

The case of the journeymen bakers : being a lecture on the 'evils of nightwork and long hours of labour,' delivered July 6, 1848 / by William A. Guy.

Contributors

Guy, William A. 1810-1885.
Royal College of Surgeons of England

Publication/Creation

London : Henry Renshaw, 1865.

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/bkhu7pqf>

Provider

Royal College of Surgeons

License and attribution

This material has been provided by This material has been provided by The Royal College of Surgeons of England. The original may be consulted at The Royal College of Surgeons of England. where the originals may be consulted. This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.



Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

Hospitals 1

DR. GUY'S
CONTRIBUTIONS TO SANITARY SCIENCE.

I.

THE CASE OF
THE JOURNEYMEN BAKERS:
BEING A LECTURE

ON THE

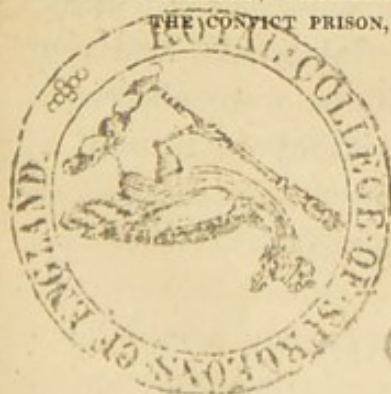
"EVILS OF NIGHTWORK AND LONG HOURS OF LABOUR,"

Delivered July 6, 1848.

BY

WILLIAM A. GUY, M.B.,

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS; PROFESSOR OF FORENSIC MEDICINE,
KING'S COLLEGE; PHYSICIAN TO KING'S COLLEGE HOSPITAL; MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT OF
THE CONFINEMENT PRISON, MILLBANK; HONORARY SECRETARY TO THE STATISTICAL
SOCIETY, ETC.

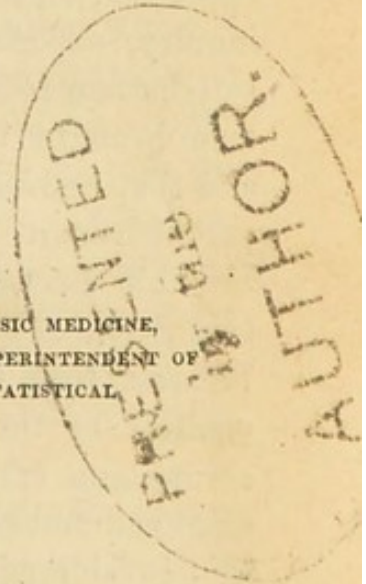


THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:

HENRY RENSHAW, 356, STRAND,
MDCCCLXV.

Price One Shilling.



ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS Lecture was delivered in the year 1848, at the Mechanics' Institution, Southampton Buildings, Lord Ashley, M.P., now the Earl of Shaftesbury, in the Chair; to whom, as well as to Lord Ebury, then Lord Robert Grosvenor, the Author desires to offer his tribute of grateful respect for the great services they have rendered to the cause of the Journeymen Bakers.

The fact that the Lecture was given in the eventful year 1848, will explain some of the political allusions which it contains.

The Lecture is reprinted without alteration. The Author sees no reason to correct the statements, or to modify the opinions expressed sixteen years ago. Both have been confirmed by further inquiry, experience, and reflection; and it is a source of abiding satisfaction to him that the legislation he advocated so long since has been brought to bear on the evils he was one of the first to expose; and that he has lived to see the making of bread changed to some extent from a *handicraft* to a *manufacture*.

This Lecture is the first of a series of "Contributions to Sanitary Science," which the Author hopes to be able to publish. He believes that it vindicates its claim to be considered a scientific treatise by the accuracy and precision of its statements, and the scrupulous care with which the facts it contains were observed, arranged and classified. It has the essence without the form of a well considered statistical essay.

THE

CASE OF THE JOURNEYMEN BAKERS.

GENTLEMEN,

WE are met together, under the kind and encouraging auspices of the noble Lord in the Chair, to consider a subject of immense importance to every journeyman baker in the metropolis; not merely to the hundreds who are assembled here this evening, but to the thousands who are prevented, whether by want of space or want of opportunity, from joining us. If I am not misinformed, the two million inhabitants of this great city are dependent for their supply of the first necessary of life on the labours of about twelve thousand journeymen bakers; and, surely, if the man who profits by the labour of another, owe to him any recompense of kindly feeling after his mere money obligation is paid, these two millions owe to this twelve thousand a large aggregate debt of sympathy, which I doubt not they will be ready to pay; and I am greatly mistaken in the existing feelings of the consumer towards the producer, if the *bread eater* be not ready to help the *bread maker* in his struggle for a redress of the grievous evils under which he suffers. I believe that already some hundreds of the inhabitants of the metropolis have come forward to evince their sympathy with your cause, by signing petitions to Parliament in your favour; and I am happy to hear that many of the clergy have given you their valuable assistance.

If, as I have said, I am not misinformed, the journeymen bakers in London are twelve thousand; and if to this number we add the women and children who are dependent upon such of them as are married and have families, we shall probably have an aggregate of at least *five-and-twenty thousand* men, women, and children, consciously or unconsciously, deeply interested in the proceedings of this evening—deeply interested in the answer to the question which I am about to discuss, whether that cruel system of over-work, which, as your own bitter experience teaches you, is so destructive of domestic

comfort, which makes the very idea of domestic life a mockery to so many of you, which places such serious obstacles in the way of intellectual culture, wholesome recreation, moral improvement, and religious exercises, is or is not injurious to health and fatal to life.

But the interest of this question does not stop here, it does not end with *you*. Every journeyman baker in England, but especially in the large towns of England, must be directly or indirectly affected by the good or bad usages of the trade, in this great centre of fashion and civilization. The journeymen bakers in Liverpool and Manchester, Birmingham and Leeds, and in all the busy hives of commerce and manufacture, wherever men are many and competition active, will sooner or later share your fate, the employer in the provinces will follow the example of the employer in the capital, and will fortify his position and defend his proceedings by quoting the precedent of the master baker in the metropolis. Indeed, I am given to understand that the London system is in course of being introduced into most of our large towns.

Nor is this all ; the question which you have raised, the right for which you are contending, the appeal which you are now making, is not a question for the journeyman baker only, it is not a right limited to this or that body of working men, it is not a selfish appeal—(at least, if it be so, I greatly misunderstand you)—but it is a battle on behalf of the rights of labour *generally*. The bad habits of your own trade, which you are struggling to reform, are the very habits against which the workmen of other trades are contending, and have for some time past been contending, as I am happy to think, not without success ; and I am sure you feel with me, that if your present efforts should prove effectual, you will have won a victory, not for yourselves alone, but for all the over-wrought and over-taxed in every other occupation. For myself, I feel that the question which I have undertaken to examine and discuss this evening, is not simply and exclusively a baker's question, but one which bears directly upon the effect of long hours of work, whether in the factory or the workshop—whether in the person of the draper's assistant, or of the poor needlewoman. I must confess that the pleasure which I have in laying before you the results of my inquiries into the influence of your system of overwork upon your health, is greatly enhanced by the reflection that those results will serve to strengthen the hands of all who are engaged in the same wholesome movement. In this, as in all other matters, *knowledge is power*.

Now, I have no doubt that there are many in this room and out of it, who are curious to know how it happens that I have interested myself in the fate of the journeyman baker, and what induced me to institute the somewhat laborious inquiry of which I am presently to give you the results. I am quite ready to satisfy their curiosity. It happened thus. Having for some years past turned my attention to the Influence of Employments upon Health, I avail myself of my opportunity, as physician to one of our hospitals, of putting questions to the patients as to the nature of their occupations, their hours of work, their wages, and so forth; and I must confess that I was not a little surprised when one of my patients, who was a journeyman baker, told me that his usual hours of work were from eleven o'clock at night to seven o'clock the next evening, being just twenty hours. Such a statement seemed to me to require confirmation. It looked, at first sight, like a gross exaggeration. Accordingly, I put the same question to the next journeyman baker who presented himself, and received substantially the same answer. Both my informants, too, agreed in stating that such hours of work, a little more or a little less, were not mere exceptions to the rule, but the general custom of the trade.

Under these circumstances, you will agree with me that I must have been wanting in curiosity, destitute of common feeling, and untrue to my creed as a sanitary reformer, if I had rested satisfied with this scanty meed of information, if I had contented myself with a hasty expression of indignation or a transient emotion of pity. With the motto, "*Prevention better than cure*," ever on my tongue, I should have been inconsistent indeed, if I had not taken some early opportunity of evincing, by my actions, that the spirit of that noble motto was busy at my heart; if I had not made some effort to carry it into effect by procuring and publishing that knowledge of the true facts of the case, without which it is always difficult and sometimes impossible to carry on with success the wholesome work of agitation.

A man who has a will rarely fails to find a way; and so it was with me; for, as I was passing along Drury-lane, soon after my last conversation at the hospital, I happened to see, in a shop-window, the Appeal to the Public of the Operative Bakers' Society, in which it is set forth, that, as a general rule, the journeymen bakers begin to work at eleven o'clock at night, and continue their labour until five, six, or seven the following evening, and frequently later—a period of from eighteen to twenty hours; and that in many cases

(more particularly among the under-priced portion of the trade) they have to commence labour at eleven o'clock of a Thursday night, and continue the same until Saturday night, and occasionally Sunday morning.

This document was the means of my introduction to the Secretary of the Society, Mr. Read, to whom I am indebted for much valuable information, and who, as many of you know, afforded me facilities for prosecuting my inquiries.

I have entered into this explanation of the circumstances which led me to institute this inquiry, and of the motives which influenced me, partly for your own satisfaction, and partly to guard against possible misrepresentations on the part of those who are opposed to your views. I know that a favourite idea with the opponents of sanitary reform is, that it is merely a selfish agitation got up to find places for doctors and surveyors: in entertaining which idea, they exhibit a very remarkable ignorance of human nature, and the true springs of action; but, as I have said, it is a favourite notion of theirs, and one which may enter the wise heads of those who would throw cold water upon your movement. I therefore hereby authorize you to combat such a notion wherever you meet with it, and to assure those who entertain it, that I am not conscious of any other motive in advocating your cause than that which actuates the noble lord in the chair—a sincere desire to promote your interests and happiness.

I have been led to allude thus briefly to the motives which have actuated me, because I have been given to understand that this lecture, if it should appear to you to contain a fair statement of your case, will be published, and largely circulated among the public; I am therefore anxious, not for my own sake, but for yours, that the circumstances which led to this inquiry should be understood. For the same reason, I have thought it right not to rest satisfied with the statements put forward in the Appeal of the Operative Bakers' Society (though, in your eyes, I am sure that they stand in need of no confirmation), nor with what my first informants at the hospital stated to me; but to ascertain for myself, by my own personal inquiries, whether these things were or were not as they have been represented to be. I will state a few of the answers given to questions addressed to operative bakers, at the hospital and elsewhere, which answers were, in each case, committed to paper on the spot, in order that the public may judge what degree of reliance is to be placed on the assertions put forward in your own publications.

A. W. works from eleven o'clock at night till five o'clock the next evening, with an occasional interval of an hour and a half, being eighteen hours.

J. E. begins at eleven o'clock at night, and works till six or seven the next evening; but sometimes gets a short nap of one or two hours. This makes nineteen or twenty hours.

T. W. works twenty hours at a time on an average.

J. P. begins at eleven o'clock at night, and leaves off work at eight o'clock in the evening. He sometimes gets one or two hours sleep on the board, and sometimes has two leisure hours from four to six in the afternoon. This makes twenty-one hours of continuous occupation, with irregular intervals of rest.

E. C. has often begun work on Thursday night at eleven o'clock, and continued, without rest or sleep, till one o'clock on Sunday, beginning again on Sunday evening at eleven o'clock. This poor fellow, then, worked no less than sixty-two hours on the stretch, and after an interval of ten hours, had to begin again.

I took down the particulars of the case of a poor consumptive patient now in King's College Hospital a little more minutely. He is a very intelligent fellow, and I am quite sure that he speaks the truth. He is twenty-seven years of age, was born at Bandon, in the county of Cork, served his time in Cork, and came to London three years ago. His hours at Cork were from six o'clock in the evening to six or seven o'clock in the morning. He next worked near Dublin, where his usual hours were from eleven o'clock at night to two o'clock the following day, but on Friday night he began at six o'clock and had not finished till twelve o'clock on Saturday night. In London, his hours at his first shop were from eleven at night till two in the afternoon; wages, 15s. At his third place he worked the same hours for 12s. 6d. and part diet. In his second place, during three days in the week, he had only two hours out of the twenty-four for sleep, and on the remaining days four, five, or six hours. His wages in this hard place were 8s. 6d. a-week and diet. He only worked five weeks at his third place, when he was laid up with a severe cold, followed by spitting of blood, cough, and loss of voice, and was unable to return to his work for a year and a half, at the end of which time he was taken, more out of charity than for any other reason, to do light work during short hours for 3s. a-week and his diet. He kept this place about three months, when he was obliged to become an in-patient of the hospital, with symptoms of confirmed consumption.

All these cases were given in evidence before the Metropolitan Sanitary Commission. They were all cases of young men of full age, who, having arrived at years of discretion, are held by the school of political economists to be able to fight their own battles and make their own bargains, and who are supposed to have no one but themselves to blame if they ruin their health and shorten their lives by excessive toil.

But you know very well that there are in your trade many mere lads, who may claim to form an exception to this strict rule of political economy, but who are, nevertheless, subject to all the evils of the system of overwork. Take this case, as an example:—

T. P., aged seventeen, as a general rule, spends twenty hours out of the twenty-four out of bed, with an hour and a half of rest on the board. Every Friday he begins work at eleven o'clock at night, and does not get to bed till twelve on Saturday night, but gets an hour and a half of sleep on the board, as on other days. He carries out the bread, and sometimes, on the Saturday, takes out as many as 26 quartern loaves, or 104lbs. His wages are 10s. a-week. He has been brought up to the business and understands it; and hopes soon to get a lighter place at 12s. a-week. This poor boy came to the hospital for advice, and I shall not easily forget the touching anxiety he expressed about his health. If anything were to happen to him, (and here the tears stood in his eyes,) what would become of his poor mother? She lived in the country, and was entirely dependent upon the exertions of himself and sister. Poor boy! overwork had already made sad inroads upon his constitution; and if he do not get a lighter place, or share the benefit of some wise and humane protective law, his mother will soon be robbed of her chief support. I do not know when I have been more interested in any case than I was in this.

These are not picked cases—they are not all hospital cases—and not one of them was chosen for me by parties interested in this movement for the abolition of nightwork. It would, of course, be absurd to affirm in your presence that all journeymen bakers are thus overworked. One of the men whose case I have detailed to you found one place he was at, a comparatively easy one; but I believe that you will bear me out when I say, that though this system of overwork is not universal, it is very general. Its victims count by thousands. Their number, at least, is such as to entitle them to the consideration of the Legislature, if the principles of political economy do not neutralize the plea.

From all, then, that I have been able to learn, the statement put forth by the Operative Bakers' Society—that a large proportion of the journeymen bakers in London work from eighteen to twenty hours a day, and many of them at the end of the week nearly two entire days in succession—is founded on fact. It is no false pretence of selfish agitators, but a sad and sober reality.

Having established this fact, I must next inquire whether this system of overwork is the only unfavourable influence which is brought to bear upon your health. You all know that in the case of the factory operatives, whose cause has been so ably and so successfully advocated by the noble Lord in the chair, it was not merely overwork that undermined their health, but the almost entire neglect of proper methods of ventilation. The same remark applies to the draper's assistant, and to all who follow in-door and sedentary occupations during long hours of work.

Now, I need not tell you that working, as with few exceptions you do, under ground; and sleeping, as many of you do, also under ground, you, too, suffer from neglect of ventilation; at the same time that the air which you have to breathe is generally rendered impure by the defective state of the drainage, and by the suffocating gusts which you often encounter at the oven's mouth. The vapours from the gas also add their share to the impurity of the air you are obliged to breathe.*

* The following memoranda collected by a journeyman-baker, and put into my hand by Mr. Read, will serve to illustrate the present condition of the bakehouses:—

1. Under ground—two ovens—no daylight—no ventilation—very hot and sulphurous.

2. Under ground—no daylight—often flooded—very bad smells—overrun with rats—no ventilation.

3. Under ground—two ovens—no daylight—very hot and sulphurous—low ceiling—no ventilation but what comes from the doors—very large business.

4. Under-ground—three ovens—use gas at all times—very hot and sulphurous.

5. Underground bakehouse—very dark, obliged to use gas—not high enough for a man five feet nine inches to stand upright in without hitting his head—very hot—one oven.

6. Two ovens—very dark—full of cold draughts—the rain falls on the man that works at one of the ovens—very small bed in the flour-loft.

7. Two ovens—half under ground—no daylight or ventilation—but what comes in at the door—privy on the top of the oven—very hot.

8. Under ground—bakehouse very small, and hot—ventilation from a hatchway—the men are obliged to go out for air to recover themselves before they can eat.

9. A privy in the bakehouse—bread-room under the stairs,

Then, again, you are exposed to another influence, which tends, on the one hand, to exhaust your strength, and, on the other, to render you liable to colds, and the severe diseases which often follow them. I speak, of course, of the *heat* which you have to encounter.

Another cause of disease to which, in common with the stonemason, the Sheffield knife-grinder, and several other operatives, you are exposed, and which is well known to produce diseases of the lungs, is the inhalation of particles of dust; and although the flour which mixes with the air you breathe is not quite so irritating as the dust from stones, or the particles of metal which fill the rooms where dry-grinding is carried on at Sheffield, it certainly does irritate the lungs, and impede the functions of those delicate organs, by filling their pores with a kind of paste. It is this, too, which causes the hoarseness of which so many of you complain, and in part, perhaps, accounts for the indigestion from which so many of you suffer. I need not, of course, tell you that the diseases of the skin which are so prevalent among you, are due to this cause.

But I have not yet exhausted my catalogue of the evils which fall to your lot. You have to lift and to carry very heavy weights, and this must be very trying to men already enfeebled by overwork and want of rest.

Now, when we put together all these unwholesome influences—long hours of work, extending through the whole night and great part of the day, and in many instances towards the end of the week, prolonged through four-and-twenty, or eight-and-forty hours consecutively, or even more; this work carried on, not in a pure air, but in a heated atmosphere, contaminated in so many ways, and loaded with dust; the short hours of rest often spent in an atmosphere equally impure; and added to all this, strong exertions of the body, so ill-suited to men exhausted by so many debilitating causes—can any one be surprised that you should be a sickly and short-lived

10. Half under ground—small bakehouse—privy in it—very bad smells.

I subjoin the following from the evidence which I laid before the Metropolitan Sanitary Commission:—"In one instance, in a decent-looking shop, in a respectable neighbourhood, I found the soil-pipe within a foot of the trough in which the bread is made; the pipe in a very unsound state, and the flour in some danger of being moistened by its contents. Indeed, I was assured by a baker who accompanied me, that he had himself seen the sewage flowing into the trough. On the occasion of my visit, the floor was damp with the drippings of this pipe, and the atmosphere very offensive. In another equally respectable-looking shop, I found the cellar at the back of the bakehouse receiving all the drainage of the establishment, and the whole basement very offensive."

body of men? If you were not so, then all that has been said and written about Sanitary Reform is a delusion, and the efforts which are now making, and will hereafter be made, to restrict the hours of labour within moderate limits, will be deprived of the support of one of their strongest and most convincing arguments. I say ONE of their strongest and most convincing arguments, because I cannot forget that the advocates of moderate hours of labour can adduce reasons more stringent far than the health of the body, reasons which no Christian man can gainsay, the improvement of the intellectual, moral, and spiritual condition of the body's immortal tenant.

My present duty is not to assume or assert that your trade is an unhealthy one, but to *prove* it. And just as I would not take for granted the assertions put forth by the Operative Bakers' Society, but determined, as far as I was able, to test them for myself; so I did not rest satisfied with assuming that your trade was an unhealthy one, but resolved to ascertain by personal examination of journeymen bakers working in the metropolis, what the real state of their health was.

With this end in view, I addressed to upwards of one hundred journeymen bakers in succession, precisely the same questions as I had previously put to men following sundry other occupations, among which I may mention the dustmen, the bricklayers' labourers, the brickmakers, the carpenters, the silk printers, and the compositors. My aim was to get together facts admitting of strict comparison; and this could only be done by summing up the answers to the questions addressed in turn to the several classes of men I have mentioned.

But here, again, more with a view to satisfy the public than for your information, it is proper that I should state my belief that the results I have arrived at have been drawn from what may be termed a fair average of the trade. I have not included any of my hospital patients, nor have I selected only men who work for underpriced bakers. I first entered in my tables the replies to my questions of the members of the committee of the Operative Bakers' Association, and then visited the houses of call resorted to by different classes of journeymen bakers; and I believe that by this means I obtained a fair average of the whole trade.

What, then, were the results of this careful inquiry and strict comparison? Let us take, as our first test, that which most men are in the habit of judging by—the outward appearance. No one who

has taken notice of you in the streets, with your heavy baskets on your arms, can say that you look healthy. No one who has seen a score or so of you together in your houses of call, as I have, can congratulate you upon your good looks; and I don't think that his opinion would be altered if he were here this evening. I have not yet encountered anywhere a thoroughly healthy-looking, robust, florid-complexioned baker; and among a hundred of you, whom I examined and questioned, I only met with fourteen who could be said to have a tolerably healthy look about them; whereas, no less than about three-fourths of the carpenters, whom I examined and questioned in the same manner, might be fairly said to be healthy, vigorous, robust men. A still larger proportion of the dustmen of London were strong and healthy-looking men, with oftentimes a good ruddy complexion of their own, under the coating of dust. So, also, with the bricklayers' labourers, and, so, also, though to a less extent, with a class of men who have the credit of leading very irregular and dissipated lives—the brickmakers. Very nearly one-half of the bakers whom I inspected may be said to have delicate health—to have a sickly look—and six times as many of them as in the other trades I have specified, must be put down at the first glance as being in decidedly bad health. So much for appearance.

You shall now speak for yourselves. One of the questions that I addressed to the men following the several trades which I have mentioned was this:—Are you subject to any complaints? and if the answer was in the affirmative, I noted down what the complaints were, putting merely such additional questions as were necessary to clear up any doubt as to their nature. I am not aware of any difference in the manner of putting the question to the several trades; so that I have no doubt that the comparative statement which I am about to make, will prove to be substantially correct.

Among the silk printers whom I questioned, eighteen in the hundred said they were subject to complaints of one sort or another; among the scavengers, nineteen in the hundred; among the bricklayers' labourers, twenty-five in the hundred; among the carpenters, twenty-six in the hundred; among the brickmakers, thirty-six in the hundred; but among the journeymen bakers, no less than seventy in the hundred. In other words, there were nearly four times as many complaining men in your trade as among the silk printers and scavengers; nearly three times as many as among the carpenters and bricklayers' labourers, and almost twice as many as among the brickmakers.

Several of the journeymen bakers complained of being subject to more than one disorder; so that when I came to add all the disorders together, they amounted to no less than 125 disorders, to be distributed among 111 men, or more than one to each man.

If, now, we pick out from these *complaints*, to which the several classes of men stated that they were subject, the severe *diseases* which had attacked them, we shall have a further confirmation of the unhealthy nature of your trade, as at present carried on. For I find that, while ten in the hundred among the scavengers, eleven in the hundred among the bricklayers' labourers, and twelve in the hundred among the silk printers, had had severe attacks of illness; forty-eight in the hundred, or very nearly half the entire number of the journeymen bakers, had suffered in the same way. The brick-makers alone will bear to be compared with you in this respect; their proportion being forty-six in the hundred.

There is one severe and fatal disease which I have placed by itself, and which is not comprised in the comparison I have just made—I mean *fever*; to which disease, as it would appear, you are less liable than the classes with which I have just compared you. I find that you suffer from fever in the moderate proportion of eight in the hundred, the proportion among the scavengers being nine per cent., and among the other two classes, much higher. In this one point, then, my comparisons are in your favour.

But the diseases to which you are peculiarly subject, and which form the true test of the influence of your employment upon your health, are diseases of the chest, or, to be more exact, diseases of the lungs. Here I can compare you with a class of men whom I have somewhat minutely examined—I mean the compositors. I dare say all of you know enough of the business of a printer to understand the nature of the compositor's employment. He stands for several hours a day, in a hot and confined atmosphere, shuffling his types about, and is occasionally called upon to work at night. His occupation is by no means a healthy one, and he is very subject to diseases of the lungs. Now, in order to prove to you how very injurious to your health your employment, as at present carried on, is, I will pick out from my memoranda all the compositors whom I found working in the smallest, closest, and hottest rooms, and contrast them with the whole of the journeymen bakers who came under my observation.

Out of 100 compositors I found that twenty-four, or about one-fourth, were subject to chest complaints more or less severe, while

the number so complaining in your trade was no less than eighty in the 100, or upwards of three times as many. Nineteen out of the eighty had had severe or lingering diseases of the chest, and as several complained of having had repeated attacks, I found that when I added up all the disorders and severe diseases entered in my notes, I had a total of 108 to be divided among 111 men, or, on an average, nearly one to each man.

But there is one important indication of severe disease of the chest, about which I put direct leading questions both to the compositors and to the bakers—I mean *spitting of blood*—and the replies to these questions convinced me that I did not exaggerate the unwholesome nature of your occupation. I found that these same compositors who worked, as I have said, in the smallest, hottest, and closest rooms, had spit blood in the proportion of twelve (or, to be very precise) twelve and a half in the 100, while the journeymen bakers had suffered in the proportion of thirty-one in the 100. In other words, out of twenty-four bakers, I should expect to meet with eight who had spit blood, and out of the same number of compositors only three.

I have already told you that I did not pick my men in your trade; but that I took what I deemed a fair average. Even so, the result is bad enough, but on referring to my notes, I found that in a group of journeymen working for under-priced bakers, no less than one in every two had spit blood. So that if we compare the compositors working under the least favourable circumstances, with the bakers working also under the most unfavourable conditions, we have the poor baker four times as subject to this formidable symptom of disease of the lungs as the compositor.

After all that I have said to you about the diseases to which you are subject, you will be prepared to hear that the same causes which undermine your health, and make you liable to so much sickness, also tend to shorten your lives.

I regret that, in consequence of the different branches of employment among the letter-press printers not being distinguished in the registers of deaths, I am prevented from comparing the compositor with the baker in this respect also. But I will take in place of the compositors a class of men exposed to like evils—I mean the tailors—and classing together masters and men, will compare the duration of their lives with that of the bakers, masters and men, excluding, in both cases, all who die under twenty. Well, the result of this comparison is, that the tailor has the advantage of a quarter of a

year of life, the average age of death of the baker being forty-nine years, and of the tailor forty-nine years three months. The shoemaker has the advantage of one year, the carpenter of three years and four months, and the weaver of nearly nine years. At first sight the difference of a quarter of a year, or even of a year, does not seem much; but when you recollect that it is an average difference, you will see that it is by no means unimportant. I find from a document put forth by the bakers themselves, that the average age at death of journeymen is only forty-two years.

It is, however, much more by excessive sickness, than by actual shortening of life, that the effect of your night-work, and long hours of labour, your violent exertions, and your exposure to heat, dust, and foul air, shows itself. That you are subject to an unusual amount of sickness, I think I have succeeded in proving. The facts which I have stated must convince you of that; and as I think I have said enough upon this part of my subject to satisfy your minds that your health is really endangered, and seriously affected by the causes to which I have just referred, I shall not enter into any further details of this sort, but proceed forthwith to consider the remedies.

That I may do this successfully, I must remind you of what I have already stated, that though the system of night-work, and of long hours of labour, is the giant evil, compared with which all others sink into insignificance, yet it is by no means the only evil of which you have to complain. I do not speak of irremediable evils, but of those which admit of abatement or removal. I will assume that, in the majority of cases, it is absolutely necessary that the bakehouse should be in the basement—that there is no space to put it anywhere else—but I contend that it is not necessary that the places in which you pass so large a portion of your time should be, as they too often are, dark, damp, dirty, dismal dungeons, reeking with foul air. The drainage, where it is defective, ought to be put to rights; more light and more air ought to be admitted, and cleanliness should be scrupulously attended to. The public have nearly as much right to claim this as you have; and I am sure that the master-baker, when the evil is brought properly under his notice, will not refuse to remedy it. I must do some of the master-bakers the justice to say, that they have not waited to be taught their duty. They have found it out for themselves, and like just and humane men, have cheerfully performed it. The remarks which apply to the bakehouses apply equally, and, indeed, still more strongly, to those

dark cupboards in the basement, at the foot of the stairs, in which so many of the journeymen are obliged to sleep. Such places are very unhealthy; and I cannot too strongly insist on the importance of providing a sleeping apartment in the upper part of the house, as is now generally done by the more respectable employers. The substitution of the hand-cart for the breadbasket, out of doors, is the only other beneficial alteration which it occurs to me to suggest to the master-baker, excepting always the abolition of night-work and the shortening of the hours of labour, of which more by and by.

But you—the journeymen bakers—will perhaps say, have you no advice to give us? Is there nothing that we can do for ourselves? If you will promise to take what I shall say in good part, I will answer your inquiry. I believe that you can do much for yourselves in many ways; for though I do not pretend to be in your secrets, I hear that the bad habits of the trade are not monopolized by the masters. If they have through negligence allowed the bakehouses to get out of repair, the walls to continue damp, and the air impure, and if they have not shown themselves very solicitous about cleanliness; you, on your side, are sometimes censured by your employers for indulging in careless and slovenly habits. If they have done their duty by you in providing comfortable sleeping-rooms, and clean and wholesome bedding; they, on their part, complain that you cannot be got to take your clothes off. They require you, it is true, to be on the spot for a great many hours at a time, but they contend that you will not sleep when you may, but prefer less refreshing ways of spending your leisure. These things have to do with your health, and therefore I mention them; and, for the same reason, I must take the liberty of alluding to a habit which you have of spending your Saturday evenings, and I dare say other evenings too, in breathing one poison—tobacco, and drinking another in the form of beer and spirits. This cannot be good for your health; and you are certainly mistaken if you think that it helps you to bear your fatigues. It is a bad habit, and it will repay you in every way to get rid of it. Do not mistake me. I do not presume to interfere with your amusements as such, or to dictate where or how you shall spend your scanty leisure. Much less would I take upon myself to censure this patronage of the public-house on the score of immorality. No man who recollects what were the drinking customs of the higher and middle classes in England, a generation or so back, can do aught but hang his head and blush, as he thinks of that monstrous infatuation. But, at the same time, he may console himself

with the thought that what the lapse of a generation has done for the black coat, another generation, or less, may do for the fustian jacket. But on the score of health, I may be allowed to protest against the public-house, and I think that in your case, especially, it ought to be abandoned. If, in saying this, I have exceeded my province, I heartily crave your forgiveness.

Having now considered the minor evils to which you are exposed, and suggested one or two obvious remedies, I shall devote what remains of this lecture to the monster-evil of your trade—*over-work*—*over-work* extending through the hours of the night, and great part of each day—*over-work* carried on, as I believe, under more unwholesome circumstances than those to which any other class of England's overtaxed sons and daughters is exposed.

It is not easy to say how much of the sickness and severe diseases to which you are liable is due to this system of *over-work*, and how much to the circumstances to which I have just alluded. The two things do not admit of separation, and I do not know that any opportunity exists in any trade of so isolating the one influence from the other, as to determine with any accuracy what is due to each.

Men have been sometimes known to lay the foundation for fatal disease by some one bodily effort carried beyond their strength, just as men have been known to exhaust themselves by intense mental application, all other things having been favourable to their health.

I recollect, a few years ago, a fine young officer walking a long distance for a wager, coming in exhausted, and soon after dying of consumption: and the same fate befel one of my Cambridge friends, who had studied too hard for his degree. Now, I put it you, whether it is not reasonable to suppose that a system of work extending, night and day, to from eighteen to twenty hours, with only irregular snatches of rest, and towards the end of the week to from forty-eight to sixty hours, must of necessity claim many such victims? Even if you worked in the purest atmosphere, and enjoyed all the comforts and luxuries of the young officer whose case I have mentioned, it stands to reason that many of you must share his fate. In other instances, the powers of constitution would be slowly undermined by this excessive toil, and none but men of an iron frame—of whom there are some in all trades,—could hope to reach even the commencement of old age. The disease which proved fatal in the two instances I have quoted, was consumption;—a disease peculiarly apt to be brought on by bodily exhaustion, however produced. It was thought to be an English disease, but the opinion has no

foundation that I know of: but this I know, that it is the disease of those who breathe impure air; of those who labour in close workshops, or serve in close shops. It is also one of the many diseases of the drunkard; moreover, it is peculiarly a disease of large towns, and from all that I know of it, is not likely to be more prevalent among any class of men than among yourselves.

Now, there is this peculiarity about consumption, as compared with most other diseases: it is a long and lingering malady, brought on, as I have said, by exhaustion of the strength, but leading to another kind of exhaustion, much to be deplored, I mean the exhaustion of the pocket. So that, to say that any body of men is subject to consumption, is to say that it is poor—to say that its members are apt to become a burden to their fellows, and to the country to which they belong.

If by abolishing night-work, and abridging the hours of labour, we should succeed in closing up this avenue to death (consumption), we should not merely be prolonging your lives, but diminishing your own difficulties, and relieving the public burdens. The ratepayers are beginning to understand this. The idea is dawning upon them, that filthy houses, and undrained towns, and swamps in the country, and close and confined workshops, and night-work, and excessive hours of toil, are paid for in the long run by the public at large.

I believe, therefore, that the ratepayers of London are interested in abolishing this system of night-work, especially as, from the best information I can obtain, the change will not only not increase the price of bread, but be the means of effecting an economy of gas, coal, and flour, which will enable the master-baker to employ more labour by the same expenditure of capital, and in this way to relieve the overstocked labour-market and the poor-rates at the same time.

But we must look at night-work and over-work in another light. We must look at it, not merely as the cause of sickness and premature decay, but as an unwholesome influence, acting day by day directly upon the body, and indirectly on the mind. Bodily exhaustion is evidently unfavourable to the exercise of self-control. It produces a feverishness, a restlessness, an excited state of mind, which is very apt to lead to excessive indulgence in spirituous liquors. The mind cannot settle to anything, even to sleep, and craves excitement and exciting amusements; and thus bad habits are formed, which grow upon a man until it becomes very difficult to throw them off. Health, on the other hand, like cleanliness, is an ally of virtue and sobriety. It is favourable to self-control, and to

quiet and rational enjoyments. It has the same effect on the mind as it has on the palate; it enables it to relish plain and homely fare, and to dispense with unwholesome stimulants. By abolishing night-work, and shortening your hours of labour, you would be placed in possession, not merely of new faculties of enjoyment, but of time to use them; and I believe that experience in similar cases to your own proves that you would use them.

But how to bring about this great reform in the usages of your trade? That, after all, is the main question. And although I came here this evening to tell you what I thought of the effect of night-work upon your health, I think you would not wish me to leave this place without giving you my opinion as to the best way of bringing about this happy consummation.

I do not imagine that any of your friends see the slightest reason to regret that your case was brought under the notice of the House of Commons on the 30th of May; for though the House refused to Lord Robert Grosvenor the committee for which he asked, no one ventured to doubt the substantial truth of the statements made in your petition, or to call in question the injury to your health as set forth in the evidence laid before the Metropolitan Sanitary Commission. There was also no disposition evinced to treat your case with anything but respect and sympathy. Whatever may be said of the logic of the House, no one can doubt its humanity; and even those who argued most strenuously against the committee did so on the ground that they wished to spare you the mortification of an unfavourable report. They were so sure that the report of the committee would be unfavourable, that they determined not to subject you to the disappointment.

But though you failed in obtaining the committee, you have every reason to congratulate yourselves that the attempt was made. You have obtained publicity; you have got a committee of the whole nation. That committee is sitting from day to day, and receiving evidence through that Argus-eyed witness, the press, and I will answer for it that it will give in a favourable report. That great inquest of the nation never yet turned a deaf ear to the cry of suffering or the claim of justice. Your cause is safe in the hands that abolished slavery, limited the hours of labour in the factories, prevented the employment of women and children in mines, and gave you some portion of the Sabbath to yourselves.

The House of Commons, then, though they refused you a committee, admitted the truth of the statements made in your petition.

and the disastrous effect of your present system upon your health. But Sir George Grey, who was the mouth-piece of the Government on the 30th of May, though he thought inquiry unnecessary, and your hard case "beyond the reach of any legislative remedy," recommended Lord Robert Grosvenor to prosecute the inquiry into your case before the Sanitary Commission, and conjured him not to hold out to you any hopes of a legislative remedy, "unless he was prepared to lay on the table of the House a Bill of which he thought he could carry out the provisions." Such a Bill, I understand, the noble lord is preparing to bring forward; and with the warm support of our noble Chairman of this evening, whose presence is almost an augury of success in any work of humanity and justice, and of other friends of the working man, there is fair ground to expect a favourable result. The majority against the motion for a committee was only twelve, and that is not very difficult to turn into a majority the other way.

Now, I am sanguine enough to think that I may contribute, in some slight degree, to the success of your movement, by laying before you and the public such considerations as have occurred to my mind in the course of my inquiry into the influence of your occupation upon your health.

I have, of course, come into contact with many journeymen and some master bakers, and have not failed to enter into conversation with them as to the possibility of abolishing nightwork, and of shortening the hours of labour; and I think that I may, without any great presumption, claim to be at least as well prepared to discuss this question as those members of the legislature who took a part in the debate upon the proposed committee. Perhaps the most useful course which I can adopt is to refer to the debate, to see what were the arguments employed by the opponents of the motion, and, with all proper respect for the great council of the nation, see what I can do to refute them.

The objections which I shall have to advance will not, I think, lose anything of their force (indeed, I believe they will receive additional weight) from the consideration, that in many respects, and to a very great extent, my own sentiments are in harmony with those of the parties from whom you may expect the most determined opposition—I allude, I need not tell you, to the advocates of free trade. Now, I am myself a free trader; I am convinced that it is not just to protect one body of Englishmen at the expense of another; I am convinced that it is not expedient to protect Englishmen as

against foreigners; I am a friend to free competition between man and man—between manufacturers, between merchants, between labourers, between bakers, between men in the same class and the same rank in life. In your own trade, for instance, I should be the last person to interfere to prevent the man of large capital from making bread cheaper than the man of small means; I should be the last person to interfere between the League Bread Company or the Carlisle Biscuit Manufactory, or any other association for converting the baking of bread and biscuits from a *handicraft*, which I think it ought not to be, into a *manufacture*, which I think it might be, and the single-handed master baker. If such a change could be brought about, it would be cheaply purchased by some present inconvenience and suffering.

So far, then, I agree with the advocates of free-trade. I am for free competition between members of the same class, whether at home or abroad—that is to say, the competition of employer with employer, and workman with workman.

But not only do I agree with the free-trader, and the men of the Manchester school, in advocating free competition, but I sympathize with them most heartily in their condemnation of French theories and French practices. I am no disciple of Louis Blanc. I do not believe that a government can safely promise the people to supply them either with work or food. I have no more respect for French national workshops than I have for English workhouses. The only difference that I can see between them is the difference between a fever and a consumption. I believe labour-laws and poor-laws to be alike mischievous, degrading, and delusive: and I look forward with hope and confidence to the time when a schoolboy would be flogged for advocating either of them. I look upon both of them as ingenious contrivances for diverting the rewards of honest industry into the hands of dishonest idleness, and substituting a slow circulation of money, with a periodical stagnation in the hands of the tax-gatherer, for that rapid flow of the golden stream which characterizes the operations of individuals.

“What, then,” you may ask, “is the difference between you and the advocates of free-trade?” I answer, this great and most essential difference, that the free-trader confounds two things, which I keep distinct—the competition between employer and employer, or workman and workman, and the arrangements between the employer and the employed. The free-trader has been reluctantly forced to admit that the State may interfere between the employer and the

child, or young person of either sex, under age, and even between the employer and women of all ages; but he contends, that between the employer and the grown-up workman there must be no interference, because, forsooth, the adult workman is able to make his own bargains. And it is somewhat curious to observe how, upon this point, one of the noble leaders of the agricultural protectionist party in the House of Lords* joins hands with the free-trade representative of the cotton-spinning interest in the House of Commons. I perfectly well recollect the noble lord to whom I have referred, contending that the agricultural labourer could make his own bargains, and everyone knows that the free-traders hold the same doctrine, than which I know none more preposterous. I put it to you, my friends, whether you can make your own bargains with your employers in any reasonable or practicable sense of the term? I will take a case. I will suppose that I am a master baker, and that any one of you is a journeyman out of work. I have a place to dispose of, and you are anxious to engage yourself. I am satisfied that your character is good, and that you understand your business. I agree to take you on the usual terms. You are quite willing to close with me, but you say that you cannot work at night, that you cannot, in justice to your health, which you are bound to preserve, work eighteen or twenty hours out of the twenty-four. What answer should I be compelled to give? Should I not decline to employ you, except according to the usages of the trade? To be sure I should; and I should probably tell you of a neighbour, who, as it is, was running me very hard by working his men more, on an average, than eighteen or twenty hours a day, and whom I could no more compel to change his system, than you could compel me to take you into my employ. The bad habits and usages of the trade are too strong for both of us. I say, then, it is a bitter mockery to talk about grown-up men being able to make their own bargains. The premiss is false, and the conclusion, therefore, falls to the ground.

In any case, however, the objection which I am considering does not apply to more than three-fourths of the journeymen bakers, for, on a rough estimate, upwards of one-fourth are under twenty years of age, and have a claim to legislative protection; and, from the nature of the case, any measure passed for the relief of these lads must embrace the men also.

But perhaps I shall be met by the argument, that, though the individual is powerless, the body of workmen, or employers, is not.

* The late Duke of Richmond.

They can arrange the matter among themselves. What! twelve thousand journeymen on one side, and about two thousand five hundred masters on the other, arrange this matter by mutual agreement? It seems to me to argue great ignorance of human nature to suppose this probable, or even possible. Who does not know the bigoted opposition of which a minority of a few score of ignorant, selfish, and self-willed men is capable? And, while this hopeless attempt is being made, recollect that twelve thousand men are, day by day, toiling, and suffering, and wasting, robbed of all that makes life happy, and excluded from opportunities of improvement, of which the consequences may not end with life itself.

The free-trader, however, may go on to object that if the masters and journeymen cannot be brought to agree, the journeymen may take the matter into their own hands, and strike. Surely, with all their love for industrial freedom, the free-traders are not prepared to go this length. The very last thing a truly practical man would encourage is a strike; and certainly the last thing the inhabitants of London would wish to see brought about is a strike of the men on whom they depend for their bread. But the fact is, that the journeymen bakers of London have tried this remedy and failed, and though the Scotch journeymen were more successful, and compelled the masters, for a time, to do them justice, they are fast lapsing into their old habits again.

I contend, then, that without legislative interference your case is hopeless. The individual journeyman cannot, as is absurdly contended by your opponents in the House, make their own bargains; the whole body of journeymen cannot win over the whole body of masters to the side of humanity and justice; and strikes have failed, and will fail again, and are at the best but temporary remedies. But the legislature can help you if it will, and it will help you if you can succeed in enlisting public sympathy on your behalf. To that object all your efforts ought to be directed. Let the public be once fairly roused to a sense of the hardships under which you suffer, and their awakened sympathy will react upon the House of Commons, and put a little heart into their political economy. We shall then hear less about "interference," and more about humanity and justice; less about the difficulty of inspecting your places of work, and more about the insufferable hardships of you—the workmen; less about unfavourable temperature and indifferent yeast, and more about excessive night-toil and foul air; less about the inconvenience to the House of having, perhaps, at some future time, to entertain the case

of the tailors, the compositors, or the knife-grinders, and more about the merits of the case actually submitted to them.

Once bring the sympathy of the public to bear on the legislature, and instead of Utopian visions of journeymen bakers representing their own class in the House of Commons, and eloquent declamations about "just and equal laws," and "just rights," and so forth, you shall have your own Bill to secure you against the bad habits of a minority of your trade. Once free from the grinding tyranny of the present monstrous usurpation on your time and health, you will have leisure to prepare yourselves for seats in the legislature, if that be your ambition, and one or other of the People's Charters shall have succeeded in opening the doors of Parliament to you; but at all events you will be able to prepare yourselves, by the wise employment of your hard-earned leisure, for seats which are far more to be desired than the benches in St. Stephen's—seats at your own fire-sides.

Mr. Hume, who was so anxious to see you represented in the House by one of your own class, seems to have fallen into an error which I must take the liberty of correcting. After referring to recent events in Paris, and the dangerous interference of the Provisional Government with the labour of the people, he alarmed the House by telling it that the proposal made in your petition was a branch of the system which undertook to feed the whole community. Now, I am quite certain that you will authorize me to assure the honourable gentleman and the House, that you are by no means anxious for national workshops, or national bakehouses; that you do not wish the Government to establish bread factories, in which all the idle vagabonds in your trade, if you have any, should do as much or as little work as they please, or none at all if they prefer it, for a uniform wage of half-a-crown a day. I am sure that you repudiate all these absurdities; and that the very last thing you desire is, that the idle and the industrious, the skilful and the unskilful, the strong and the weak, the healthy and the sickly, should receive exactly the same pay. Your request is a modest and a reasonable one—that between six o'clock in the evening and four o'clock in the morning, you shall be compelled to do no work, except light work of absolute necessity; and that your freedom should be guaranteed by Act of Parliament. What this has to do with Communism or Fourierism, or any other *ism*, I don't know. You do not ask to be excused from working more than ten hours a day, but you prefer a modest request, to have ten hours out of the twenty-four to yourselves. And this

request, so modest and so reasonable, frightens a Legislature which, after its own fashion, has interfered between the employer and the employed more than France or any other nation under the sun. What was the abolition of slavery, but an interference, dictated by justice and humanity, between the slave and his owner? What is our blockade of the African coast, but an interference with the freedom of commerce—an interference dictated and justified by the same high considerations, though scarcely sanctioned by true wisdom? But to come nearer home—what are the several Acts for regulating labour in factories, of which that remarkable Ten Hours Bill is the climax; what the Act for preventing the employment of females in mines and collieries; what the Coal-whippers' Act; what the Pawn-brokers' Act; what the Act for regulating Sunday baking, but interferences between the employer and the employed, more than one of which directly affects the hours of labour? And yet that very able and enlightened statesman, Mr. Gladstone, is reported to have said, that to grant your request would be to do an act "abhorrent to the genius of the constitution." I, for my part, do not profess to know much about the "genius of the constitution," but I have always looked upon the constitution of these realms as a mixed constitution, in every sense of that term—a constitution in which mercy tempers justice, and considerations of moral expediency are wont to triumph over abstract theories, however true in themselves—a constitution which is the practical exponent of that great Christian principle of our common law, which bids us *so use our own as not to injure others*, and which must be a mockery and a snare if it cannot be made to mean that the employer shall not abuse his privilege of capital to the ruin of the health, the destruction of the lives, the wreck of the happiness, and the imminent danger of the temporal and eternal well-being of the employed.

Mr. Gladstone, whose opinion of the "genius of the constitution" I have just quoted, makes, as I think, an unsuccessful attempt to prove that the interference of the House on behalf of the coal-whippers, which was referred to several times in the course of the debate, ought to form no precedent in your favour. I will read to you his own very lucid description of the case of the coal-whippers, that you may judge whether it ought or ought not to be a precedent in your favour. "A custom," Mr. Gladstone tells us, "had grown up between the masters of coal-vessels and the publicans, in that part of the city of London where the coal-whippers exercised their vocation, by which it invariably happened that

the men whose services were necessary to discharge the coal-ships were hired through the publicans. The publicans had come to be hiring agents. The consequence was the greatest demoralization—a demoralization which he should have said was complete had it not been for the fact that the men were conscious of the servitude to which they had been reduced, and were unfeignedly anxious to escape from it. The Act did nothing to regulate wages or the hours of work; it did nothing towards the inspection of labour. All that the Act did was to establish an office and a public officer to control it; and it was required, under sanction of a penalty, that every one having a coal-vessel to discharge should repair to that office for the purpose of hiring men. Even that provision was attended with subsidiary arrangements which were intended to exclude interference. Whatever might be the merits or demerits of that Act, it did not form a precedent.”

I admit that the cases of the coal-whipper and the journeyman-baker are not parallel cases, but I contend that the interference in the case of the coal-whipper is carried very much farther than you have ever dreamed of proposing to carry it in your own case, and very much farther than Mr. Gladstone’s analysis of the Act would lead you to infer. In the first place, it destroys at one stroke of the pen, and without compensation of any sort, the business of the publican—a business which, like your system of nightwork, had grown out of a bad custom. In the next place, it interfered with the coal-whipper himself, by enacting that, with one or two specified exceptions, any man who should follow that employment without being registered, should be subject to a fine, and that once entered upon the books, he should be employed in a certain rotation. It further prescribes that the Commissioners under the Act shall furnish the necessary tackle for unloading vessels, at a certain fixed charge. The shipmaster, again, though he may employ the crews of colliers, and non-registered coal-whippers under certain circumstances, is liable to a penalty for employing non-registered men in any other cases.

Though I am free to admit that everything is done to mitigate the operation of the Act, and to guard against abuses, I must contend that the interference with labour, though most humane and beneficial, and, as we were taught on the 10th of April, most acceptable to the coal-whippers themselves, is nevertheless a much greater interference than that which you ask for—in a word, a remarkable example of the organization of labour. Louis Blanc himself would have been proud of it, and would have looked upon it as a masterpiece.

This Coal-whippers' Act, we are told, did not regulate the hours of work. Granted. But what shall we say of the "Act to Amend the Law for regulating the Hours of receiving and delivering Goods and Chattels as Pawns in Pawnbrokers' Shops," which was passed in the session of 1846? How was it that this Act was overlooked in the debate? I am prepared for the objection that the interference was made, not on behalf of the shopmen but of the public, with a view perhaps of restricting in some degree the practice of pawning. Even if this were so, you have nevertheless an interference with labour, and a limitation of hours; and if morality was the plea in the case of the pawnbrokers, so it is in your case; for your long hours of labour are as morally mischievous as they are physically destructive.

I must not fail to give you the benefit of one consideration which ought to disarm the opposition of the more moderate among the free-trade party. Your trade is a home trade; the limitation of your hours of labour, therefore, will not be open to the objection which may be advanced against all factory legislation, that the foreigner may possibly drive us out of the market by working his operatives during a greater number of hours in the day. This distinction may possibly be of some service to you.

The opposition which you have most to dread will come, as I have intimated, from the free-trade party. The Protectionists must be with you to a man; for how can they, with any show of consistency, protect production and refuse to protect the producer? Is not the man of more worth than the manufacture?

The advocates of sanitary reform, too, must be with you heart and soul; for they cannot stop short with sewers and water-supply, and the cleansing of streets, and the suppression of nuisances. They cannot let slip so favourable an opportunity of improving the health and lengthening the lives of 12,000 working men.

There is still a party in the House, small in numbers but strong in talent, which takes expediency for its rule, and which, though professing the doctrines of free-trade, is not, as I would fain hope, committed to the extreme views of the men of Manchester. This party ought to support you. Its leader, too, who found consolation amid all the vexations which attended his most wise and necessary change of policy on the subject of the corn laws, in the thought of the benefits to be conferred on the toiling masses, will surely sympathize with your sufferings, and regard their alleviation as a work of merciful expediency.

As to those members of the House who advocate a rigid economy,

and complain that the people are not duly represented in the Legislature, let them beware how they give occasion to doubt their sincerity and consistency by protesting, on the one hand, against a lavish expenditure of public money, while they view with placid indifference the waste of that health which enables men and nations to grow rich; and, on the other, justify by their own votes, as the professed friends of the non-represented, the misgivings of those who view with apprehension a large extension of the suffrage.

I have still a word to say on another subject much laboured in the debate. I mean the possibility of submitting the bakehouses of the metropolis to inspection. Now, I do not hear that the Bill to be brought before the House makes any provision for inspection. Your Bill for regulating Sunday baking works well without it, and an occasional fine levied upon an offender, upon information before a magistrate (as happened the other day at Greenwich), answers every purpose. But were it otherwise, if the Bill did propose to appoint inspectors to see that the bakehouses were fit places for human beings to work in, and to watch the operation of the Bill in other respects, I should not be disposed to side with several speakers in the House in condemning it. The reason they gave for scouting the very idea of inspection was this:—that it was very easy to inspect factories, where men, women, and children are brought together in large numbers under the same roof, and very easy to manage the affairs of the coal-whippers, who work in bodies, and in one locality; but *impossible* to inspect the premises of the bakers, because they are scattered over a large space. Now, I must confess, that of all the odd things which were said in the debate this appears to me to be the strangest. Why! does not the school inspector go from school to school, and overrun the entire county? Is he not always on the move, visiting every town and village school which receives Government assistance, and sundry others besides? and have we not already inspectors of weights and measures, and of markets; and do not the Courts Leet go about from place to place, prying into nuisances, and, after a loose fashion of their own, reporting against them? But one honourable member, Mr. Labouchere, not content with pointing out the difficulties of inspection, waxes very indignant, and talks about its being “intolerable and impossible in a free country such as this, to apply to labour in dwelling-houses and workshops a minute system of inspection and revision, such as was found practicable in our factories.” Surely such a speech as this argues not merely an extraordinary degree of timidity, and a marvellous

tenderness towards men who work their fellow-creatures eighteen or twenty hours, or more, in the day, but a very short memory. Would any one credit it, with this speech sounding in his ears, that scarcely a month has elapsed since the House of Commons, after long and repeated discussion, passed a Health of Towns' Bill (a poor, miserable, timid measure), which appoints inspectors, with large powers of entry on private property, and which expressly places lodging-houses (and they are to fever very much what your bakehouses are to consumption) under very stringent rules, and especially under the surveillance of parties appointed by the local board? For my own part, so far from fearing or condemning the principle of inspection, or limiting it to factories, which I think an injustice, I would extend the principle till it applied to every trade and occupation in which abuses existed calling for legislative remedy. I believe that that system of inspection and reporting has done infinite good, and is yet destined to be carried further than the timid and forgetful gentlemen whom I have quoted imagine.

But the fact is, that this contradiction between the acts of a month ago, and the sayings of to-day—this want of a steady purpose and an intelligible principle—is the inevitable effect of the contest which is now going on, and which must, ere long, take a more definite shape, between the natural feelings of the Christian man, and the cold, unbending theory of a perfect freedom of human action. These feelings, conscience-prompted and God-inspired, are now, as ever, battling with individual and national selfishness—the individual selfishness embodying itself in the homicidal question, “May I not do what I will with mine own;” and the national selfishness, in the theory of non-interference, or, to use the familiar French phrase, *laissez-faire*. Our true wisdom, as I believe, lies in the happy medium between the two extremes. It consists in acknowledging liberty of action and freedom of competition as the broad general principle which is to govern production and exchange, trade and commerce; but subject to modification and judicious interference wherever liberty of action and freedom of competition trench upon that higher form of liberty which consists in a sound mind in a healthy body. Even if we could look upon our fellow-men in the light of mere machines, we should owe them the same protection which we give to machines of wood and iron. We should punish the man who injured or destroyed the last; with what consistency can we refuse, at least to prevent the wanton injury or destruction of the first.

Woe to that nation which, given over to the worship of Mammon, dares to prefer the interests of trade and commerce to the welfare, physical and moral, of its toiling masses! Woe to that nation, which, while it scrupulously protects every form of material property, refuses to guard that only property of the working man—his health—from the assaults of the careless and avaricious! But happy indeed the people who shall first contrive to reconcile the requirements of humanity and justice with the true theory of trade and commerce! I, for one, firmly believe, that because this nation has not altogether failed in bringing about that union, it stands secure amid the wrecks that strew the Continent. I firmly believe that our protection of health and life, and our consideration for the comfort and happiness of the working classes; our factory bills, and our mines and colliery legislation; our Coal-whippers' Act, our Sunday Baking Bill, our recent sanitary measure, our model lodging-houses, our baths and wash-houses, our ragged schools, and, in a word, all those efforts of a wise philanthropy, with which the noble Lord in the chair has for ever associated his name, are the true glory of our nation, and the best safeguard of our institutions.