

**The mortality, sufferings and diseases of grinders / by G. Calvert Holland.
Part II, Pen-blade grinders.**

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THE
MORTALITY,
SUFFERINGS AND DISEASES
OF
GRINDERS.

PART II.
PEN-BLADE GRINDERS.

BY G. CALVERT HOLLAND, M.D., EDIN.

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THE HUNTERIAN AND ROYAL PHYSICAL SOCIETIES, EDINBURGH.

"Think not
But that there is redress where there is wrong,
So we be bold enough to seize it."

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PREFACE.

The inquiry in which we are engaged will be admitted to be important, affording to the legislature numerous facts bearing on the condition of the artisans of this town, and making the artisans themselves familiar with the extent, as well as the causes of their own misery. The investigation has, also, comprehensive relations to political economy. The circumstances influencing the production and distribution of wealth—the condition of the masses and of society at large, are necessarily brought under review, and in practical connexion with the principles of the science. They are not viewed from a distance, and hence obscurely seen or imperfectly appreciated; they have been objects of daily observation and study.

Our position gives us peculiar advantages; causes and effects, in relation to the labouring classes, are so immediately under our examination, that we seem to have the power of testing the correctness of our reasoning by actual experiments. We have, on the one hand, a class of artisans in combination, regulated by well defined and strictly enforced laws, influencing the rate of production; on the other, we have a class, in which the individuals are independent elements—exempt from all rules and association, consequently in no degree controlling the powers of production. We can institute comparisons

between the two, with respect to their command of the necessities and comforts of life—habits—morality—education—and conduct generally ; and we have analysed the value of combinations by reference to these interesting facts, which establish beyond doubt the advantages of them to the artisans, the manufacturers, and the public.

The conclusions at which we have arrived, are the result of extensive inquiries that have occupied years, and of considerable labour at the most vigorous period of life.

We give expression to our opinions as a duty ; not, however, without pain, knowing that some highly valued and intelligent friends entertain very different views on this subject. To these we would say, “Suspend your judgment, until we have brought under consideration the reasons which have modified our own.”

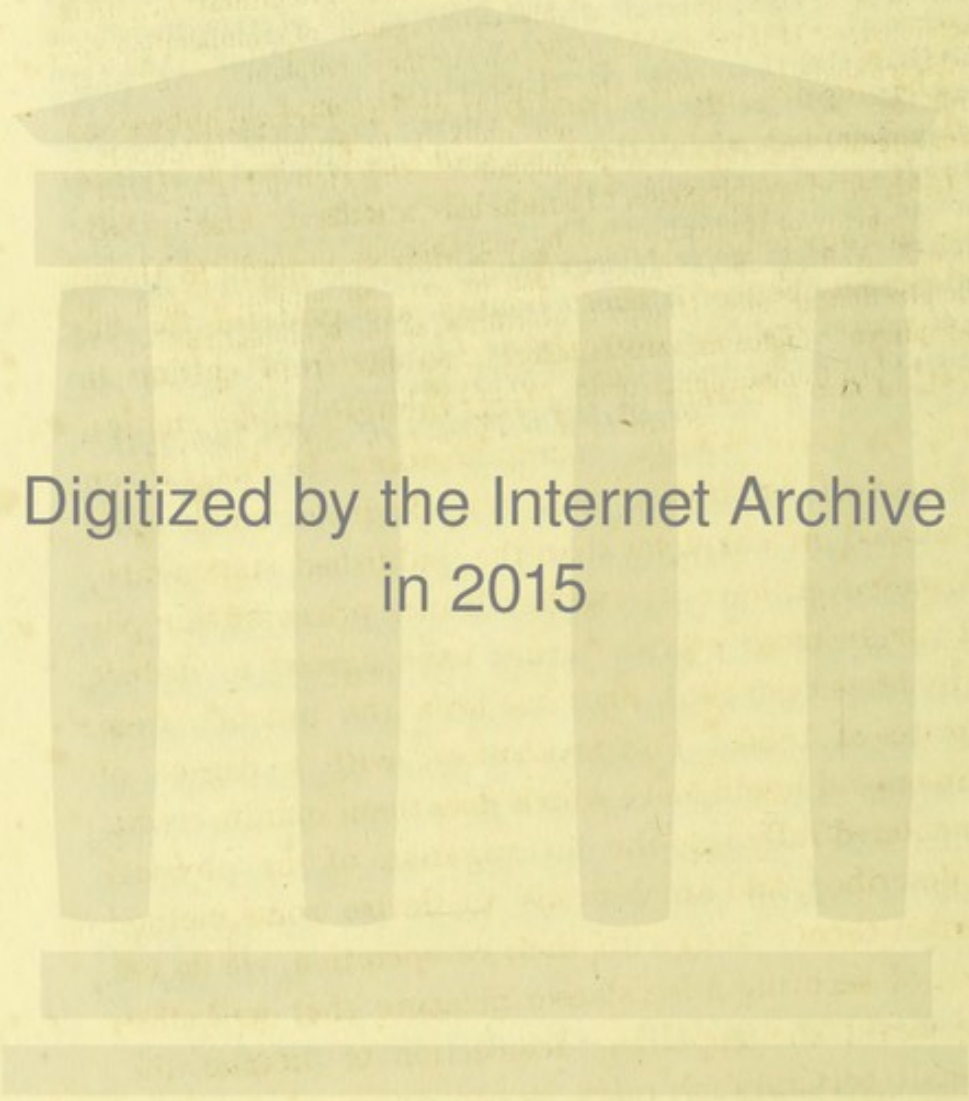
We were fully prepared to meet with opposition, but scarcely from the press, of a character as dastardly as it is vindictive—as persecuting as it is unprincipled—and especially from the *liberal* press, that boasts of the advantages of free inquiry—of unshackled discussion. As a specimen of the spirit which animates one of these guardians of public rights, we insert the subjoined article, one of four personal attacks by the editor, appearing on the same day, without further comment or reflection :—

“THE TRADES’ UNIONS AND DR. HOLLAND.

“We learn, from various quarters, that Dr. Holland has had several recent meetings with some of the trades’ unions, for the double purpose of acquiring information as to their condition, and of encouraging the men to combine ‘in perfect union.’ In not a few cases, we believe, he has found our shrewd and honest artisans reverting to the subject of his political apostacy, respecting which they have urged questions and made remarks anything but pleasing to ‘those fine feelings,’ of which Dr. Holland so often talks and writes. We understand, also, that some of

his enquiries have been of such a kind as to excite no small and no unreasonable doubts in the minds of his hearers, whether the objects he avows are the sole objects he has in view. Inquiries as to health, life, and disease, seem quite suitable for the physician; but when he pushes his questions upon a variety of other subjects, it may well make those cautious, who know the use that has before been made of facts by him, and by the politicians whom he now supports. When the Duke of Buckingham heard that certain complaining agricultural labourers received 9s. a week, amazed at this extravagance of remuneration, he exclaimed,—‘If they have *so much*, why do they complain?’ And when his Grace shall learn from Dr. Holland that some of our artisans can earn 15s. 20s. or 25s., he is not unlikely to grumble to himself—‘Ungrateful dogs, why do they complain?’ Dr. Holland is, *at present*, the advocate of combinations, as he was once a Radical. **But**, as he is now an enemy of Radicalism, so he may become an enemy of Trades’ Unions. And as up to January last, he gave his support to men and principles that he now labours to overthrow, so the combinations which he at present vindicates, may, before Christmas, 1842, become the objects of his strong denunciation. What has been, may be.”

Sheffield Independent, December 18th, 1841.



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AN INQUIRY.

The inquiry into the condition of the fork-grinders has excited considerable attention, and has led, we are happy to find, to immediately beneficial results. The public have acknowledged the appeal which was made to them, and the recipients of their bounty are grateful for the liberality. The manufacturers, so far from calling in question the accuracy of the facts brought under notice, have, in their written communications to us, given instances of oppression and wretchedness much more aggravated in character than the published statements; and, moreover, have agreed to advance prices fifteen per cent., or, in more correct terms, have agreed to deduct less by fifteen per cent. than has been the practice from the prices of 1836. The magistracy, with a degree of readiness and intelligence which does them infinite credit, have entered fully into the investigation of the physical evils described, and are desirous to devise some method to correct them; and, with their co-operation, we do not despair of securing a legislative measure that will effectually arrest the appalling destruction of human life. We shall certainly not relax in our exertions, until we have unmasked the evils in all their enormity. The illiberal and uncourteous opposition of the press shall not stifle the spirit of investigation. We have a duty to perform, and one that belongs not to party, but to the comprehensive claims of humanity; and strangely consti-

tuted, indeed, must that individual be, that can systematically throw obstacles in the way of researches—the object of which is to better the condition of a large class of sufferers. Knowledge is always valuable, but none so valuable as that which informs men of the circumstances by which they are surrounded influencing the chequered course of existence.

To expose the causes of wretchedness, is, in some degree, to ameliorate it. It teaches the artisans their own rights—the ground which they ought to occupy,—the manufacturers the duties of their sphere, and the public the justice of the demands of the one party, and the candour of the complaints of the other. We are friends to free discussion and inquiry, and especially in all matters in which the interests of humanity are involved.

The condition of the grinders is one of great hardship and suffering, perhaps exceeding that of any important class of artisans in the kingdom; and the various branches differ only in the degree of the evils inseparable from the pursuit. The unhealthy atmosphere which they breathe—the severity of the occupation, and the miserable remuneration for their exertions, impart more than ordinary interest to their case. The consideration of it is connected with circumstances, which bear equally on all classes of workmen, viz., circumstances influencing the wages of labour. On this subject, there are great differences of opinion, and gross fallacies in prevailing doctrines to which we shall direct particular attention in the course of this inquiry.

The pen-blade grinders use both the dry and the wet stone, and though they create less dust than the fork-grinders, yet the atmosphere to which they are exposed is almost as injurious, from the different branches of grinding being carried on in the same room. The

destructive tendency of the trade is placed in a strong point of view, by the analysis of the ages of those employed, whence a general idea may be formed of the rate of mortality. The number of men in this branch is 319, and of the following ages:—

From 21 to 25	124	From 52	2
25 to 30	73	53	3
30 to 35	25	54	1
35 to 40	42	55	1
40 to 45	31	56	2
46	4	57	0
47	2	58	0
48	1	59	2
49	1		
50	4		319
51	1		

This table, the general accuracy of which is unquestionable, is the result of considerable labour, having procured the name and age of every person employed. What an awful picture does it present! 295 of the 319 disappear between 21 and 45 years of age, leaving only 24 to drop off gradually between the latter period and 59. Many of the 319 have not been constantly employed in the trade. Some have passed several years in the army or navy, or in other occupations less destructive to life.

- A 7 of the 124 are of this number.
- B 6 of the 73 ditto.
- C 1 of the 25
- D 5 of the 42
- E 6 of the 31
- F 149 years of age, ditto.
- G 2 of the 4—50 years of age.
- H 1 of the 2—52 years of age.
- I 1 of the 3—53 years of age.
- J The 2—56
- K Of the 2—59 years of age, one was eight years in the army, and the other is past work, from disease.

Thus 33 of the 319 have for various periods, two, three, four, five, seven, eight, and ten years, been removed from the baneful influence of the trade. Of the 24 above 45 years of age, eight are of this number, so that 16 only of 294 regularly pursuing the occupation are found employed after 45 years of age. Perhaps it would scarcely be correct to infer that these facts furnish an exact scale of the rate of mortality, some few individuals having retired from disease or other causes from the trade. They convey, however, a general idea of the sweeping mortality in the branch.

On this part of the subject it is in our power to throw further light, having the names and ages of 67 pen-blade grinders, who have died since 1832.

This branch not having been in perfect union for many years, it has not been possible to procure correct returns of all who have died, or particulars belonging to many of the 67, with the names and ages of whom we are furnished. The following facts may, nevertheless, be depended upon.

The ages of the 67 who have died since 1832 :—

From 21 to 25 years of age	12	At 53	1
25 to 30.....	15	57	1
30 to 35.....	14	58	1
35 to 40.....	8	60	1
40 to 45.....	6		
45 to 50.....	8		<hr/> 67

Several of these had not been regularly employed in the trade.

- A 34 years of age, has been ten years in the army.
- B 58 years twenty years
- C 57 years fifteen years
- D 46 years eleven years
- E 49 years nineteen years.....
- F 53 years twenty years

According to these facts, 52 of the 67 die under 42 years of age, and of the 15 above this age, five are to be deducted not having worked regularly at the business, consequently not subject to the destructive agencies of it. We shall now proceed to compare the proportions, at different ages, of the adults at present employed with those who have died within the past ten, or rather nine years and a half. In order that the comparison may be clearly perceived, we will state the proportions in 1000 employed, and in 1000 dead.

Deaths at particular ages, out of 1000 deaths, at all ages above 20, of the Pen-blade Grinders, and of the inhabitants generally of Sheffield.

Ages.		Pen-blade Grinders.	Sheffield generally.
		1832 to 42	
21 to 25	...	179	.. ... 94
26 to 30	...	223	..... 90
31 to 35	...	210	..... 85
36 to 40	...	119	..... 83
41 to 45	...	90	..... 80
46 to 50	...	119	..... 80
51 to 55	...	15	..... 80
56 to 60	...	45	..... 81
		1000	673
		Above 60..... 327 left living.	

673 die under 61.

Ages of individuals, out of 1000 living at all ages above 20, of the Pen-blade Grinders.

Ages.		Indiv.
21 to 25	.....	389
26 to 30	.....	228
31 to 35	.....	79
36 to 40	.....	132
41 to 45	.....	97
46 to 50	.....	37
51 to 55	.....	25
6 to 60	.....	13
		1000

The exceedingly high rate of mortality in this branch of trade, is shown by the one table, and may be accurately inferred from the artisans employed, at different ages, given by the other. In the former, 731 of 1000 engaged in the occupation are stated to die under 40 years of age. In the latter, the number of workmen under 40 years is 828 out of 1000, leaving only 172 following the business beyond this period—the prime of life. The actual deaths recorded establish a rate of mortality not equalled in any pursuit in the kingdom, except in the different departments of grinding.

The public have long been familiar with the destructive tendency of the occupation—the fact was too obvious not to be generally appreciated, but previous to the present investigation they had no just idea of the appalling rate at which human life is sacrificed. To render this, however, more apparent, we shall place in juxtaposition, the rate of mortality in England and Wales—in Sheffield, and in this particular branch, the fact then comes home to the understanding of every individual.

Actual deaths, at particular ages, in England and Wales, during 1838 and 1839 ; in Sheffield, 1837 to 1841 ; and amongst the Pen-blade Grinders, from Midsummer, 1832, to January, 1842, above 20 Years of Age :—

	England and Wales.	Sheffield.	Pen-blade Grinders.
			1832—1842.
20 to 29	26,289	685	27
30 to 39	22,349	611	22
40 to 49	20,752	589	14
50 to 59	20,797	579	4
At all Ages above 20	163,905	3724	67

Comparison of deaths at particular ages, out of 1000 deaths above 20 years of age, in England and Wales,—Sheffield generally, and of the Pen-blade Grinders particularly :—

	England and Wales.	Sheffield generally.	Pen-blade Grinders.
	1838—9	1837—41	1832—42
20 to 29	160	184	402
30 to 39	136	164	329
40 to 49	126	158	209
50 to 59	127	155	60
From 20 to 60	549	661	1000
At all Ages above 20	1000	1000	1000

According to the latter table, 160, out of 1000 deaths above 20 years of age, die in the kingdom between 20 and 29; in Sheffield, 184, but in this branch 402. In the next period, between 30 and 39, in the kingdom at large the deaths are 136—in this town 164, but in this branch 329. The deaths under 50 years of age in the kingdom, are 422—in Sheffield 506, and among the pen-blade grinders 940! What an awful disparity! At this period—little beyond the prime of life, when there are only 60 individuals remaining out of 1000, in the kingdom there are left out of the same number, 578. These are startling results and cannot fail to awaken the attention of the legislature. The evils demand consideration, and they need only to be fearlessly exposed to be corrected. They are neither mysterious nor incurable in their character. To know them, it is simply necessary to visit the rooms in which the artisans work—and to redress them, ventilation on the simplest principle only is required, the carrying out of which, on a comprehensive scale, must, however, be enforced on the proprietors of wheels.

We have further evidence to adduce of the misery of this class of artisans. Wretchedness is implied in the

high rate of mortality. Death is preceded by long and tedious suffering—disease of a chronic and aggravated form which embitters existence for a series of years. Life is protracted misery. Of the 319 adult workmen in the branch, 85 are at this moment afflicted with disease, and with few exceptions, arising from the occupation. This proportion would almost be anticipated from the foregoing facts respecting the rate of mortality. When, out of 1000 deaths above 20 years of age, 612 occur in this class of grinders under 35 years of age, immense suffering must be at work gradually breaking down the constitution.

The ages of those suffering from disease in its various stages are as follows :—

12	under 25 years of age.
16	30 ditto.
8	35 ditto.
20	40 ditto.
15	45 ditto.
14	above 45 ditto.

Thus, 85 artisans out of 319, more than one fourth, are actually diseased, and of the 85, 71 are under 45 years of age. These are melancholy truths viewed in connexion with the *progress* of civilization—the accumulation of wealth—the increase of luxuries—and the aggrandizement of the few rising on the ruins of the many. The few full of commiseration and verbal charity—abounding in liberal principles—when the source of their own riches is touched. Until thus awakened how contracted and grovelling are their notions—how indifferent to the ever-urgent claims of humanity—how selfish in their enjoyments—how narrow is the circle in which they place heaven and themselves. The scales, however, are not always partial in their inclination. Eternal justice forbids this, and the

adjustment is a day of reckoning in which interest is paid on capital purloined from the suffering multitude.

The facts here stated, give the artisans a claim on the consideration and sympathy of the public. The appeal is not directed especially to secure the aid of the benevolent—this is only one object and the least important. It is to familiarize the mind with the rights of labour, and to enforce by argument the recognition of them. Charity, though needed, is asked less than justice.

It would be unjust on this occasion not to mention an interesting circumstance, bearing on the condition of this class of grinders. It has been stated that the proportion of the diseased to the healthy workmen, is rather more than one fourth. In the wheel, however, belonging to a distinguished and enterprising firm,* in which a perfect system of ventilation has been established, the proportion of the diseased to the healthy is only 1 in 21, showing clearly that a great amount of the physical evils admits of redress. The same system has, also, long been acted upon in the grinding of spindles, in which a larger surface of metal is every moment exposed to the revolving stone, than in the grinding of either forks or pen-blades, consequently the dust created is proportionately greater, and yet the room in which the operations are carried on, is entirely free from it. Great credit is due to the proprietors,† for the skill, taste, and humanity displayed in the application of this system. In their hands it possesses all the qualities of an effectual remedy.

The foregoing picture of wretchedness naturally suggests to the mind domestic scenes of misery—poverty—disease and ignorance. The parent struggling against difficulties and bodily ailments, to maintain his offspring ;

* Messrs. Joseph Rodgers and Sons, cutlers to the Queen.

† Messrs. Yeomans and Shaw, Colston-crofts, Sheffield.

or the widow, with prematurely exhausted energies labouring, but with efforts unequal to the task, to provide for her dependent charge. The shifts and expedients of necessity—the overstained exertions to live, is a fruitful source of crime—is the hot-bed of immoralities. Virtue has ample room to exercise her powers, but she yields the field to the gross wants of sense.

III. The artisans in the well-paid branches are invariably the best educated, and exhibit in their conduct a higher tone of morality. Poverty and ignorance always co-exist, and hence the rate of wages and the fluctuations to which it is subject, are facts which unerringly indicate the prevailing intelligence of any class. When the attention of the mind is engrossed by the urgent wants of the body, there is neither the desire nor the occasion to acquire knowledge.

The power to read and write is a valuable attainment. It opens sources of gratification that would otherwise be unenjoyed, and places within reach the elements of excellence and distinction. We cannot, however, forego the expression of an opinion which we have long entertained, that an exaggerated degree of civilization or intellectual progress is inferred from the possession of this power by the masses. It is viewed too much as evidence of education than as a means towards it. The wide, and by far the most important field—the emotions, which may be awakened to the perception of virtue, or the beauties of external nature, is often left uncultivated as if fraught with no interest or barren of beneficial results. Indeed the tendency of the age is material, not spiritual. The struggle is for wealth, and the mind is trained to regard it as the most valuable of all objects, and taught to pursue it as the aim and end of existence, and not as a means of enjoyment.

The degree of education possessed by the pen-blade grinders is superior to that of the fork-grinders ; it is, however, low compared with that of the artisans in perfect union. Among the 319 adult workmen, there are 75 that cannot read, and 21 that can read, but cannot write. The number of apprentices is 215, of whom 33 cannot read, and 14 that can read, but cannot write. When we consider the facilities for elementary instruction—the Sunday schools, and the gratuitous day schools—it seems extraordinary that so large a proportion of either class should be unable to read. What gross ignorance or wretchedness must prevail to allow of such results !

IV. The wages in this branch are reduced to the starving point, and the artisans complain much less of the scarcity of work than the want of remuneration for their labour. The quantity of goods manufactured is immense, but it yields only a miserable pittance for long hours and close application. For a large portion of the work executed, the prices are little more than one-third what they were in 1836 ; and on some articles in great request, the reduction is 80 per cent. This system has gradually increased for the past four years, not as the result of diminished demand for the goods of this town—it has exhibited, indeed, no necessary relation to such diminution, but as the result of the reckless and ruinous competition of the manufacturers. They have ceased to study the legitimate wants of markets, or the necessity of regulating production according to natural demand.

When the market is glutted, whether home or foreign, they create a temporary and fictitious demand, by the temptation of cheap goods, and the cheapening process goes on as the real wants decrease ; but unfortunately at the expence of the profits of the respectable and liberal

capitalist in the trade, whose principle is to live and let live ; and at the expence of the wages and well being of the artisans. Will such an enterprizing spirit be urged as worthy of commendation, simply because it furnishes work, but forgets the consideration of profits and wages ? It is this spirit, and this alone, which is the occasion of the ill-paid and impoverished energies of the labouring classes, and of the deeply seated depression of the times. On this subject, however, we shall enlarge hereafter.

The pen-knife grinders are now struggling to correct the evils of this spirit, and the necessity for such an attempt requires no eloquence to enforce it. Their wretchedness—bodily suffering—exertions and miserable remuneration, are arguments which no sophistry can subvert, and they ought to inspire an energy of purpose—as fixed and enduring as their own misery. They starve with labour, how much better to starve without it ! If they are to perish, let them not perish with wasted powers—destroyed to beggar themselves and to benefit permanently no class of individuals. The system pursued is self-destruction, and the artisan by his conduct facilitates the process of his own degradation and death. How, aptly, the words of the poet apply to his actions !

So the struck eagle, stretch'd upon the plain,
No more through rolling clouds to soar again,
View'd his own feather on the fatal dart,
And wing'd the shaft that quiver'd at his heart.
Keen were his pangs, but keener far to feel
He nursed the pinion which impell'd the steel,
While the same plumage (exertions) that had warmed his nest
Drank the last life drop of his bleeding breast.

The sufferings and claims of this class of workmen are well described in their printed address to the public—a document temperate and judicious, stating in few words

their condition, and the scope of their demands, as the following extract will show :—

“ In consequence of the great mistake prevailing in many parts of the Town, with regard to the advance of prices made by the pen-blade grinders, we wish to offer a few remarks. In the first place, we are said to be very unreasonable in our demands. Now, it must be remembered, that the statement price of 1831 was allowed to be the most reasonable ever agreed to by any class of workmen, and was at the time very satisfactory to our employers, being, we believe, at least 25 per cent., under the statement of 1810. But, notwithstanding this, we have not asked for the above price of 1831. No ; the very unreasonable price about which so much has been said, and not in the most becoming manner, is from 15 to 20 per cent. under the 1831 statement. In order that the reasonableness of this advance may appear, it should be distinctly stated, that in consequence of the long depressed state of trade, our prices have been gradually going down, until at length we are, as a trade, brought into a very distressed and destitute state. At this moment, there are many of our number that have no tools to work with, but are under the necessity of working with any one who will find them wheel room and tools, and even under these humiliating circumstances, have not the means of paying the necessary expense, which will at least amount to five or six shillings per week. The amount of debt contracted in this way is very great. In the next place, those who have wheel room and tools are greatly involved in debt, so much so that if the proprietors of the various wheels were to make a distraint, we should, with very few exceptions, be without tools to work with. As a proof of the truth of the above statement, we will state the amount of arrears owing by pen-blade grinders alone, at three or four wheels:—At the first, £250 ; at another, upwards of £300 ; at the third, £600 ; and at the last we shall mention, £1017. So that, at four wheels, the arrears of rent owing at this moment are above £2000 : and could all the arrears owing at the different wheels be ascertained, they would, we believe, amount to several thousand pounds more. And then, it is a well-known fact, the great majority are greatly in debt to shopkeepers, and almost every other person with whom we have to do, without the least apparent prospect of ever being able to extricate ourselves.”

This catalogue of evils is not the result of the want of demand for the manufactures of the town—the demand may possibly be less than in the highest state of commercial prosperity, but it is vast, if the quantity of goods executed be deemed a measure of it.

We have facts supplied both by the manufacturers and the artisans in confirmation of this assertion.

The evils may be accurately traced to the competition of the manufacturers; and many have shown that they are as destitute of principle as of capital. They have urged production without the slightest regard to demand.

V. The enterprise of the reckless speculator would have been checked, had the important staple branches been in perfect union. Had the prices been maintained, credit would have had no chance in the struggle against capital—roguery against honesty—gross selfishness against liberality. The breaking down of wages has given play to such conduct. The branch now under consideration is not, nor has it been in firm union, consequently the evils described exist in it to a lamentable extent; and we shall prove, in the course of this inquiry, that they may be accurately measured by the more or less perfect condition of combinations. If perfect, the evils are scarcely felt, or are of brief duration; if imperfect, or not at all in operation, they leave indelible impressions in the bodily sufferings of the artisans—the attenuated frame—the enfeebled vital powers—and immoralities springing out of ignorance, portray the dark outlines of the picture.

VI. The competition resulting from the absence of well-formed combinations, has changed the character of the trade, and led to the deterioration of the articles produced. Quantity and cheapness, not quality and remunerative profits and wages, is now the only consideration: and to such a length is the system now carried, that a large portion of the goods manufactured are worthless—unfit for the purposes for which they are designed. They are, in fact, a gross imposition on the purchasers. The production of them is accompanied with beggary and

wretchedness at home, and the reputation of the town is undermined, thus narrowing the field of consumption and encouragement abroad. These remarks apply to all branches of trade, except the silver-plated. Perhaps, in no department do the evils of this system exist to so great degree as in the one under consideration.

The pen-knife grinders have described these evils, and no words can improve their own. They speak of facts with which they are familiar, and they challenge investigation. "In 1831, there were no articles that could be called useless; there were many that were common, as was always the case, but they were well fitted for the object for which they were intended, not excepting the Wadsley *flat-back*.* About 1831, the commonest blades began to be polished, and the demand for them has continued to increase; articles thus got up having a finished appearance being in fact an imitation of fine cutlery. Competition, however, in the production of these imitative articles, has now been carried to such an extent, that the prices for grinding them are reduced so low, that they cannot be ground to be useful or fitted for the purpose designed; nor do they afford the means of living to the workmen. To such an awful degree is the production of these absolutely useless articles carried, that they leave neither profit to the respectable manufacturer, wages to the artisan, nor utility to the purchaser. We have ascertained that, at this moment, the knives of this kind made weekly, contain 108,000 blades. The prices for making these sham articles, in 1831, were low, being regarded as extremely common; but even these prices are now reduced 50, 66, and in some cases 75 per cent. The making of these trashy goods is inflicting a serious injury on the trade generally

* The commonest knife made.

of the town. We are gradually losing the fame which we once possessed; and if the system be persevered in, we shall be known rather for the impositions which we practise, than for the excellence of the goods which we make. But while there are many manufacturers imposing on the purchasers at home as well as abroad, it is an act of justice to state, that there are some few who abstain from such impositions, and one,* at least, who has not made a single spring-knife known in the trade by the term *crasher*.† The amount of knives manufactured at this time *exceeds that of any former period, but in value is vastly less than in 1836.*" Such are the remarks of the penknife grinders, and no authority can be higher on a practical subject of this kind. Their information is not borrowed or reflected from others. It is derived from experience and personal observation. Were it our business, at this moment, to extend our view to other branches of manufacture similar facts would present themselves.

The system universally pervading these branches out of union, or in which machinery supersedes human labour, is rotten at the core, and has become so from the maddened mania stimulating production beyond demand. The rights and claims of humanity are swept away by the machine in its gigantic operations; and the unprincipled proceedings of the speculator, at our own door, where the machine plays comparatively a subordinate part, have been almost equally injurious to these rights which are inherent, and to these claims which no power can treat long with contempt.

We are not gifted with prophetic vision, but there is a something, which, if not the prompting of inspiration, is kindred to it in the truthfulness of its breathings, which

* Messrs. Joseph Rodgers and Sons.

† A well known, and now a very trashy article.

tells us, that the days of the huge Millocrat are numbered—that the hour of reckoning is at hand, when he must disgorge slowly a portion of that wealth, which he has wrung out of the sinews and vitals of the poor. The handwriting is upon the wall, and the brief events of brief years leave no mystery in its characters. His existence in an age of churches is anomalous, and did not these give a meaning to Christianity, his actions would afford no key to the solution of it. A being so bloated with wealth—pampered by luxuries—cold blooded in calculations—hollow in professions—reckless of the value of human life, and so concentrated in all that is selfish in feeling—grovelling in tendency, and earthly in inclination, never moved on the face of this planet.

His existence is anomalous, but his endurance, especially when he courts the sympathies and support of the wretched—out of whose misery he extracts his riches, would be far more anomalous and strange. Outraged justice and humanity are beginning to recognize their rights. The wrongs of the oppressor—the monopolist of wealth living upon infant suffering, have cleared the perception of them, and redress is never far distant from the distinct apprehension of injustice.

VII. We pass now to the consideration of the causes which have led to the miserable condition of the artisans of this town. The inquiry, though necessarily limited in its scope, will, nevertheless, be sufficiently comprehensive to place before the mind important facts essential to a just understanding of the arguments adduced. From 1831 to 1836, all branches of trade advanced—at first slowly, but towards the latter period, at a rate which perplexed by its vastness. During the ever memorable years, 1835 and 1836, not a word was breathed of the ill effects of foreign competition—of the loss of foreign

markets—of the high price of labour—of a surplus population—dead silence prevailed on these subjects. The machine was incessant in its operations. Night brought no rest. The native population of a town was unequal to the demand for infant labour. One step of productive power succeeded rapidly another, and the manufacturers so far from complaining of the wages of the period—bribed the workmen with various sums—viz.—eight, and twelve pounds, to enlist into their service. These are interesting facts and must be kept in mind. At length, the productive power over-stepped all natural and fictitious demand, and the manufacturing interest came to a stand. A panic occurred, that is, credit would stretch out no farther. This stand was sudden, and not the gradual result of foreign competition. The interest, three months previous to the panic, was in the highest state of inflated health, and the visions of the manufacturer were as brilliant as they were boundless. After this fit of expansion came the period of contraction, which is accompanied with struggling—vigorous efforts to live on credit, but which in a period of depression is exceedingly attenuated.

During the years 1837 and 1838, the manufacturers admitted, that in the two previous years speculation and productive power had been carried to too great an extent, and no one had the hardihood to assert, that business had declined from foreign competition. The injurious effects of certain laws, or the high prices of home manufactured goods, was never alluded to in the years 1835 and 1836. The allusion, coupled with an extraordinary demand, would have been an absurdity, and equally so during the two subsequent years, when the highest commercial authorities acknowledged,* that

* The Manchester Chamber of Commerce.

speculation and over-trading, in this and in foreign countries, had been the immediate cause of the depression.

The manufacturers experiencing a diminished demand, from their own folly—a desire to grow rich all at once, and finding themselves in difficulties, determined to maintain their position by reducing the wages of the artisan. In a period of prosperity too many traded on the capital of others—in a period of adversity on the life blood and energies of the operative. The picture is not the creation of imagination, but the result of personal observation. We have mingled with the actors behind the scenes, and we are familiar with the pulleys and the springs which produce effects startling to the ignorant spectator.

The manufacturers in place of producing less, to be in harmony with a diminished demand, kept up the glutted condition of the markets by immense supplies, every cargo of which was cheaper than the preceding, and the cheapening process has gone on with the deterioration of the article, until at length, the artisan is starved and the article is worthless. Talk of foreign competition—aristocratic extortion—unequal laws, the farce has been acted long enough. The despot is at our own door—the influence of the speculator is felt on our own hearth—the inequality of the laws is aggravated by his attempts to rise to distinction on the wretchedness of the masses.

Are there not evils within our own sphere that require not for their correction the aid of the legislature? Let us begin the reform at home, and for once let the artisan examine the actions of those who direct his attention to distant and unattainable objects. The remedy is in his own hands.

This cheapening of labour to the starving point, is not the result of foreign, but of home competition, and every step of it is at the expence of the independence of the operative and respectable manufacturer. The home and colonial markets have been equally glutted with the foreign, where alone a continental rival can dispute the ground. How has the artisan been treated by these liberal competitive parties? They are occasionally loud in their complaints of his conduct. He is deemed rash—unreasonable and unjust, for he presumes in times of prosperity to demand an approximation to prices, which have not been maintained by his employer. Have not these parties in their struggle to create quantity—in their efforts to outstrip each other, reduced his condition to beggary—to extreme wretchedness? The wages are at the lowest point—for there is a point beyond which even extortion cannot go, but even these wages miserably low, are not paid in money. Of the 319 workmen in this branch, 41 are paid wholly or partly in stuff, and a short time ago a much greater proportion.

This circumstance shows more strongly than any other the thoroughly broken down condition of the workmen. To pay in stuff subjects the individual to a severe penalty; but so destitute and wretched are the workmen, it is nevertheless practised with impunity. Is such conduct considerate, just, or reasonable? Have combinations led to this result? Does the fault of cheap and worthless goods lie with the artisan? Does not the fact clearly prove, that when he fails to protect his own interests no guardian spirit superintends them? Would we die gradually of exhaustion, to feed the pampered appetite of the speculative trader? Give us any death, rather than an elongated train of wretchedness for such an object.

Depression and ruin, consequent on over-production, are evils not confined to this country. From the frequent reference to the effects of continental competition, it would naturally be imagined that our rivals abroad would be progressing rapidly in wealth—that their powers of production would be unequal to the demand. With us the depreciation of mill property is constantly adduced as evidence of this competition. Is it not, therefore, remarkable, that foreign manufacturers should ascribe their embarrassments to our enterprising spirit in their own markets, and should apply to the legislature for additional protection? This is, indeed, strange; but no less strange than true. The following extract, which confirms the fact, is from a periodical publication conducted by gentlemen entertaining *liberal* principles, and, consequently, unexceptionable authority for those who may be disposed to call in question the statement:—

“It is an undeniable fact, that the consumption increases every year, although many complaints are continually made by the manufacturers. But whether it increases in the *same degree* as the production, is a matter on which I must decline giving an opinion. Certain it is, that of some articles the production is carried too far, and I think I may name Twist. It is but natural, therefore, that in England, as well as in Germany, yarns pay badly. I cannot foresee the period when a change may be expected. With us, cotton mills have almost no value. As a proof of this, I will only remark, that a very short time ago a mill, originally bought only four years ago for 80 m. thalers, was sold for 18 m. thalers. Now that one mill after the other is ruined, our manufacturers petition for another protecting duty of 4 thalers. But our government, averse to such a step, have frankly answered, Your mills have not been established on the ground of a protecting duty; and it is therefore your own business to take such measures as to enable you to compete with England.”*

Thus, it appears that the application of capital to manufactures abroad, has led to over-production and its

* Facts and Figures, a periodical record of statistics: No. iv. p. 57, from a letter giving an account of Leipsig fair.

inevitable results—embarrassment and commercial depression—evils under which we suffer and to be traced entirely to the same cause.

Is it not obvious from this sketch that there was only one step from prosperity to adversity? Not a gradual loss of trade. Not a piecemeal breaking down of wages as the consequence. The fall was a panic—the credit of the manufacturer had lost its elasticity, or rather it snapped in the attempt at further extension, and all our evils are the result of this foolish experiment. Trade declined? Foreign competition rapidly undermining our commerce? What are the plain facts of the case? During the past year as great an *amount* of goods was manufactured in this town as in the memorable year 1835. We speak not at hazard, but from facts resting on unquestionable authorities. The goods, then, are clearly wanted, and seven-eighths are consumed at home and in our own colonies where the enterprise of the foreign rival is not felt. Why do not these markets yield a better profit? The competition of the manufacturers has glutted them, and certainly at the expence of the artisan.

The source of all our embarrassments is cheapness—the result of competition, leaving now little profit and less wages. The complaint is not the want of work, but the want of remuneration, and the remedy can be applied only by trades in combination. Perhaps it may be urged that the remedy would be a demand exceeding the means of supply. But with the present amount of productive power and the facilities for extending it, when and whence is such a demand to occur? We have waited five years and in vain, and we may wait many more unless the demand be improved in quality by the influence of combinations. The remedy lies here and the application of it will be

beneficial to the respectable manufacturer, and to every class and order in the kingdom.

There is gross misconception on the subject of combinations. The public generally do not understand the constitution, tendency or object of them. A few cases of despotism, or acts of unwarrantable injustice, are adduced as evidence of their curse or evil.

The idea of men associating together for a purpose, though neither political nor religious in its character, alarms the timid and awakens the prejudices of the ignorant.

VIII. There is no subject connected with the condition of the artisans, replete with the same interest and instruction as combinations; and perhaps on no other is there an equal amount of ignorance and prejudice. Legislative and provincial official authorities, regard them as instruments of mischief and despotism. Having, for a series of years, contemplated the influence of them on workmen—manufacturers and society at large, and having been peculiarly favoured in our position for investigating their nature—object and tendency, we shall state briefly the conclusions at which we have arrived.

Almost all classes are in perfect union, except those in which machinery is largely employed, and of these the public seldom hear anything—the wheelwright—the joiner—the cabinet-maker—the shoe-maker—the tailor—the plumber—the painter—the printer—the bricklayer—and the mason. The objections urged, are not drawn from these classes, but from those who occasionally make vigorous efforts to place themselves in combination, or from attempts made in times of prosperity to secure a former rate of remuneration agreed to by the manufacturer, but from which he had departed, leaving a large margin for subsequent improvement in wages.

The latter circumstance is the principal cause of the objections. The demand for higher prices is made when trade is reviving after long depression ; the turn-out of the workmen is then alluded to as an act of despotism—unreasonable—embarrassing to commercial transactions. All this is exceedingly fine and well calculated to make an impression. What beautiful stories might be woven out of such materials ! Large orders on the books—excellent prospects in the future, and the men will not work ! They turn out for better prices !

The manufacturers forget to tell the other side of the question ; the tyranny of power in a period of adversity. This is never breathed. The reduction of wages to the starving point—the payment in stuff in place of money—long hours of labour and bodily distress—and the train of evils which exaction and injustice inflict, are kept far in the back ground of the picture.

Let both sides of the question be clearly understood—the severe exactions and selfishness of the manufacturer in a season of depression ; and the aroused energies of the artisan, in a season of prosperity to place himself in a former position. The turn-out to accomplish this object is unquestionably a temporary evil, but unworthy of consideration, in comparison of the evils of reduction to which the masses had previously been subject. There is much less injustice in an attempt to secure the prices of a past period—to rise from degradation and wretchedness, than in the studied endeavours to screw down the miserable to the last penny, and to pay that penny in stuff.

The gradual steps towards wretchedness excite little attention or interest. The despotism of power, by the plausibility of assurance and the dignity of inflated importance alone gets the ear of the public. It is high

time that suffering humanity found a voice, not simply to complain, but to demand redress.

IX. The object of combinations is to secure steady and remunerative wages ; or in other words, to prevent wages fluctuating either with production or demand : and why should wages be subject to changes in reference to either ? The shoe-maker—the printer and the other branches of trade enumerated, are not paid at a rate varying with demand. Whether employment be abundant or deficient, the scale is maintained.

There is another advantage directly connected with unions. In a period of depression, the unemployed workmen are not at once thrown upon the parish, or driven to labour at miserably low prices to the permanent injury of themselves and the branch ; but they are maintained by the funds to which they have regularly contributed. This is a circumstance fraught with incalculable benefits. The high moral tone or independence of the artisan is preserved in common with that of the family, and this is a good in which society at large is interested. The evils which spring from the subversion of it are numerous and exceedingly aggravated in character ; and, as we shall subsequently prove, the protracted depression of the times is mainly attributable to the subversion of this independence.

X. The principle of combinations is not confined to workmen ; the master manufacturers in the iron trade have their quarterly meetings to adjust prices ; and they have very recently agreed, in consequence of diminished demand, to blow out one-fourth of the furnaces. We commend this conduct and regard it as an act of wisdom. If the manufacturers in the staple branches of the kingdom had pursued the same just policy, the period of depression would have been brief, and the condition of

the artisans would not have been one of wide-spread degradation and wretchedness.

The varying rate of demand does not modify the fee of the lawyer or of the medical practitioner. Whether the business of either be great or small, the same general charges prevail; or if necessity compels a member of either profession to work at a cheaper rate than the established terms, he loses cast and sinks in respectability. And virtually, the members of these professions, especially in the law, are in combination, and in neither case does the scale of remuneration fluctuate with demand.

The man of education and refined taste feels bound by the understood charges of his profession, and they are as strictly maintained as the wages in the best constituted union. The same high tone of mind not existing among the masses, the same results are attempted to be secured, not by understood but clearly expressed terms, and by machinery a little more complicated in the one instance than in the other.

It may perhaps be urged, that in the one case an individual is master of his own actions, and in the other he is not, and hence a striking difference. It is true, the artisan belonging to a branch in combination is not allowed to work at prices under the established scale, nor has he any right, when by such conduct he would inflict a serious injury on the branch generally.

The professional man is similarly circumstanced. He cannot with impunity cheapen the prevailing charges. The attempt is followed by the loss of his position. So that in the one case, a rate of remuneration is supported by clearly expressed rules; and in the other, by clearly understood sentiments and an accurate knowledge of the results consequent on any deviation. The despotism of sentiment is quite as harsh as the despotism of rules.

XI. We shall proceed to point out the influence of combinations in a season of depression.

All periods of commercial stagnation originate either in speculation and overtrading, or in interruptions from war. The latter cause we may leave altogether out of consideration, as it has exercised no influence since 1814. From this time to the present moment, the country has had three extraordinary periods of manufacturing distress, averaging nearly five years each, and each was the result of speculation and overtrading. It is necessary to have distinct views on these matters to appreciate the beneficial effects of combinations.

The first depression lasted from about 1817 to 1822, and was occasioned by the vast spirit of enterprise and speculation which pervaded all classes. Goods were exported in immense quantities to all countries, but particularly to those states with which we had had no direct intercourse during the war. The result was, that in a very short time the markets were glutted—and the demand at once grew less. Then came the season of struggling. The merchant and manufacturer, who had grown into undue dimensions on credit or the capital of others, broke down in the subsequent process of contraction, transmitting to every class and order in the state the effects of their folly, especially to the labouring classes. This result was not ascribed to the high prices of the articles, or to foreign competition. No complaint on these subjects was made.

During the season of contraction—which is a levelling season, credit rises in value, the amount in *circulation* being diminished, and capital adjusts itself to new situations and channels. It is in fact a period of convalescence. The different interests throw off the peccant humours—the consequence of high living and

sensual indulgences. Health gradually returned with this process, and at length the system became again plethoric in 1825, especially from home speculations and over trading abroad. The suffering which resulted lasted until 1830, and was much the same in character as that which succeeded the speculations of 1816, and on this occasion there was no complaint of the high prices of goods, or of foreign competition. The cause of the distress was obvious and unquestioned.

From 1831 to Midsummer 1836, was marked, in the first place, by gradual improvement, but afterwards by a spirit of enterprise and speculation surpassing that of any former period. When this occurred, and for the two following years, the manufacturers admitted that they had exceeded all legitimate bounds in the stimulus given to production—and the existing distress was ascribed to this circumstance. The high prices of the articles, or the competition of the foreigner was never alluded to as the cause. How was it possible in the face of enlarged markets—augmented exports—and increased productive power?

We shall confine our remarks, with respect to combinations, to the circumstances connected with the present depression, the cause of which is universally admitted to have been speculation and over-trading—*the continuation of the depression has another origin*, and one which is not clearly understood by the public, and the consideration of it will establish the advantages of combinations.

After a period of extraordinary prosperity, which is always accompanied by over-production, the only way in which the consequent distress can be ameliorated, both in its character and duration, *is by producing less*. It is thus that the iron-masters act, and it is by such a principle that

they preserve themselves from ruin, and their dependents from beggary and degradation ; and, therefore, whatever tends to keep down production under such circumstances is a general good, and every attempt to extend it is a curse both to the manufacturers and the artisans.

Exertions so directed reduce profits and lower wages, and we are prepared to shew, that the most intense wretchedness prevails in those branches in which the *extension* has been the greatest. Where production has been restrained by combinations, profits and wages have been comparatively steady, and the condition of the workmen far from extreme suffering. The efforts made to force trade, after a period of prosperity, *are always at the expence of the well-being of the artisan*. The first step is, the reduction of wages, which enables the manufacturer to offer a cheaper article to tempt the purchaser whether at home and abroad, and with the gradual reduction in price the articles deteriorate in quality, until at length an immense quantity is manufactured leaving neither living profits nor living wages. This condition exists not simply in foreign trade where the manufacturer is liable to continental competition, but equally in the home and colonial, in which markets about seven-eighths of the manufactures of this country are consumed. We shall show, by reference to general facts, that this system has been gradually undermining the condition of the artisan, and by steps, imperceptible to the general observer, has brought him and the manufacturing interest too into a position of peculiar difficulties. The system for a long time worked well for the huge millocrat. His opulence grew with his establishments, but every step of his progress was upon the ruins of humanity. The system, however, could be partial only for a time. There is always a day of reckoning for injustice, and now is the

hour. The few must give an account of their actions—of their tender solicitude for the masses. To point out the baneful effects of any class of laws is not enough. The question still returns in all its force. Why has the rise of the one and the fall of the other been contemporaneous? Is this the natural effect of any laws?

The spirit of speculation has so cheapened manufactures in all those branches in which the artisans exercise no controul over production, that the application of capital is no longer accompanied with profit, nor industry with remuneration. To establish these facts, we shall make a few remarks on the exports of the country, to show to what extent the relative value of goods has diminished and the quantity increased.

Exports in official value.	Declared value.
1832—60,600,000	37,100,000
1833—65,000,000	36,400,000
1834—69,900,000	39,600,000
1835—73,800,000	41,600,000
1836—78,300,000	47,300,000
1837—85,200,000	53,300,000
1838—72,500,000	42,200,000
1839—92,400,000	50,000,000
1840—97,400,000	53,200,000
1841—102,700,000	51,400,000

The *official* value represents the quantity of goods, and the *declared*, the *real* value exported. Towards the early part of this century the real value was greater than the official, and now the latter is twice the amount of the former. The difference, to a certain extent, is the result of improvements in machinery and the arts generally, and so far is a benefit to the country. But much of the prevailing distress is to be ascribed to the vast increase in the exports, *cheapened at the expence of the profits of the manufacturer and of the wages of the artisan*. In evidence of this important fact, we observe that in 1835,

a year of great commercial prosperity, the goods exported were in official value £73,800,000, and in real £41,600,000, while in the past year,—a season of severe and general distress, the exports in official value *had increased to the extraordinary sum* £102,700,000, and yet the *real* value, which indicates the profits of the manufacturer and the wages of the artisan, was only £51,400,000; so that while the *real* value had increased £9,800,000, the *official*, which shows the augmentation in the *quantity* of goods exported, had increased £28,900,000. This difference is not attributable to improvements in the processes of manufacture, but principally to reduced profits and miserably low wages.

Were it in our power to state the consumption of goods at home in *official* and *real* value, the same facts would present themselves, proving clearly that the distress is not occasioned by a want of any legitimate demand, but by the competition of the manufacturers which has reduced profits and wages, especially the latter, to the starving point. We need no evidence of this with respect to the staple branches in this town.

Factor has struggled against factor—manufacturer against manufacturer, and the struggles of these parties have been to secure additional labour at diminished cost; nor is there a branch out of combination that has not been brought to the lowest degree of degradation and wretchedness. The complaint is not the want of work, but the want of wages. Whether the goods be exported or consumed at home, the production of them is a process of misery.

It may perhaps be imagined that this state of things is not new—that it has in fact characterised all preceding periods of commercial embarrassments. We are disposed to point out important differences between the present and

the past. In the latter, which occurred during the past century, diminished demand was accompanied by greatly diminished production, or the goods created were not forced into the already glutted markets. The merchant was induced to buy the cheapened articles, and these were generally *shelved* in anticipation of future demand, which was never long protracted, except from war.

The contest among the manufacturers to create quantity in a season of depression, is a feature which belongs to the present times, and to this alone is to be ascribed the long continued distress, and the little hope of any immediate improvement unless the artisans insist on better wages. The improvement rests entirely with them. In former periods, this was accomplished by the return of the *natural* demand, but on the present occasion demand and production are immense, in some branches were never greater, and yet the goods leave neither profit nor wages. The demand necessary to enhance prices—by exceeding the means of supply, is indeed far distant. A knowledge of the existing amount of productive power establishes this important fact.

The artisan suffers not from the competition of the foreigner, but from the competition of his employers, and it is his business to correct it. The attempt cannot be altogether unsuccessful, and we should regard his efforts, vigorous—firm and dignified in character, as worthy of public sympathy and support. The manufacturer in the struggle to create quantity may sacrifice profit, but he has no right to sacrifice the wages of the artisan.

The present state of things we contend is the result of home competition, and the remedy must be of home application. If the working classes generally could have supported their position after the panic in 1836, the subsequent misery would not have continued to the

present moment. They would have produced fewer goods, but the diminished quantity would have kept in circulation a greater amount of capital, to the advantage of the manufacturer and the artisan. The embarrassed and glutted condition of foreign markets would not have been maintained, and unfortunately maintained to the permanent injury of profits and wages. Cheapness, as far as it is the result of mechanical improvements, is a general good, but when it arises from encroachments on the necessary profits of the manufacturer and the remuneration of the operative, it is an evil which is felt by the producers, and at length by the country generally.

The artisan is told that he must wait until certain laws are repealed, and then he will have better wages, the demand being increased. If the goods which he manufactures at the present time are to satisfy any existing demand, why does not this *degree* of demand afford an adequate remuneration? Is he to live only in a period of inflated prosperity? There is no reason why prices should fall with diminished labour. There is no justice in the principle. The shoemaker when he makes only one pair of shoes in the week, is paid at the same rate as when he makes four pairs, and this is the case with the several branches of trade to which we have already adverted.

We contend, therefore, that whether the work executed be much or little, it is gross injustice to withhold a fair remuneration, and the height of hypocrisy to justify the conduct by the existence of any laws. These laws have not prevented the manufacturer from rising rapidly in wealth and influence, and why should they operate partially to the injury of the artisan? At this moment large orders are on hand from abroad, taken subject to a probable advance in prices from the rise of wages.

The manufacturer, however, endeavours to keep back the knowledge of them to the full extent, and thus the goods continue to be exported leaving the artisans in poverty and wretchedness. This is a state of things which cannot be permitted, and we see no chance of improvement from any appeal to the parties benefitted by throwing doubts over demand—by obscuring the fact and directing the attention of the sufferers to legislative enactments. The only chance lies in the determined exertions of the artisans to correct the evil, and let these exertions be concentrated to a point, not frittered away in efforts for constitutional changes. The first step is to secure living wages for the work executed, and then they may indulge in visions and calculations of further good, founded on the repeal of legislative enactments. But let the first step be taken.

XII. It is often urged as an objection to combinations, that they embarrass the manufacturer in the execution or taking of orders by unsettling the prices. The fallacy of the charge is equalled only by its absurdity. A branch in combination can alone present steady data for the calculations of the manufacturer. According to his own doctrines, wages should rise and fall with demand, and such is usually the case in branches that are not in union, except those in which machinery is extensively employed. If such be not the views entertained, in what way is an improvement in trade to be a blessing to the artisan? If wages rise with demand, it is evident that the prices will be modified, at least, in a corresponding ratio, and in all probability by fits, the results of which could not be estimated *a priori*, and hence the difficulties inseparable from fluctuations would still exist.

The embarrassments alluded to arise from the struggling of the artisan, contemporaneous with improvement in

trade, to participate in the advantages of it, not by insisting on an advance of prices previously agreed to by the manufacturer, but by endeavouring to raise the prevailing depressed scale to a former standard. Hence, the objection is founded not on branches in perfect union, because in this case the prices would not have been reduced, but on branches in partial combination arousing themselves to elevate their condition. The same results—the same embarrassing circumstances would occur were, the workmen in their individual and not associated capacities to attempt to better their position, and, therefore, the objection is clearly not against combinations, but against all efforts, in a period of reviving commerce, to participate in the benefits of an increased request for labour. The manufacturer in the silver-plated trade—the master builder—mason—printer and tailor, are subject to no peculiar difficulties in the execution of orders, wages in each branch being a known and settled quantity, and not modified by every little impulse communicated to manufactures.

As an illustration of the evils to which the masses are subject where they are passive instruments—disjointed links, incapable of concentrating their exertions to a common point to enhance the scale of remuneration, in harmony with the improved condition of their employers and the progress of manufactures, analyse the ignorance—the wretchedness and the immorality prevailing, where the opulence of the few stands out in bold relief amidst the darkness and the suffering of the many! In such districts the manufacturers experience no difficulties in the extension of production—in the execution of orders from the staple branches being in combination, and how have they treated these disjointed links—these elements in the creation of wealth? The question needs

no answer. The harrowing outlines of the picture are familiar to the eye, and the intensity of the misery will leave an imperishable record in history—perhaps in exertions to relieve it.

Wherever labour is unprotected the artisan is invariably cheapened by temporary fits of competition—by a surplus of productive power called into existence, in connexion with which he is only a subordinate instrument. In confirmation of this truth it may be observed—and we challenge investigation—that the deterioration in the condition of the masses may, at all times, *be accurately measured by the extension of the branch to which they belong.* The more ample the field chalked out and occupied by enterprise and speculation, the more opulent and despotic the few—the more poverty-stricken and servile the many. The palace and the hovel—the fastidious sensualist rampant in luxuries—and the exhausted operative, co-exist in startling contrast.

If combinations be a curse, where are the blessings which flow from their destruction ?

XIII. The breaking down of the condition of the artisan ultimately affects the position of the manufacturer, especially in the staple productions of this town. Competition springs up out of those whom he has impoverished and thrown upon their own exertions. To live, they sacrifice the profit of the master and a large portion of the wages due to the well-paid workman, and with goods miserably cheap, they supply the factor and enable him to contest the home and the foreign markets with advantages, which the manufacturer does not possess. His capital—credit and all his facilities for production have no chance in the struggle against the journeyman master. At this moment, while the former is compara-

tively inactive, the latter, is busily employed starving and labouring to respond to the demand. One circumstance, strongly illustrative of the fact, is the immense increase,—almost the creation of a new *genus* of factoring capitalists.*

While the manufacturer feels the severe pressure of the times and is unable to maintain his position, this class of traders are making large fortunes, and, as some evidence of their success, there are nearly ten now where one existed ten years ago. The extent of business which they transact is appalling,—because it is a measure of the misery which they create and feed upon. The reduction of wages alone produces such men, and their prosperity is at the expence of the respectable manufacturer.

The competition of the manufacturers evolves many interesting facts bearing on the condition of the artisans and worthy attention, as illustrating the truth of the more important of the preceding remarks. In the season of prosperity, though speculation was a general passion,—gave indeed a colouring to the transactions of all parties, the recklessness of its character did not in this town mark particularly the actions of the substantial and established houses. Such might possibly play on the extreme borders of their ability, but the balance was preserved. The passion in its excess—in the wildness of its aspirations, was prominent only in a class just arising above the dead level, and who, in their earnestness to emulate others in the race, overshot their strength. They miscalculated both their capital and credit. The speculation of the one, leaving out of con-

* Many of this class, a few years ago, were needy Irish adventurers who supplied hawkers and sold goods by auction at fairs; but several among them are now employing a much larger capital than many of the substantial merchants, and they deal exclusively with the wretched journeymen masters.

sideration *degree*, was much less injurious than that of the other. The substantial manufacturer might glut the market, *but if glutted, it was through established and tried channels*, and hence the speculation consisted simply in exceeding the demand ; whereas the other ran riot, and not only erred in overstepping demand, *but in transmitting goods into forced and untested channels*. The parties in the one case, would soon recover their elasticity and tone ; but in the other, the attempt at recovery has been an uninterrupted series of embarrassments. The striking difference in the results are manifest at this moment. The substantial houses* have regained in a great measure their natural health and activity.

The purely speculative manufacturers, in the height of commercial prosperity, endeavoured to break the combinations of the workmen, alledging as a reason, and we speak from a knowledge of the fact, that the demand was far ahead of production and would continue unless freer scope was given to industry and enterprise ; and the apprehensions of the artisan anticipating a diminution of the demand, were treated with contempt and ridicule.

They who complained the loudest of these restrictions on productive power, were the very parties who exceeded their ability to a reckless and ruinous extent—who forced goods into illegitimate and untested channels ; and their embarrassments were the first links in the long chain of national difficulties and insolvency. The point to which we direct particular attention, however, is the striking difference in the conduct of such men in a period of depression, compared with the liberality of the substantial manufacturer, in those cases in which prices are not regulated or

* A few of the highly respectable firms, engaged extensively in foreign trade, to which we allude, are Sandersons Brothers, Huntsman, Greaves and Sons, Butchers Brothers, Dixon and Sons, &c.

enforced by combinations. Here is a test of the men. The great bawlers—the stirring agitators—are with few exceptions, the great screws, and their influence is exercised to depress, not elevate the condition of the masses. This is a fact easy of illustration and proof. In the fork-grinding department one house, of high character and standing,* was giving 1s. 4d. per gross for a certain kind of forks grinding; another, ample in its pretensions and foreign relations, was giving for the same 10d. When the latter was reasoned with on the subject, and made acquainted with the disparity in the prices, the answer was, “Our markets will not afford such terms.” The plain meaning of which is, “We the manufacturers, in our efforts and determination to force sales, have left no margin either for profits or wages. We are at full stretch and only just living, and consequently the artisans must labour and starve.” This is a practical illustration of the effects of competition—of the injury which it inflicts on the productive classes. Similar examples crowd upon the mind, but we must pass them over for the present. The charge is not founded on detached facts, but on evidence broad and undisputable.

XIV. If combinations be detrimental to the branches associated, would it not necessarily follow that the artisans would be less liberally remunerated—less educated—less moral, and would manifest less regard for the necessities of the future, than the workmen in branches independent of all restrictions and regulations. If fraught with injury, the evidence of it should exist in the condition of the parties so united; and the advantages of unrestricted competition should be obvious and imposing in the circumstances of those who enjoy the freedom. The investigation of years has placed at our

* Thomas Ellin and Co.

command important data relative to these questions, and they give to our reasoning a weight of authority which it would not otherwise possess.

We challenge the opponents of combinations to disprove the following conclusions, the result of our labours.

1. The longer a branch has existed in union, and the more perfectly it has been maintained, the higher is the rate of remuneration received by the workmen.

2. The less is the amount of fluctuations in the branch.

3. The more sober, intelligent and moral are the artisans.

4. In a period of depression, less is the proportion of the workmen relieved by the parish.

5. Less is the proportion confined in the local jails for debt.

6. Less is the proportion recipients of medical and other charities.

7. Greater is the proportion members of sick clubs.

8. Greater is the proportion depositors in saving banks.

We have studied the influence of combinations with respect to these important points, and have facts bearing on the several inquiries, which place the conclusions beyond all doubt. We would even go a step further and contend, that, with few exceptions, the respectability and the substantial character of the manufacturers, exhibit a strict relation to the same circumstance—viz., the degree in which the branch is associated. The system which gives unlimited play to competition, not only lowers wages and degrades the condition of the masses, but ultimately reduces profits, narrows the liberality and vitiates the moral tone of the manufacturer.

In subsequent labours we trust to be able to adduce additional evidence in support of the opinions expressed and the principles brought under consideration. But alone we can do nothing. The co-operation of the many—the parties immediately interested in the inquiry, is essential to the accomplishment of the undertaking, which is not less important than comprehensive in its relations to all classes of society.

In the present volume we have to do with the
philosophy of the mind in its various aspects
and the principles which govern its operation. It is
not a new science, but one which has been
studied for centuries. The principles which govern
the mind are not new, but they are not
yet fully understood. It is the object of this
volume to present a clear and concise
account of the principles which govern the
mind, and to show how they are applied in
the various branches of knowledge.