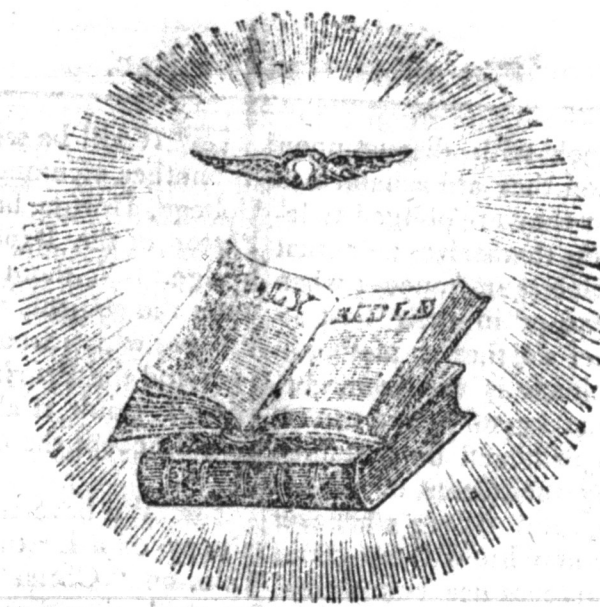


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REV. E. D. VERY,

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BERNARD BARTON ON THE PRAYER BOOK.

Mr. Bernard Barton was of a Quaker family, and held strictly the tenets of the Society of Friends; yet he held them in a kind and liberal spirit toward others. This is illustrated in the following lines "written in a prayer-book given to his daughter:"

"My creed requires no form of prayer;
Yet would I not condemn
Those who adopt with pious care
Their use as aids to them.

One God hath fashion'd them and me;
One Spirit is our guide;
For each, alike, upon the tree
One common Saviour died!

Each the same trumpet-call shall wake,
To face one judgment-seat;
God give us grace, for Jesus' sake,
In the same heaven to meet!"

FACTS FOR SOCIAL REFORMERS.

THE MANUFACTURING DISTRICTS OF ENGLAND.

In the first letter of the *Chronicles* Commissioner—and an admirable letter it is, both for power of description and soundness of sentiment; as are also generally the communications of the gentleman to whom are confided the metropolitan and rural districts respectively—occurs this striking and instructive passage—

In a colored table of crime which lies before me—one of those ingenious modes of painting statistics which the present statistical age has invented—the metropolis is the most darkly-shaded district. Next to it comes the iron country; then the cotton region; and treading close upon their heels—closer, perhaps, than most people imagine—we have, as the next deepest in criminality, the rural districts. If we represent the amount of manufacturing crime during the year 1847 by the figure 18, we shall find the proportion of agricultural offences to stand as high as 14—a proportion which will be of startling magnitude to the many who naturally connect rustic beauties with rural innocence, and take but little account of the fact that the agricultural laborer endures more habitual and more pinching hunger and cold amid his fair fields and woods, than the factory operative amidst the dust and smoke of his alley and his mill.

From a highly-interesting description of a cotton-mill—several of which were visited by the correspondent; one, employing 2,000 hands and connected in its different parts by subterranean passages, tunnelling intervening streets—we note first the fact, that factory labour is comparatively light and unintelligent, requiring little either of physical strength or skill. That it is exhausting to body and mind in a degree above that of other descriptions of occupation requiring continuous attention, does not appear. The spinner, being constantly afoot and in movement, may be supposed to exert most muscular action; but his place is regarded as a prize in the factory—his wages varying from £2 to £2 5s. or £2 10s. per week; while his piecer earns, say, 11s., and his scavenger—a mere child—2s. 6d. There is great difficulty in making a general average of wages, from the many varying descriptions of work, and consequent gradation of payment; but the correspondent sets it down as 11s. per week, of ten hours a day, as the average of men, women, and children; which, supposing, as appears generally the case, that several of one family are thus engaged, and paid, the result would indicate—apart from domestic and moral considerations—a high position for the factory operative among the working classes of this country. The *personnel* of the workpeo-

ple is not pleasing. Bare feet are more common while in the mill, than otherwise; the flesh and the floors alike of the brown, oily complexion of dingy furniture. Positive cleanliness is rather exceptional, and baths or washing conveniences, when provided by the employers, frequently neglected. The atmosphere of the mills, necessarily—though not to so great a degree as is general; in some mills the nuisance being considerably abated by good ventilation—is impregnated with cotton dust and the smell of oil evaporated by friction; which gives to the people, together with the absence of muscular exertion necessitated by their employment, a stunted, thin, sallow look—"a negative sanitary condition." "At any rate," it is well said—"what is called 'the bloom of health' is a flower requiring more air and sunshine than stir and gleam athwart the rattling spindles."

The dwellings usually tenanted by the operatives are described at some length. Insufficient room, imperfect ventilation, and high rent, are noted as too generally characteristic; but, it is added, that matters are decidedly improving in this respect. Even more gratifying is the increasing intercourse and amity between the millowners and their people. Depreciations from the latter concerning the rate of wages are respectfully listened to by the former, and differences quietly arranged which, a few years since, would have caused a strike and a turn-out—mutually injurious to an incalculable extent. One of the best results of this better state of things is a general weekly half-holiday.

Of the low lodging-houses of the district, tenanted chiefly by poor Irish, we need only say that they rival in wretchedness and vice those of the metropolis.

Digressing to Bolton, and the country cotton mills of the locality—which seem to indicate, in their combination of rural with urban influences and occupations, the ideal of the factory system—the correspondent returns to Manchester, and remarks on the morality of the operatives, especially on the chastity of the factory girls, which he concludes has been greatly slandered; maintaining that prostitution is rare, unchastity is deemed disgraceful among them, and the number of female inmates of the Penitentiary who had worked in mills only one-third of those who had been in domestic servitude.

The rate of mortality in Manchester is next investigated. A distinction is established between the nature of employment and the habits of the employed, as sanitary conditions. Facts and tables are adduced to show that factory employment is not unhealthy, and that the sickness and mortality of the workpeople depend on the condition of their dwellings.—"A vast proportion," it is observed, "of the mortality of Manchester is that of children; but of children under the age to labor in the mills. Out of every 100 deaths in Manchester, more than forty-eight take place under five years of age, and more than fifty-one under ten years of age. In some of the neighbouring towns—particularly Ashton-under-Lyne—the proportion is still more appalling. There, by a calculation made embracing the five years ending with June 30, 1843, it appeared that, out of the whole number of deaths, 57 per cent. were those of children under five years of age. Whereas in purely agricultural districts infant mortality is only about 33 per cent. The disproportion is attributed, not only to the impure atmosphere of the dwellings occupied by the factory operatives, but still more, to that worst feature of the system—the withdrawal of the mother from her home to work in the mill; and the consequent abandonment of the children to neglect, to permanent disease, and, in many cases, almost certain death, from the abominable use of narcotics. That 4,000

children are annually found "lost" in the streets of Manchester is an indication. Whatever the evils of juvenile factory labor—and the letters before us supply abundant illustrations of evils inseparable from the system—it should be known, that the young mill-hands do not work longer and earn more than mechanics' and shopkeepers' apprentices; the latter, however, have the better chance of advancement in after life. Here is a picture of Manchester, which though not directly in our way, is too good to be passed by:—

As Lancashire is to England, so is Manchester to Lancashire; and as Manchester is to Lancashire, so is Union-street to Manchester. The locality is the very incarnation of the spirit of the district. A more perfectly ugly spot you shall not find between sunrise and sunset. Fancy a street one side of which is all mills, huge square piles of mills, with six, seven, and eight, tiers of foul and blackened windows, the grimmest, sootiest, filthiest lumps of masonry in all Manchester. Through the thick, sunless air comes the throb and the boom of many steam engines, and the lowly clattering whirl of hundreds of thousands of revolving pirns and bobbins. Look in at the lower ranges of filth-encrusted windows. What multiplying revelations of endless carding frames, and draining frames, and tenting frames. Above ponderous masses of hammered iron, limbs of toiling engines, appear ever and anon to rush to the open window, glance abroad, and then retreat to their dens. On the other hand lies a canal—the Rochdale canal—a ditch of muddy water, very much like rotten pea soup. Curious, old-fashioned, highly-springing bridges span it. On the further side are tumbled-down houses, smouldering edifices, sinking into their foundations of muck and mire—filthy wharfs, littered with dung, and bricks and rubbish-heaps of splintered stones, lie along its course. Blacksmiths' forges are established in rickety old tenements, with every pane of glass in their casements long since dashed away. Mean streets, and patches of black waste ground, with mouldering fences and fetid pools, back these wharfs and ruinous forges; and a dingy fringe of second-rate mills, with puffing steam gushes and everlasting volumes of smoke, shut in the cheerless picture.

The educational condition of the district is then glanced at, rather than examined. Each spinner is compelled by the Factory Act to pay for the instruction of his "piecers and scavengers;" but the tuition administered, apart from the qualifications of the teacher, appears to be necessarily defective. The limitation of work-time by the Ten Hours Act has increased the attendance on evening classes, without affecting, perceptibly, the consumption of literary commodities, the striking statistics of which we gave a short time since.

Here is a testimony to the power of an educational agency, which some begin to deem well-nigh spent, but which we regard as capable of, and demanding, indefinite improvement:—

The Sunday-schools of the industrial North form not only a vast moral and educational engine, but a curious and characteristic social fact. The system originated by Mr. Raikes, some seventy years ago, took deep root in Lancashire, and grew with the growth of manufacturing industry. The serious cast of the Lancashire mind, and its earnestness and zeal, acting upon the facilities afforded by the order and discipline which it is the very nature of the factory system to instil, formed a soil in which the Sunday-school system took very deep root, and bore very rich harvests. I rather understate than overstate the numbers, when I say that in the Sunday-schools of Manchester may be found from 40,000 to 50,000 scholars, and from 4,000 to 5,000 teachers, inspec-

tors, and visitants. In 1832, the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the system was celebrated by a day of jubilee, and upon that occasion no less than 32,000 medals were disposed of, to be worn by members of the Sunday-schools' procession which defiled through the streets of Manchester. "Were it not for the Sunday-schools," I have been over and over again assured, "Lancashire would have been a hell upon earth." Long before educational committees of the Privy Council and British and Foreign Societies were heard of—long previous to the era of Institutes and Athenæums—the Sunday-schools were sedulously at work, impregnating the people with the rudiments of an education which, though always rude and often narrow and fanatical in its teachings, was yet preserving a glow of moral and religious sentiment, and keeping alive a degree of popular intelligence, which otherwise would assuredly have perished in the rush and clatter with which a vast manufacturing population came surging up upon the land.

Here, too, is a notice of a nascent but highly promising agency of social advancement.—After observing upon the great consumption of groceries among the temperate operatives, and remarking that, by their retail method of purchasing, they usually pay more than 33 per cent. more than the higher classes, the correspondent says:—

In order to get rid of this disadvantage, the Messrs. Morris have started a co-operative society in their Chorlton mill, the working of which was explained to me. The mill is mapped out into twelve districts, the overlooker of each of which is furnished with a slip of paper, properly ruled and headed, in which each operative enters the amount of tea, at 5s. or 4s., black, green, or mixed; the amount of coffee, at 1s. 4d., 1s. 8d., and 2s.; that of cocoa at 8d. and 1s.; and that of chicory, which he or she may require during the week. The quantities of tea are reckoned in quarter pounds, those of coffee in half pounds. The different papers being filled up, are carried to the secretary of the association, who casts up the sum total, and the people having paid for their week's supply when they received their wages, the amount, together with the order for the next week's consumption, is sent to a large wholesale house, which of course supplies a good article at wholesale price—that is to say, deducting half-a-crown in every pound of the nominal rate. Thus the average weekly supply costs about £20, and it is received for about £17 10s. The saving to the hands effected by this rate of discount, since the institution of the association three years ago, is calculated at £251 11s. 11d., and the saving from the 28th of March to the 7th November of the present year has been no less than £60 7s. 1d. The collectors throughout the mill levy twopence on every pound sterling subscribed, and out of this fund they make good to the wholesale house the deficiencies of any defaulter.

Macclesfield and the silk trade is the next subject. The population of this district is of slower increase and less density than in the cotton territory; the mortality is also less, but the morality not higher. About half the laboring population work at home—of the other half, working in mills, the great majority are females. A weaver may earn, averaging the year, 10s. to 12s. a-week; a female throwster or doubler in the mill, 8s. to 9s. The condition of the latter is superior to that of their countrywomen in the cotton mills, their employment and appearance more healthful. The Factory Act allows females of eleven years of age to work in these silk factories, thirteen being the earliest age legal in other branches. Earning moderate wages—though frequently suffering from periods of stagnation—the domestic condition of the silk operatives seemed