of the pits the work is day and night, but there are two sets of men employed. The pits are well ventilated and quite dry. An engine pump, of 140 horse power, is always at work.

He thinks that not more than six men have been killed underground during the last 17 years. Two were killed by the roof falling, one by being run over in the pit, two tumbled down the shaft [about 60 fathoms], and another, whilst imprudently riding on a load of coal, struck his head against the roof and dislocated his neck. There is an abundant supply of pit timber for propping and four men are regularly employed cutting it into proper lengths. The wages of the boys and young people run from 4s. up to 2ls. a week. The lads of 15, all of them, like to make themselves independent of their parents. Most of them continue to board and lodge with their parents after receiving their own wages but they frequently go to other quarters. Sometimes the boys, being better taught than their parents, like better habits than they find at home. On the contrary, some boys are wild, and like to escape from their parents oversight.

There are two national schools, one at Cinderford, built by Mr. Protheroe, who also provides a master and mistress, another at Trinity Church, near Drybrook, under the particular care of the Rev. Henry Berkin. There are numerous dame-schools in the neighbourhood. All the denominations have Sunday-schools, the Church, Wesleyans, and Independents. Most of the boys attend one or other of the Sunday-schools, and go to their respective places of worship regularly twice a day. About 250 boys and girls are regular attendants at the Wesleyan Sunday-school. They have books given them, as rewards for merit. At the Wesleyan chapel they have a treat of tea and cake annually. He believes the same is done at the Independent chapel. The parents, on the whole, encourage their children's attendance at the schools. The boys and young men are much improved in their habits, within the last few years. They are more attentive to

their work and to their religious duties, also less given to drunkenness.

There is a surgeon's club, to which the married men contribute 3d. a month more than at Parkend, in consequence of the surgeon not thinking himself sufficiently remunerated, and threatening to give up attending the works. The married men, valuing his skill very highly, hereupon volunteered the additional subscription. There is also a benefit club among the underground workmen, the same as at Parkend.

Mem.- I understand the practice of employing only surgeon-accoucheurs, is universal throughout the works.

The supply of pit timber is not only plentiful, but strong and durable in quality, being straight and Stout oak.

No.15 Emanuel Beach, aged 13 last November.

He has worked in the Bilson Mine Works about a year and a half and his employment is jockeying out of the level, i.e. driving the horse attached to the tram carts. He earns 9s. a week and is used to work in the colliery. He likes one work as well as the other. He can read the Bible and has had three teas up at Mr. Goold's by going to the Sunday-school. [See last examinant.] He gets tired at night when he works hard. It is very wet in some parts of the mine, up to his knees sometimes. There is no engine at work pumping engine. It is not yet ready. He never catches cold at his work.

Mem.- The water which accumulates in the iron mines is never allowed, so far as I have observed, to affect the workings, but as it runs off by the horseway, and so out by the mouth of the level, it frequently overflows the road, and I have often seen it up to the axles of the carts. The jockey boys generally, indeed constantly, ride on the foremost cart, but have occasion to get off sometimes, when obstacles occur, such as shifted tram plates, or a lump of mine fallen from a preceding train, and when this happens in a wet place, into the water they must go but none of them appear to mind it.

No.16 Frederick Ledbeater, aged 15 last birthday.

He works in the Bilson Coal Works and hauls hods by leathers over the shoulders and breast, attached to chains. The hods are placed on trollies. He earns 2s. a day and likes his work and has always liked it, and went steadily to it. 'The pit is quite dry where we do get the coal. Father's dead, and I do live with mother. I do give all my money to mother, and her do give me back what her got a mind to.' Would not wish to live away from his mother on any account.

Mem.- This boy reads, goes to the Wesleyan Sunday-school and chapel. He is a hardy little fellow, with a good physiognomy.

No.17. Samuel Elton.

He works in the colliery at Bilson. He thinks he is 12. [I should say not more than 10 or 11.] He minds doors in the pit and has done so since the beginning of the winter. He likes his work very well. Sometimes he amuses himself by playing whilst waiting for the turns of trams, sometimes makes a cootch and lies down. Another door boy works about 100 yards off, and they sometimes get a game of play together but not very often. Has bread and cheese for his dinner in the pit, or bread and butter. He always gets meat and tatur for supper after he goes from work. He reads, and attends the Wesleyan Sunday-school and chapel. He always has a candle with him in the pit.

Mem.- I have since had opportunities of observing that the door boys amuse themselves, agreeably enough, by taking rides to and fro between the doors, with the returning trains, thus getting a chat with the drivers or jockey boys, and giving themselves the benefit of locomotion. The above examinant has an open, good countenance, and appears very healthy, as indeed do all the boys I saw in these works.

COLLIERIES near COLEFORD, carried on by PETER TEAGUE and Co.

March 24, 1841.

No.18 Mr. Peter Teague, Managing Partner in the firm of Peter Teague and Co., carrying on three collieries, viz. Hopewell, New Engine, and Prosper pits, near Coleford.

We employ from 60 to 70 hands but have no young boys. There are only five under 18 years of age. We have no hodding, the horseway going quite into the headings. One pit is worked by level, the others by shaft. The men traverse the shaft sometimes in carts, sometimes by looping themselves in the chains. The workings are well ventilated. Rarely interrupted by bad air, principally on getting into old workings, and then the free supply of fresh air speedily overcomes it. A good deal of water in wet seasons, which is carried off by drainage. The workings are generally quite dry. None but slight accidents have occurred, and all these have arise from carelessness in propping the headings. Plenty of pit timber is provided and we have much more reason to complain of the colliers using too little than too much. The hour of work, are nominally, from six to six, but the work is usually done in seven or eight hours. All paid for by the ton, and no night work. The men are generally moral in their conduct, some of them are religious men. Few of the adults can read, not one in six. The young persons all read. We have no vein in work less than from four to five feet thick. There is a surgeon's club in the works and married men subscribe 8d., and single men 6d. per month. The rule is, that every young hand getting 1s. a day pays 6d. a month to the doctor. There is no benefit club peculiar to the workmen. Nearly all the colliers are smokers. They would rather go without one of their daily meals, than be deprived of their pipe of tobacco. Some of them are intemperate occasionally, but generally speaking they are sober men. There can be no doubt the beneficial effects of the Sunday-schools on the morals and manners of the juniors. A large Sunday-school is held in the Baptist Chapel here, which is well attended.

Mem.- Mr. Teague is a man of great benevolence, and is highly respected. He has since addressed me by letter on the subject of beer shops in the Forest, which appear to have a mischievous tendency, in counteracting the effects of educational and religious instruction, to a greater extent than is observable in a town population.

**REDBROOK TIN WORKS, parish of NEWLAND, near COLEFORD,
carried on by Mrs. SARAH WHITEHOUSE.**

March 24, 1841.

No.19 Mr. William Wright, Clerk of the Works.

He will have filled that post 10 years next April. He employs about 100 hands. About half a dozen boys under 13 years of age. About 20 lads and girls between 13 and 18. Sixteen girls are employed, all in cleaning and rubbing plates. The boys do the same work as in other iron works and never oil gudgeons, or are employed about machinery when in motion. They have had no fatal or serious accident in the works. Hours of work from six to six. No night work at any time for children. The girls earn from 7s. to 8s. a week, all by piece work. The boys earn about the same. Lads of 18 get men's wages. The major part are paid by the employer. The youngest hands are paid by their parents, or other adults under whom they work. The parents of the younger ones receive their wages. He considers the character of the females quite correct as regards chastity. Their habits are cleanly and orderly. The boys conduct themselves pretty well. Some are unruly enough, but not vicious. There is a free school at Newland under an endowment. There are several dame schools here. There is also a Sunday-school, pretty well attended, conducted by persons of various religious denominations. He is not aware that any of the young people cannot read. He believes they all do. Nearly all the elder ones can write.

No.20 Mr. Whitehouse.

Who is manager of the works, and son of the proprietor, fully concurs in Mr. Wright's statements. He admits no boy under 10 years of age, and always discharges his workmen for drunkenness. He does not approve of employing females at all, but it is the custom of the trade

and their great anxiety to obtain the work renders it difficult to avoid. No girl is admitted whose moral character will not bear close examination.

They have a surgeon's club, to which the uniform subscription for the workmen, married and single, is 1s. 3d. a month. Boys and girls pay only 10d. a month. The workmen had a benefit club among themselves, which gave 7s. a week to the members in case of sickness or accident. It was broken up in consequence of the healthy young men grudging the contribution, and, being a strong body, they outvoted the seniors.

**CHEMICAL WORKS, GEORGE SKIPP and Co., at CANNOP BRIDGE,
near COLEFORD.**

They employ no young persons.

**LYDBROOK TIN WORKS, FORGE, and ROLLING-MILLS, carried on
by PEARCE and ALLAWAY.**

No.21 Mr. Allaway, Managing Partner, examined.

We employ, perhaps, half a dozen boys of eight years old, and 12 of various ages under 13, about a dozen young persons under 18 years of age, about 18 females, only a few of them under full ages. They are quite moral, as far as I know. We do not keep them if they act otherwise. There is a large subscription school at Bicknor, carried on by the Rev. Mr. Field, vicar of the parish, which educates about 200 boys and girls. There are Sunday-schools, both at Bicknor and Lydbrook, among the Dissenters as well as the church. A good many of our young people attend the Sunday-schools, and are, on the whole, well conducted. We employ altogether about 100 hands. We have a powerful water wheel, and a 60 horse power steam engine to work the rolls, shears, &c.

Mem.- I remarked that the flywheel in the tin works, near which some of the lads are employed, was remarkably well fenced off, evincing great care to prevent accidents. I saw all the boys and girls at their work, which corresponds with that of other iron plate, and tin works. Their appearance was generally healthy. I found some of them, who were the sons of widows not provided with a proper change of dress for Sundays. Their wages correspond with those at the other tin works. Generally the young people in this district look very neat and clean on Sundays. Their customary upper dress is a round frock either blue or white.

**IRON WORKS at CINDERFORD, carried on by the CINDERFORD
IRON COMPANY.**

No.22 Stephen Allaway, Manager.

Have three furnaces worked by a blast engine 120 horse power. We employ about 100 hands, about 20 boys under 13 years of ages, and 6 or 7 from 13 to 18 years old. The youngest boy 15 is 9 and there are several about 11. The 9 year old boy works at picking up coke that falls from the tram carts conveying it to the furnaces. The other younger boys shovel up the mine [or ore] and cinders. One boy of 13 assists the moulders.

The majority of the boys can read, and about half of them can write.

About eight boys are employed on alternate Sundays. Sunday work is unavoidable, for properly maintaining the furnaces. About two years ago the blast furnaces were stopped on Sundays, throughout the kingdom, by a general agreement of the iron masters. The principal effect was the production of less iron but the furnaces could not be stopped at all times without serious injury to the metal, by letting down the heat in the process of smelting. They have no Sunday work but what is absolutely necessary. The boys are healthy. There is a distinct set for night work, who rest by day. He does not observe any ill effect on their general health from

night work. They take the nights on alternate weeks. It is true that this change renders one long turn necessary but the boys generally get substitutes. The men work the long turn, i.e. from six on Sunday morning to six on Monday evening. The employment of men instead of boys, in those parts of the process where they work, would not be compatible with necessary economy in the manufacture. The boys also perform the description of work more easily than men could do it, the posture required being stooping.

No fatal accidents have occurred. The last 'Gloucester Journal' reported a case of death which was altogether untrue. Sometimes a man burns his foot badly, by stepping into hot cinders from the furnace.

There is a surgeon's club, to which the married men contribute 3d. and single men and boys 1d. per week.

Mem - I saw and conversed with every boy and lad in these works and carefully looked for any instance of bowed back, or other deformity, which might proceed from early labour in a bending posture, but saw none. The fact is, the body is bent and erected again in such regular succession, that no such effect can well result. Some were rather pale, but it was not the peculiar pallor of disease. Their general appearance was healthy and active. All seemed well pleased with their work and wages. Some of them answered my questions with intelligence and promptitude, superior to the colliery boys in general. They mostly attend the Wesleyan Sunday-school, which has long been established in the neighbourhood, and has evidently supplied nearly the whole instruction in reading to the working classes. Mr. Protheroe's recently established school at Cinderford, is likely to become a great benefit for the future.

No.23 William Heane, Esq., Surgeon.

He has been in practice at Cinderford 10 years and observes the most relevant complaint among the boys in the works, is scrofula in a mild form. He does not remark the same among the agricultural population. The glandular swellings in the neck usually disappear about the age of manhood. It is a very mild form of struma. There are very few children in this vicinity employed in agriculture. A few burns, principally on the feet, are the only accidents that have required surgical aid.

Mem.- I incline to think the frequent contrasts of temperature, to which boys are necessarily exposed in iron works, one side of the body hot and the other cold, sufficient to account for the frequency of glandular afflictions.

No.24 John Williams, aged about 47.

March 30th.

He is a mine haulier to the Cinderford Iron Works, and farms some land and has known these works since their first erection. He considers the character of the workmen greatly improved within the last 32 years. They are more civilised in their habits and most part of them attend places of worship, occasionally, at least, when he first knew them, they thought very little of their duty to God. There are now very few boys and girls who do not to School, either Sundays or week days. Some go to both; has several of his own who do. He thinks the parents take an increasing pride in sending their children to school, not liking to see their neighbour's children wiser than their own. He thinks the young men who have worked in mines when boys, about as strong and healthy as other young men. The mine boys here do not carry the ore on billies. He is a native of Breconshire, and has worked iron ore and coal in Wales and considers the Forest of Dean a far healthier district for work. The coal makes less smoke, and the air is purer. He knew Cinderford, when there were only half a dozen houses here, now there are at least 300.

BIRCH HILL LEVEL COAL WORKS, at FUTTRILL, near COLEFORD, carried on by JOHN BLANCH and Co.

No.25 Mr. John Blanch, managing Partner.

He has been a manager of the works 22 years. These are about the oldest pits in the Dean Forest now in work. They employ about 22 hands. One boy, about 11 years of age, works with his brother at the headings, filling the coal. There are four between 13 and 18, two fill, the other two drive the ponies. They have no doors in use at present, the air working round the different headings so as to ventilate the pit sufficiently without doors. In one spot the bad air prevails so much that an air trunk has been placed across, i.e. under, the main road to carry it off from workings to an air shaft. The coal is worked wholly by level. One working is wet, the remainder are quite dry. They use boards over the wet workings to protect the men. Sometimes they get rheumatism.

Men were killed, 25 years ago, by the roof falling in. There are some dangerous joints in the roof which is otherwise solid rock. Another man was killed in the same way four years ago and another last week, by a heading coming down suddenly. He lived for several hours. A few cases of fractures and dislocations have occurred in a similar way. The man who attends the roads is required to watch the roof, as part of his duty. There is no hodding. Two of the boys read a little, the others do not. The youngest goes to the Baptist Sunday-school at Coleford and they are all in good health. Two of them earns. 4d. a day, the others about 18d. a day. They work by the ton. The married men pay 10d. and the single men 8d. month, to the surgeon's club. One boy, about three years ago, had his leg broken by the fall of some clod, after the heading of coal had been cut away, but he had no business under it.

Mem.- This colliery has a bad repute for accidents, principally owing to a shattery roof in some places. The managing proprietor has the character of a humane man, and complains that he cannot induce the workmen to use proper precautions.

No.26 Edward Machen, Esq., Deputy Surveyor of the Forest.

He considers the proportion of the population employed in the woods, to be about one-fourth. Boys go to work about the same age as in the mines. They are often employed in charcoal burning, which keeps them at work on Sundays. The cases of complaint brought before him, as a magistrate, are principally assaults. He estimates the present population of the Forest at 10,000, the acreage is 22,000. There has been a rapid increase of population since 1838, in consequence of the Act of July in that year, which gave titles to the encroachments, and which has occasioned numerous cots to be erected on them. The health of the men employed in the woods is better than that of the miners, and their longevity is greater. Illegitimate births are rather numerous and men and women still cohabit openly without marriage, but the cases are diminishing in frequency. He thinks the efficiency of the Forest schools would be materially promoted by increased permanent funds. The contributions are not kept up as could be wished.

UPPER OAKWOOD MINE LEVEL, carried on by the CINDERFORD IRON COMPANY.

No.27 Mr. Richard Cooper, Agent, aged 56.

March 31st.

He has known this mine five years and no accident has happened in that time. The roof is a remarkably good one, sound rock in most places, and well secured where it is loose. The workings are kept dry by drainage and the ventilation is good though there is some bad air when the mines were first worked before cutting an air passage up to the surface. There is no bad air now. He has resided in the Forest nearly all his life and considers the morals and habits of the population improved since his memory. This mine is worked by a contractor who employs his own hands.

I am enabled to verify all the statements of Mr. Cooper and Mr. Jenkins, as regard this mine, having inspected it minutely. The ore lies in what are technically termed pockets. Some of the veins run in an upward angle of 60 degrees. The only circumstance likely to affect the boys' health

is the quantity of gunpowder smoke from constant blasting. The horse way is frequently a foot deep in water*.

No.28 Mr. Isaac Jenkins, aged 28.

He is the contractor for working the Oakwood Mine Level and has been connected with these mines for six years last August. He employs from 30 to 35 hands, two boys under 13, the youngest being about 11. One is a jockey boy*, the other picks stones out of the ore in the mine. There are four lads over 13 who fill and wheel with wages, 1s. a day to the younger, the others earn from 10s. to 14s. per week. Three of the elder boys can read, and one of the younger very little. They are well conducted in their work. There is no night work, except when pressed for an extraordinary supply of ore, and then the hands are changed. There is no Sunday work. None go to the Sunday-school at Breame or Parkend, each about a mile off. Four go regularly to church. One can write a little. The men have a doctor's club, to which the married men contribute 9d. and the single men 6d. per month. The boys appear to be healthy. They have swellings in their throats sometimes, but they always go away again. Most of the ore is wheeled in barrows to the horse way some is carried on billies, where the working is too steep. The greatest weight of a billy load is 1cwt. A boy of 13 will carry that weight. Two boys help to place it on the billy. No serious accident has occurred.

Mem.- All the billy boys I saw in this mine, were working down a steep inclined plane, and they did not appear to be at all oppressed by the exertion. Some of the billying is far more laborious. I think the situation of the jockey boys, on the front of the carts, dangerous, the seat being insecure, and the roads often extremely jolting from irregularities. In the tram plates. In one colliery (that of Messrs. Trotter, Thomas, and Co.) I observed a very simple and convenient moveable seat, or dickey, contrived by Mr. Thomas, junior, expressly for the safety of their driving-boys.

**The jockey boys always ride on the front of the foremost tram cart.*

CHURCHWAY, NOFOLD, and PROTECTION COAL PITS, near BILSON, carried on by the MESSRS. BENNET.

No.29 Mr. Stephen Yemm, Manager.

We employ about 100 hands, say 25 boys from 10 to 15 years of age and work a vein of two feet two inches. The water pumped by a 60 horse power engine. We use hods, which are drawn by boys through very low roofed passages. The hods weigh from 1cwt. to 11/2 cwt. each. The door boys earn 3s. 6d. a week, the hod boys 8s. to 9s. per week. They are expected to hod from six to eight tons of coal each a day. This is considered a fair day's work.* The workings are kept dry and there is no bad air. The shaft is 112 yards deep, by this the coal is raised, and the water pumped. Two men have been killed within the last four years by falling out of a cart in the shaft. I cannot tell how this happened. No stone or other weight fell on them. They were not intoxicated, the chains of the cart were all secured to the winding rope. There was another man killed by a stone falling on him in the pit.

*It appears that this approximation to task work is intended only as a criterion of a fair day's labour.

No.30 Edward Davies, aged 16.

He is a hod boy at the Churchway Colliery and cannot read, though he went to school for three months before he came to work. He began minding doors when about eight years old. He does not attend a Sunday-school and neither father nor mother can read. His father works here. He feels very healthy and thinks not more than two of the boys can read, perhaps as many may go to the Sunday-school.

No.31 John Knight, aged 12.

He cannot tell his birthday exactly. 'I do think 'twere of a Thursday night.' He is a hod boy in Protection Pit and draws the hods on his knees through a way barely two feet high. He earns 9s. a week. He never did any other work, but would like working above ground best. The road he hods over is very wet. He never has rheumatism or colds, or any lumps in his neck. He went to an evening-school and reads, and writes a little.

Mem. - This boy's appearance is remarkably healthy. His naif surmise as to the time of his birth, must be regarded as a specimen of more than common intelligence, on this point. (See the Rev. H. Berkin, No.32, for some light on the fatal accident mentioned by Yemm.)

No.32. The Rev. Henry Berkin, Incumbent of Holy Trinity, one of the three Forest Churches (extra-parochial).

He considers the morals of his neighbourhood to have been incalculably injured by the beer shops. He wishes me to make further inquiries on this head. He has seen boys, 12 years old only, staggering drunk, since the new Act came into operation. The facilities offered by these pot houses induce the colliers to spend their money away from their families, and destroy their domestic habits. He thinks all the instruction afforded by his schools is greatly counteracted by the ill effects of the Beer Bill on the community. The fatality in the Churchway main shaft, viz. the two men who were killed by falling out of the cart, occurred in coming up, and was occasioned by a defect in the perpendicular of the shaft, which is planked at the swerving point, and one of the boards having started, caught the cart [or skip] and capsized it, precipitating the poor fellows to the bottom. The agents do not like to acknowledge these defects, and conceal them, if they can.

Mem. - It would be easy for the coal owners to give the hod boys more headway, and reasonable that they should do so, by clearing out a portion of the rubbish, widening the passages, and stowing away the clod at the sides. This is done in some pits, where the veins are equally shallow, that the boys may not be forced literally to crawl, like reptiles, through the bowels of the earth. Repeated accidents, I am informed, have happened among the smaller pits in this neighbourhood, by the dangerous practice of using ropes after they have become too rotten to sustain heavy weights. This is highly reprehensible, and ought to be made a penal offence.

No.33 Mr. Howell, Master of the National School at Trinity Church, under superintendence of the Rev. Henry Berkin. His wife is Mistress.

April 2, 1841.

Both had five years' practice in school keeping before they came here. Payment is made by each scholar in quarterly advances of 2s. The children frequently attend only a single quarter. Sometimes another of the family comes, instead of the one previously on the books. Often the payment is not made at all, and then the scholar does not make his or her appearance. Frequently payment is postponed for a week or ten days, and then the scholar loses the advantage of instruction during that time, and gets out of regular school habits. Practically, payments in advance have been found the best mode of collecting a regular attendance. They have from 65 to 70 boys on the books but not more than 40 attend, on an average. The youngest is four, the oldest eleven. There are 97 girls on the books, average attendance 45 to 50. The youngest girl is four, and the oldest between thirteen and fourteen years of age.

The Sunday-school is well attended, and a disposition to come to it increases. A number of scholars volunteer their assistance, to the amount of nearly 30, male and female teachers.

Mem. - The school-room at Holy Trinity, is calculated to accommodate 300 children. There are about 650 cottages in Mr. Berkin's district, at various distances from his church and schools, extending from a quarter of a mile to three miles, or more. If the parents generally felt the value of education, there would be more children to district than the schools would contain.

Mr. Berkin lays great stress on the evil tendency of the beer shops, in rendering the foresters careless of

their families, in this as in other respects.

No.34 Mr. John Matthews, aged 35.

He has been master of the national school at Coleford eleven months and was at the Bicknor and Berryhill schools several months by way of training. His wife is mistress of the girls' school and kept a national school at Adderbury three or four years. His salary is £30, and the children's contributions, 2d. per week each. The payments are by no means regularly made, the workmen generally being paid monthly, the money is usually left unpaid till the month expires, the children often quit without paying at all. There are 50 names of boys, and the same number of girls, on the books. The average attendance may be considered about 30 of each. The punishments are keeping in after hours, and a little use of the stick occasionally but he never flogs them. The course of instruction is the same as usual in national schools. He thinks one fourth of the school are the children of Dissenters. They all go to church. The Rev. Edward Hawkins, perpetual curate, regularly superintends the religious instruction of the scholars. The youngest child is three years old, the eldest fourteen to fifteen. There are only a few children of among them. The attendance is deplorably irregular. Their progress is on the whole satisfactory but some are so negligent as to attend only a day, or a day and a half in a whole week sometimes. They are not well supplied with books. He thinks the funds insufficient for the effective purposes of the institution, and that a distribution of rewards for merit would essentially promote an increased and more regular attendance. There are four boys and seven or eight girls in the Bible class, and twelve or fourteen of each sex in the Testament classes.

The Sunday-school is much better attended than the daily school with about 100 boys and tolerable regularity and many more come occasionally. He thinks nearly half are in work in the mines, from nine years of age to fifteen or sixteen. He has no doubt of the influence of Sunday-schools on the rising generation in this district.

No.35 Mr. Charles Stockham, aged 36, Master of the Newland National situated at Whitecliffe, between Coleford and Newland.

He has been master of this school sixteen years: his wife is mistress. The number of boys on the books is 61, average attendance 45, girls, 74 on the books, average attendance 50. The salary is £50 without a house. It used to be £60. The children's contributions, 2d. per week each, go into the school funds. He had the privilege of taking a superior class of scholars, at 5s. per quarter, for his own emolument, paying 2d. per week for each such scholar into the school fund but finding it created jealousy among the parents of the other boys, he voluntarily abandoned it. The children's contributions, in 11 years, from Jan. 1, 1826, £321. 12s. 6d., showing an average of £30. 4s. 9½d. per annum. The routine of education is the same as usual, only they sometimes introduce the elementary rules of grammar, also Carpenter's Explanatory Spelling Book. Only six boys and six girls are the children of miners. The religious instruction of the schools is superintended by the Rev. George Ridout, vicar, and the Rev. Henry Winter Sheppard, curate, of Newland. The Sunday-school, held only in the morning in the vestry of Newland church, consists of about 50, most of them are day scholars, say 30, and the remainder are principally those who have been day scholars. He has had many opportunities of observing the beneficial effects of the schools, in the conduct of the scholars in after life. His old pupils show him great attention and kindness. Goldsmith's History of England has been introduced among the school lessons, in the first class.

Men.- It appears to me that this school and the Coleford school rather interfere, being within a mile of each other. Coleford is a chapelry of Newland parish. If the Coleford school were converted into an infant school, which is a very desirable thing here, perhaps more benefit would result. The Sunday-school might still be held there.

[Mr. Nicholson, of Lydney, informed me, that an infant school was once tried at Coleford. but failed, principally from the injudicious selection of a master. The man, being rather pragmatial, and an accomplished cockney used to question the children after this manner,- 'vich is this substance? hanimal, wegilatle, or mineral?' and would respond, when they failed to comprehend his language, 'vy, wegitable, to be sure.' The young rogues used to laugh at him and, of course, all respect and. subordination were at an end.]

No.36 Thomas. Batten, Esq., Surgeon, Coleford.

He has been twelve years in practice and does not observe more disease among the boys employed in mining, than others of the population. He has known boys employed as door boys as young as six years but does not think glandular swellings more prevalent among the miners, than the other inhabitants of the Forest, who are, as a general fact, particularly subject to them. The colliers are subject to an inflammation of the bursæ, in the cellular membrane of the knees and elbows, from constant pressure on those parts in their working attitude [cutting under the headings, which they do in a nearly recumbent posture]. Sometimes has known cases of nervous relaxation from an exhaustion of strength in young boys. He had one case of epilepsy in a boy about thirteen, brought on by too much exertion of the muscles and whole frame. Another boy, in the Parkend pits, died of hemorrhagia purpurea (a suffusion of blood under the cuticle) from the same cause. This boy was not more than seven years of age. Cases of fractured limbs, among boys and young people, from falling in of headings, are not unfrequent. He thinks if any means could be devised for rendering the uniform propping of headings imperative, the accidents in collieries would be diminished at least three fourths. The old colliers and iron miners generally complain of bronchitis. He has had no fatalities from bad air. Those who work in mines where it prevails complain of great lassitude. He thinks the longevity of miners, about on a par with other foresters.

Mem.- I have not been able to discover that any case of over working, such as those instanced by Mr. Batten, has arisen out of any imposed task. The boys are usually anxious to perform such work, as will give them the highest wages of their class and this naturally leads to their overtaking their own powers for the sake of the gain.

BIXLADE COAL WORKS, near COLEFORD, carried on by DAVID MUSHET, Esq.

April 3rd.

No. 37 David Mushet, Esq., Proprietor and Worker of two collieries at Bixslade, worked by level.

He employs from 90 to 100 hands and has not more than two boys under 13, if any, employed as door boys. About 30 from 13 to 18 employed in carting and jockeying. He considers young persons much more efficient in these operations, than adults. They have more activity, and can move about more readily in a smaller compass. There is no hodding in these works. He is of opinion that there is no necessity, for boys being ever obliged to work in such contracted ways, as compel them to go on their hands and knees. In all cases the rubbish might be so removed from the narrow workings as to give sufficient headway and the only reason it is not done, is the increased expense to the proprietor, and consequent deduction from his profits.

The original railway in the old Forest pits, was a single pole carried along the middle of the road about 18 inches from the floor. On this a sliding cart was placed containing the coal and the man conveying it had to balance his load, whilst he propelled it. The next stage of improvement was laying beech planks on each side, and employing carts with wooden wheels. The carbonic acid gas used to be very troublesome, when we had a less supply of pure air than now. The recent Act of Parliament, granting powers to sink air shafts in the Forest enclosures, is likely essentially to benefit the workings.

One boy was recently killed by the falling in of some coal. The heading had been brought down by a man, who left the pit before the coal was filled. This boy went in to help cart it away, and inquired of an older boy, who had more experience, if he considered there was any danger, in working under what remained of the heading. Being assured there was none, he went to work there, when a back crack, the notice of which occasioned the previous consultation, suddenly opened, and the mass fell upon the poor boy, and buried him.

He has observed no physical injuries to arise to the young people from their work. The men generally become asthmatic from 50 to 55 years of age. The vein of coal averages five feet in these works. He has seen the knees and palms of men and boys, who have worked long in narrow seams, perfectly hoofed, by continued pressure on those parts. This effect more

particularly takes place in the iron mines, some of which were worked to a considerable extent last year by the small miners, by means of boys, who crawled about 60 or 70 yards, carrying the ore on billies strapped to their backs. The billy was originally a legal Forest measure, generally weighs now about 1cwt. or 1 1/2 cwt. The boys in these mines used to climb up to the surface with their loads, sometimes by notches cut in the rocks, and in other places by ladders. We carry off all our water by drainage, and keep the workings dry under foot. The men are protected from drippings through the roof as well as can be done, by iron plates and boards. He thinks no legislative restriction of the age at which boys should be employed would be advantageously applied to mines. No boys being so employed till they are able for the work, and having no tasks imposed upon them, nor working more than eight hours a day an average. The boys earn from 6d. a day as door boys, to 8s. and 10s. a week as fillers and jockeys. Some of our boys attend a door, and also manage a horse. These earn the last quoted. It is an object with the colliers to have each cart well filled, because if well filled, six carts will load a tram, if not, he has to send out a seventh cart, which they never like. This renders it desirable to the colliers to have smart active lads under them. They are paid by the piece. The fillers have from 7d. to 10d. per tram (35 cwt.), and the craters 5d. to 9d. per ditto. The higher prices are when there are two stages on the journey. There is always a change of boys at the stages.

Payment of wages is monthly, and uniformly in money. Payments at Tommy-shops are still prevalent in the Forest. Less prevalent than heretofore and have lately been discontinued by one coal company. The miners are an improvident race, and have a bad habit of running in debt any shop wherever they deal. He thinks all legislative enactments in this matter easily evaded. He has heard no particular complaints of unfair charges, but knows those who pay in cash, can obtain labour on better terms than those who do not.

The beer shops have produced the most dreadful evils among the workmen. Boys of 12 years old not infrequently getting intoxicated. Many of the workmen would be glad to see him abolished, because they say they can keep no money in their pockets, through the temptations of these places offer to unnecessary drinking. The Sunday-schools are of important benefit to juvenile workmen, but the beer-shops form a preponderating evil.

There is an important class of workmen in this district, very numerous and very poor, viz. the quarrymen. Many boys of 15 are employed in the quarries, generally sons of the men. Full 10,000 tons of worked stone are turned out in the year. Such as millstones, ones, cider presses, troughs, rollers, &c. The quarry boys earn about 1s. a day; men's wages are 15s. to 18s. per week.

When colliers work by day work, they have 14s. to 17s. per week. At piece work they earn 18s. to 20s. The day work is principally making and keeping the horse ways in repair.

Mem.- Mr. Mushet referred me to his agents for information as to the extent of education among the boys in his employ. I have not yet got the details. This gentleman is both scientific and practical, in his acquaintance with the staple trades of the Forest, and stands high as a man of general intelligence. The knowledge of this led me to be more excursive in my inquiries of him.

The instance of a boy's death, as recorded above, furnishes a characteristic illustration of the dangerous improvidence, which prevails, respecting propping of headings. Common prudence, if exercised, would have taught the elder lad either to fix up a prop, or forbid the younger one from working there. The cutter, however, ought not to have left that portion of the head which had not fallen, in so insecure a state, without warning the fillers, who went in after he had quitted.

No.38 T. Marsh, Esq.

April 5, 1841.

He has practised as a surgeon in Coleford 14 years. He has not observed any prevalent disease among the mining boys and young persons. No particular frequency of glandular swellings. Cases of bronchocele are common among the females of the district. Colliers usually come in at 50 to 55 years of age. Lunacy is prevalent, generally from an hereditary taint. He has had many cases of fractures and dislocations in the coal works. Being registrar of deaths for a district embracing half the Forest, can furnish the exact number of fatalities for the

district.

Mem.- Mr. Marsh was called away at this point, and I have not had the good fortune to find him disengaged since. I hope to see him again on the subject. I have not yet met with any instance of distortion or other injury, apparently originating in the early labour of the mining boys.*

**After repeated vain attempts at finding Mr. Marsh disengaged, I reluctantly gave up all hope of completing his valuable evidence.*

COLLIERIES at HOWLETS SLADE, near COLEFORD carried on by TROTTER THOMAS and Co.

April 6, 1841.

No.39 Mr. John Trotter Thomas, of Coleford, Managing Proprietor of Coal-works at Howlet's Slade; viz., Vellett's Level, Mile-end Pit, Purple Pit, Darby Pit, and the Success Colliery, also of a small Iron-foundry, all carried on under the firm of Trotter Thomas and Co.

We employ about 130 hands, say 10 or 12 boys under 13, none younger than eight or nine and 20 over 13 and under 18. The youngest are door boys, the others are drivers, fillers, and carters. In most of our collieries the horse ways go up to the headings. The Darby and Mile-End pits are the only exceptions, where the coal is carted into the horse way.

We use no hodding. We work four feet and a half seam. The water is carried off by drainage. The men are protected by plates and boards when working under drippings. There is no bad air which has not been kept sufficiently under to prevent accidents. The boys earn 6d. a day as door keepers, drivers, for jockeys, from 1s. to 1s. 6d, fillers, 2s. 6d. to 3s. We pay monthly, the first Friday in every month. Uniformly pay in money, and each individual is paid separately. We have had only one fatality within the last five years, from negligence in propping a head of coal. A few fractures and dislocations occur, generally of the clavicle, or the ribs. Rarely is any man detained from his work more than a fortnight. No boy has been injured. These accidents generally happen to the cutters, or the men who look after the roads. Four of our collieries are worked by shaft, the others by level. Most of the boys and young persons can read. I don't know one of them above 10 years old that cannot read. They nearly all go, or have been, to the Sunday-school, some to Mr. Garnsey's, at Bury-hill, some to the Baptist chapel at Coleford. Many of them have learnt to write at the national school. I offered to instruct any of them in writing, gratuitously, at the Temperance Reading Room established in Coleford, and found seven or eight who attended for that purpose, could already write sufficiently well. I am well satisfied of the great advantages derived to the junior working classes, from the Sunday-schools. Those boys who will not be persuaded to go to them, are the most mule-headed and vicious of their class. There is also a marked difference in the whole conduct of the two descriptions of boys. Our boys are healthy, and always able to do their work. We have colliers now working at over 70 years of age and several over 60. I do not observe that they become asthmatic, unless employed as sinkers, blasting rocks, &c. I consider the beer shops to be great curses to the neighbourhood. They occasion great waste of money and time, destroy good morals, and are frequently little better than brothels. I have often heard of boys getting intoxicated at these shops but have not see any case. Mr. Trotter, my partner, has frequently seen such lamentable cases.*

**Mr. Trotter confirms this statement in person.*

The domestic habits of the men who frequent these places are quite ruined. It is considered rather disgraceful these beer shops. They are generally young men who go. The little Forest freeholders rarely encourage these places, preferring staying at home and cultivating their patches of ground after they come from the mines. I am a member of the Baptist Church at Coleford, and have known melancholy instances of religious men, falling victim, to setting in consequence of visiting these houses. These men would have shrunk with disgust, from the idea of, sitting in a public house under the old system. I think the legislature would render an important service to the community, by abolishing the present law, and making it legal for every man to retail a barrel of beer in his shop, just as he does a barrel of vinegar. There would then

be far less of the present temptation, offered by companionship in, drinking, to the selfish expenditure of wages in liquor, leaving wives and children in destitution and want.

Mem.- I have conversed with many of the boys and lads in the above collieries, and consider them better taught than most of their class.

No.40 Mr. John Trotter Thomas (the last examinant).

April 6, 1841.

He takes an active part in managing the Sunday-school, held in the Baptist chapel at Coleford. There are about 350 boys and girls, attending with tolerable regularity, about equal numbers of each sex, say, 300 attend at Coleford, and 50 at the branch school, Symmon's Yatt. We give books to all the scholars who attend regularly, Bibles, Testaments, Bunyan's Pilgrim, Religious Biography, Doddridge's Rise and Progress, Watts's Hymns, and a variety of smaller books. These are distributed by tickets of attendance, 24 tickets entitle the holder to a book.

One of our members, who was a teacher, bequeathed the interest of £90, to be laid out in books annually. This brings in £4. 10s. per annum and other contributions are made by the members. Our pastor visits the school regularly. Most of our teachers, of both sexes, are old scholars. The colliery and mine boys generally appear particularly neat and clean on the Sunday, more so than other classes of poor boys.

Mem.- The Sunday-schools are evidently of great importance to the working boys in this district, who, without these aids, would be nearly destitute of instruction in reading, and ill prepared to benefit by opportunities for public worship.

There is also another Dissenting Sunday-school at Coleford, consisting of about 80 boys and girls, conducted by the Wesleyans. One fourth of these appear to be the children of miners and colliers.

No.41 The Rev. John Horlick, Morse, near Dybrook, aged 63, Pastor of two Independent Congregations, one at Mitcheldean and the other at Ruardean.

I have lived in this neighbourhood 40 years, officiating as a minister of the gospel. We have two Sunday-schools, one at each of the before mentioned places. The attendances are fluctuating but I should think 80 at Mitcheldean and 40 at Ruardean, principally the children of colliers. Not many of them have been at day schools. They are taught reading only, but copies in writing are set them by some of the teachers, and they write from them at home in the evenings, bringing their copy-books to be inspected on the following Sabbath. Some parents are remiss in promoting their children coming to school, paying no regard to their morals, others act more wisely. The generality, I think, encourage the schools. I consider the morals of the neighbourhood greatly benefited by these schools. They have been made a blessing to many. I am sorry to say the beer shops, now so numerous in the Forest, sadly counteract the effects of our labours, whether in preaching or teaching. I have very seldom seen boys intoxicated, but plenty of drunken men. The women are quite sober, generally, in their habits but bad language is too prevalent among the boys. Some boys are more moral than others. Some are profane. The Sunday-schools have done much good in this respect. 30 years ago there was scarcely such a thing as a school in the whole district. The Rev. Mr. Berkin, when curate of Mitcheldean, opened the first church Sunday-school in the Forest about 1816 or 1817. Our school had then been established about two years. At that time very few of the population could read. Of the old foresters few can write, even as much as their names. I think, in this respect, much the same as in other rural districts. We give books as rewards for steady attendance at the schools, and proficiency, for which we make annual collections. We are too poor to give Bibles. Testaments and hymnals are our highest prizes. An increase of funds for this purpose would materially assist the schools by promoting the attendance of the boys and girls. We teach no particular creed, but make the Word of God the basis of our religious instruction;. The children go in to chapel from the schools, in fact they are taught in the chapels. Sometimes they go to the church school, and sometimes the church scholars come to us. Many of our teachers were our scholars previously. The attendance on public worship is, at least, doubled within these 30 years. My own congregations are more than doubled in that time. I have about 70 communicants. The population of this neighbourhood has much increased of late years, owing to new pits being opened, a great number of new houses have been erected. I am not of the opinion that any legislative restrictions, as to the age at which children should be allowed to work in the mines, could be made available in this district. They do not appear to me

to be ever imposed upon or ill treated. The mining population have generally been well off. Formerly there has been a depression in the coal trade, and they were not so well provided for. I do not know of any applications for relief to the Union.

Mem.- Mr. Horlick is an eminently useful character, is well acquainted with the Forest population, and held in much respect. I sought him out in consequence of hearing his name frequently mentioned. I understand his ministerial stipend, which is all he has to depend upon, has never exceeded £50 per annum, on which he has brought up a large family creditably. It is not uncommon for the Foresters, when in distress from want of work, to remove within the compass of a neighbouring Union, in order to obtain relief.

No.42 Mr. Zechariah Jolly, aged 33, Master of the National School at Cinderford, formerly kept a boarding school at Wickwar. Mrs. Jolly is Mistress of the girls' School.

April 7, 1841.

We kept the national schools at Coleford for two years and removed by Mr. Protheroe's invitation. The number of boys on the list is 65, average attendance 60, girls, 85, average attendance 70. Some of the children are as young as three years. There are some as old as 18 having had no opportunity of being educated before. We have no system of rewards. I have objection to them, as exciting envy and jealousy in the less successful scholars. Very little punishment has hitherto been found necessary. A task, or putting them to stand on one of the forms by way of disgrace, has generally answered. We teach reading, writing, and the common rules of arithmetic. The girls learn needlework. We have been opened only since last. We have no Sunday-school, the scholars usually attend the Wesleyan Sunday-school. We have no clergyman or minister who visits our schools regularly. The nearest parish is Littledean, about a mile and a half off. I think the children generally take an interest in going to school. Some of the parents are very sensible of the advantages of it, others are careless about it, and take no pains to send their children to school. We receive quarterly payments of 2s. 6d. each child, in advance. If two of a family come, 4s. 6d., if three of a family, then 6s., or 2s. only for each above two. Mr. Protheroe at present pays me £70 per annum, which he engages to guarantee and whatever excess accrues from the contributions of the children I am to receive in addition.

Mem.- This school house is a very handsome and commodious structure, calculated for double the number of children who now attend, or nearly so. An excellent dwelling house for the master and mistress is under the same roof. Mr. Protheroe has generously expended full £1000 upon this building, which is connected with a population of about 1200 souls. A new extra-parochial church is likely to be erected here, and appears to be much needed. Mr. Jolly appears to be a remarkably well qualified teacher.

COAL and MINE WORKS, near CINDERFORD, carried on by H. CRAWSHAY, ESQ.

April 7, 1841.

No.43 Mr. John Davis, aged 33, Manager of the Haywood Coal pit and Black Brush Iron mine, near Cinderford, carried on by Henry Crawshay, Esq.

At the coal pit we have two high pressure steam engines, one pumping, the other winding. The cylinder of pump engine is 18 inches diameter and that of the winding engine 10 inches. We work all by shaft and keep our workings quite dry with no bad air to hurt. We have four boys, from 10 to 12 years old. We have no doors in our pit. The boys are hodders, they haul the hods about 25 yards on an average. We work a 2 feet 10 inch vein. We clear a sufficient headway by cutting away the clod at bottom. The roof is sound rock. We have three lads 10 under 18, who also are hodders. They take the longest run, say 50 yards at the outside. They all earn 9s. per week, paid by the men whom they work under. We have had no accident since we began cutting coal. One lad was drowned while the pit was sinking, in consequence of over reaching himself after the cowl, which carried up the water. In the iron mine we employ about 35 hands. The only boy works with the blacksmith, is 11 or 12 and earns 6s. a week. There is one lad under 18 in the mine, he hangs the skip on to the rope and earns 16s. per week. All is piece work. We drain the mine by two pumping engines, cylinders 13 inches diameter. The lifting cylinders are 12 and 14 inches diameter. It is a very watery pit. We have had one death within the last three weeks, by a stone falling on a man out of the workings. We have had a few

cases of fracture, not nearly so many as in many other works. I am not sure whether all the boys or lads can read but think they can. Being mostly employed under their fathers, I know little of their habits but doubt if they generally attend the Sunday-school. They appear to be all very civil boys. We pay in money every four weeks. Our iron ore frequently lies in an angle of 60 degrees upward. The ore, as it is worked, runs down to the bottom of the cuttings, and is loaded into the carts.

**TORMENTOR COAL WORKS, near BILSON, carried on by the
CHELTENHAM COAL COMPANY.**

April 8, 1841.

No.44 Mr. Samuel Barton, aged 41, Manager of the Tormentor Pit, near Bilon, carried on by the Cheltenham Protector Coal Company.

We employ about 50 hands, not more than four or five boys under 13. I should say 10 to 15 under 18 years of age. The youngest boy is 10. The younger boys are door boys, and earn from 6d. to 8d. a day. The older lads are hodders and jockeys, earning from 10s. to 12s. per week. Our seam is two feet thick. We work away some of the top to make a better headway for the hodders. Our vein dips a good deal, which gives them easy hauling with the full hods. They have only the empty ones to pull up. Each hodder hauls from 30 to 40 yards. Our workings are quite dry. We tub up all our water. They are well ventilated with no chokedamp to injure us. We have had only slight accidents for the last two years, since I have managed. Only one man had a bad wound by a piece of roof falling, which he might have prevented by propping, as he was at work about it. Some of our boys can read. I fear they do not frequent the Sunday-schools so much as could be wished. I suppose few of the boys have been at a day-school. I began to work myself at seven years old, in Nottinghamshire, as a driver. I drove the horse in the gin. I got all my writing in a Sunday-school, and my figures by my own application. I have often been, when a boy in the pit from long before daylight till long after. In the winter time, I have not seen daylight for a whole week, working from before six every morning till after eight every night. I consider the work and the wages of both boys and men in this country, vastly superior to what I was accustomed to in my young days. Our colliers do not exceed 8 hours work in the 24, on an average. I consider our boys, on the whole, well conducted. The beer shops in the Forest have been a decided injury to the working classes, by encouraging intoxication, and the waste of wages, which ought to go to their families.

**SLING PIT IRON MINE, near COLEFORD, carried on by JACKSON
and Co.**

April 13, 1841.

No.45 Mr. Richard Nash, aged 32, Mining Agent to Messrs. Jackson and Co., Sling Pit Iron mine, near Coleford.

I am a free miner, and let the Sling Pit to Messrs. Jackson and Co., who opened it. I took the Gale of the Crown. We employ 35 hands. There are three boys under 13 years of age, the youngest is nine. He is a billy boy and carries about 60 or 70 lbs. of ore down a steep descent to the horse way. He earns 1s. a day at piece work, under the miner who employs him. I fix the wages, and pay them. The other two boys sometimes cart the ore, and sometimes carry billies. They earn from 1s. 4d. to 1s. 6d. a day. I believe we have no young person over 13 and under

18 years of age. We work by shaft, 106 yards deep, and a steam engine. Our pit has no water as we are on a dry tump. We had bad air all last summer but are now cut down to some old workings, beyond the memory of man and this gives us a better circulation of air. Our boys are healthy. Iron mining is a great deal healthier work than coal cutting. One man had his leg fractured, about six months ago, by the fall of a large stone. No other accident has occurred during the whole five years that we have been working. I have lived always in the Forest, and my father and grandfather before me. They were real old miners. I remember things well 20 years ago and think there is a great improvement in the foresters since then. They are more civilised, and better taught, a sight. Two of our boys can read, the others can not. The two eldest go to a night school within 40 yards of the pit. They pay 6d. a week. The least boy is the son of a widow, who has nothing but what he earns, and has one small girl to support besides. He has no change of clothes but a clean shirt but wears the same on Sundays that he wears in the pit.

Mem.- The above evidence contains an instance, among many I have met with, of the peculiar destitution of instruction, to which the children of poor widows are subject. Partly from want of means to pay even a small weekly contribution to the school, and partly from inability to procure clothing, such as they like them to appear in, among their less impoverished yoke-fellows. It is a curious fact connected with the Sling Pit, that in the old workings spoken of in the evidence, there was found an ancient shovel, made entirely of wood, but shod with iron. It fell to pieces on being touched.

STRIP-AND-AT-IT COAL WORKS, SURIDGE GREEN, carried on by Mr. JOHN HARRIS.

April 29th, 1841.

No.46 Mr. Josiah Marfell, aged 42, Underground Manager of the Strip-and-it Coal works, at Suridge Green, carried on by Mr. John Harris of Lydook.

He employs about 100 hands, working a 20 inch vein, depth of shaft 127 yards, a steam engine, 20 horse power, to pump water and lift coal. He can generally keep the pit dry by pumping during the night only. Employs about six boys under 13, the youngest nine years about 15 under 18, and over 13. Seven are door boys when the pit is in full work. He agrees that there must be seven boys under 13, as no door boys are so old. They earn 6d. a day. The older boys are hodders and fillers, earning from 8s. to 9s. per week. No horses are used in the pit and 40 yards is the longest stage for the hodders, and mostly down hill, all narrow workings. All but the door boys are paid by the cutters, who pay the boys, and set their own bargains with them. Many of the boys are sons or brothers of the cutters. There is bad air in the pit, but the ventilation is good when the water does not prevail. Just now there is so much water, that they can work very little. We never any accident in this pit from or any other cause. They have been regularly at work for two years. Some of the men work 15 hours some days and do not get through their regular work under 10 or 11 hours on this is owing to the narrowness of the seams. The boys work the same time as the man. They are now working day and night, with three sets every 24 hours. This is an emergency. Most of the boys can read, some better than others. Some go to the Bicknor Sunday-school, the Trinity Sunday-school and some to the Lydbrook [dissenting] Sunday-school. He certainly thinks the boys who attend Sunday-schools are better conducted than the rest. He thinks some boys overwork themselves in their anxiety to earn more money, or to do their work in a shorter time. When he was a boy between 14 and 18, he often hodded eight tons in a short day, up an ascent, and could hardly move when he got home. He then earned 15s. a week. He thinks the men do, sometimes, put upon the boys rather too much. When he sees anything of the kind he considers it his duty to interfere. The boys have never complained to him. He thinks the colliers and miners generally, would be taller and better grown men if they had not done so much hard work when young. He thinks the boys in these narrow workings are much stunted in their growth. The door boys are kept quite stationary in this pit. The boys generally leave their parents as soon as they earn 8s. or 9s. a week but are sometimes glad to return, finding they do not make their money go so far as their mothers used to do for them. About half the boys are decently dressed on Sundays. Some of them wear the same clothes as in the pit, some do this from poverty, some from indifference.

Mem. - This completes the list of coal and mine works, of which it appeared important, from their

extent, to take specific minutes. It was my wish to see the hod boys employed in this pit, on account of the uniformly confined character of the workings but the water had so nearly drowned the pit for a few days that the boys were away. I inquired of a man near the spot, who had a boy in the work, whether he thought the employment injured them and he replied, in no other way than hindering their growth, which was not equal to that of other boys, who work above ground, or in more roomy pits. I may probably find an opportunity of seeing one of these boys at their homes but I am satisfied that I am already in possession of all the substantial facts connected with their employment.

No.47.

Coleford, April 14, 1841.

In connection with your examination respecting the employment, and nature of education, the children in this neighbourhood, I would most strongly direct your attention to an inquiry into the very great evils arising from the common licensed beer houses around us. For my own part, I believe there is nothing which tends to demoralise and counteract the endeavours to promote the welfare, and to enlighten the minds, of the lower classes, so much as this thing. The evils, I very much fear, are increasing. I continually am obliged to witness this, and the reports I am in the constant habit of receiving are distressing. I trust our legislators will speedily be induced to repeal this law, which, no doubt, was meant for the good of the community, but, in my opinion, has produced one of the greatest evils.

To E. Waring, Esq.

I am, &c.

(Signed) PETER TEAGUE.

MINUTES ON NATIONAL SCHOOLS.

May 1, 1841.

The Lydney National School is under the especial patronage of Mrs. Bathurst, of Lydney Park. There is no master, the mistress is Maria Foulkes, aged 31. She appears to be well qualified for her post and has been a teacher nearly three years. There are 25 boys, and an equal number of girls, under her tuition. The oldest boy is 10 and the youngest two years old. The oldest girl 14, and the youngest two. The girls are taught needlework, and the boys knitting. The infant school system is partially observed, in teaching the youngest children. Tickets of approbation are given for regular attendance and rewards of books. The punishments are keeping in, a task or a slap on the palm with a flat ruler. The children pay 1d. a week each. They have also a benefit club, to which they subscribe another weekly penny, and at the end of the year Mrs. Bathurst adds 1s. 8d. to each child's amount, by way of premium which enables them to buy a frock, or other garment. There are two children of Baptist parents in this school and it has been agreed by Mrs. Bathurst and the governess, that these children should omit that part of the Catechism which relates to godfathers and godmothers, as it would be untrue from their lips. The salary of the mistress is £40 a year, with a house and garden adjoining the school, also her coals.

Bicknor National School is under the special superintendence of the Rev. Mr. Field, vicar of the parish, and educates many of the boys employed in the tin works at Lydbrook, and in collieries. Here is the only infant school immediately connected with the Forest. A small branch infant school has been established by the indefatigable vicar at Simmond's Yatt, about two miles off, on the banks of the Wye. The master, George Terret, the mistress, Mrs. Harrison, and the governess of the infant school, Mrs. James appear to be well adapted to their various situations. Their respective salaries are, £30, £16, and £12. The children's contributions are 1d. per week each. There are 61 boys, 80 girls, and 50 infants on the list. The usual course of teaching is observed. One little boy, Thomas Jones, not quite three years old,

reads a psalm throughout very correctly and fluently. The girls worked a beautiful patchwork quilt, the centre square of which contained 1300 pieces, and presented it to the Queen.

Berryhill National School is under the immediate superintendence of the Rev. T. R. Garnsey, the exemplary incumbent, whose parsonage, Church, and school house form an isolated and interesting cluster of buildings, on a hill surrounded by the open Forest. There are about 1300 inhabitants in the district attached to this extra-parochial church. The school house will accommodate 160 children. The present number is about 70 of each sex. The master, James Turnbull, is a man of superior qualifications, and has a salary of 12s. per week only. The mistress, Maria Rudge, has £15. per annum. The children contribute 1d. per week each. The routine of instruction as usual. Private contributions are scanty, and funds for books, as rewards, appear to be very desirable. There is a Treasury grant of £20 per annum to this school.

Parkend, St. Paul's National School is under the immediate superintendence of the Rev. Henry Poole, incumbent. Not having been fortunate enough to find this indefatigable clergyman at home, at an hour convenient for visiting the schools, and making inquiries of the master and mistress, under his sanction, I am in possession only of the leading facts. That its operations embrace a population of about 1400, that the school house will accommodate 200 children and that the average attendance is from 40 to 50 of each sex. There is a peculiar air of completeness and good taste in the whole of this little extra-parochial establishment, which is very near the important iron and coal works at Parkend, and neighbouring iron mines.

Breme National School is connected with the St. Paul's school, under the superintendence of the same reverend gentleman, whose onerous duties in his extensive district prevent him from the requisite personal attention to this branch. The master and mistress are, William Webb aged 35, and his wife. Neither are trained to the work of instruction, but they appear to take a warm interest in it. The school was established in 1830. There are about 30 names of each sex on the books, and the attendance is pretty regular. An old endowment of £2 10s. per annum, for the education of 12 scholars nominated by the clergyman, has been transferred to, rather blended with, this school. The fixed salary is £12 per annum; and the contributions of 1d. per week appear not to yield more than a similar sum. The free subscriptions have fallen off since 1814, to the extent of from £7 to £10 per annum; There are no funds for rewards. This school is in a populous neighbourhood, and requires more encouragement, to render its usefulness equal to its capability. The usual course of teaching is followed. The old endowed school was taught, during a period of 55 years, by Mrs. Elizabeth Batten, whose tombstone in the churchyard records the fact.

Mem.- All these schools have Sunday-schools in connection, which are rather numerous attended, and are most desirable resources for the instruction of boys and young persons employed in labour all the week. The children are taken to church. The two Forest schools of Trinity and St. Paul's, have a grant from the Treasury of £15 per annum each.
