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# LONG HOURS LASTING CONSEQUENCES: CHILDREN AS PASSIVE VICTIMS IN THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND A PIVITOL PART OF REFORM

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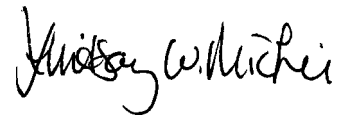
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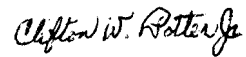
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BY HANNAH MYERS

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## Introduction

The British Industrial Revolution has been studied extensively. Leading scholars of the past and present include, but are not limited to, Getrude Himmelfarb, E.P. Thompson, Sonya O. Rose, Mary Poovey, Troy Boone, Friedrich Engles, Oliver Hamlin, Hugh D. Hindman, and George Dodd. Each focused on different aspects of the experience, which range from the economy, to family roles, including definitions of childhood and gender roles, to education, Victorian values, working conditions, and even slavery.

The reason for such a diversity of approaches was clearly explained by Joel Mokyr, who argued:

. . . [T]he Industrial Revolution illustrates the limitations of the compartmentalization of historical sciences. More changed in Britain in those years than just the way goods and services were produced. The role of the family and the household, the nature of work, the status of women and children, the social role of the church, the ways in which people chose their rulers and supported their poor, what people wanted to know and what they knew about the world – all these were altered more radically and faster than ever before. It is an ongoing project to disentangle how economic, technological, and social elements affected each other. The event itself transcended any definable part of British society or economic life; it was, in Perkin's phrase, a “more than Industrial Revolution.”<sup>1</sup>

Mokyr is clearly right, and by examining various aspects of the Industrial Revolution, the literature ignores that its impact, and the response to it, were all parts of a larger whole. That is, one cannot truly understand anything about industrialism if one does not first grasp that it had an extreme and unprecedented impact on every aspect of English society, from the economy to sociological constructs, making reactions to it complex and often contradictory. Reforms aimed at addressing the evils of the system clearly fall into the same category.

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<sup>1</sup> Joel Mokyr, "Editor's Introduction: The New Economic History and the Industrial Revolution," *The British Industrial Revolution: An Economic Perspective* 2 (1999): 4.

On the surface, one might question this assertion. After all, it seemed that concern about the impact of child labor was the overriding factor behind the Sadler Committee studies and the legislation they inspired. In that, the works of Nigel Goose and Katrina Honeyman, along as that of Allison James and Alan Prout, bear mentioning. According to Goose and Honeyman's *Childhood and Child Labour in Industrial England: Diversity and Agency, 1750–1914*, children needed to be understood as participants in the Industrial Revolution.<sup>2</sup> James and Prout, however, contend that the real story necessitates an understanding of children as passive victims of the Industrial Revolution who are depowered and demeaned by their bosses and overseers.<sup>3</sup>

Certainly, without children, economic takeoff could not have occurred, so in that Goose and Honeyman have a point. However, unrestrained capitalism created circumstances that fostered the exploitation discussed by James and Prout. It was ultimately the latter that offended middle class Victorian sensibilities and triggered investigations and efforts at reform. Thus the importance of understanding the interplay of class, economic transformation, changing family dynamics, and politics if one wishes to grasp every aspect of the Industrial Revolution, including the efforts to rein in its abuses. It is this synthesis of context that this study seeks to address.

### **Demographic and Technological Issues**

The population of England rose significantly in the half century before 1800, setting the stage for many potential consequences such as overpopulation within cities promoting issues such unemployment. In 1750 the combined population of England and Wales was 6,039,684; by 1801 it had dramatically increased to 9,187,176.<sup>4</sup> This meant that England and Wales saw about a

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<sup>2</sup> Nigel Goose and Katrina Honeyman, *Childhood and Child Labour in Industrial England: Diversity and Agency, 1750–1914* (London: Ashgate Publishing Company 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Allison James and Alan Prout, *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood* (London: Psychology Press 1997).

<sup>4</sup> A.A.W. Ramsay, *Sir Robert Peel* (New York, New York: Barnes and Nobel Inc, 1971), 50.

52.11% increase in population between 1750 and 1801.<sup>5</sup> Cities grew a large workforce to fuel industrial advancement. Combined with a demographic shift in population from the countryside into the cities, due to the number of manufacturing jobs available in the cities, this population explosion posed many potential problems for England such as joblessness and poverty.<sup>6</sup>

Population growth provided one vital ingredient necessary for industrialization. Technology constituted the other. With the invention of the power loom, the textile industry found itself in need of labor to meet rising demands.<sup>7</sup> The demographic explosion that transformed England in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century provided the solution. In words reflective of Goose and Honeyman's interpretation, Peter Gaskell, a factory overseer explained, "This economy consists of a series of operations which the child performs an essential part. There is mutual dependence of the entire labourer, one upon the other, and if the children who are employed principally by the spinner are dismissed, his work ceases, and the mill is at a standstill."<sup>8</sup> Children found themselves employed for many reasons. Primarily they were cheap labor, and they were small. Many of the mills used small machines and needed small hands for upkeep, repairs, and operation.<sup>9</sup> Children fulfilled these roles in many different environments.

### **Raising Awareness of the Costs of Child Labor**

Of course, children were no better equipped for the rigors of industrial life than anyone else in a society where such a form of economic organization marked a significant departure from earlier constructs. This is a point that James and Prout make clear and that is best illustrated in the Dickens novel *Oliver Twist*. Children within workhouses in the early 1800s "had contrived to

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<sup>5</sup> Percent increase courtesy of Aaron Jacks, Lynchburg College Undergraduate Mathematics Major.

<sup>6</sup> Ramsay, 51.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 51.

<sup>8</sup> Hindman, 556.

<sup>9</sup> Frederick Engels, *The Conditions of the Working Class in England* (London: ElecBook, 2001), <http://www.libertas.lynchburg.edu/record=b1349696>, 234.

exist upon the smallest possible portion of the weakest possible food, it did perversely happen in eight and a half cases out of ten, either that (a child) sickened from want and cold, or fell into the fire from neglect, or got half-smothered by accident.”<sup>10</sup> Charles Dickens experienced firsthand the woes of what it felt like to grow up as a poor working class child in 1800s England. He “often traveled to Manchester and Birmingham, toured a number of factories, studied several strikes, and read his quota of Blue Books on industrial conditions.”<sup>11</sup> He understood the lives of “these unfortunate creatures.”<sup>12</sup> Many forget that this knowledge, “(led) to a definite artistic virtue—to Dickens’ unique vision of society as a dismal, unfathomable tangle.”<sup>13</sup>

Working class children led a difficult life in the early 1800s. Families with four or five children would sometimes live in parish allocated spaces less than 400 yards squared.<sup>14</sup> The conditions led to a deterioration in the overall quality of life. “Overcrowding, insanitary housing, and a polluted environment were not only everyday discomforts; they bred common diseases of typhus and tuberculosis which ensured a short lifespan.”<sup>15</sup> Factories made life miserable for many children, but also redefined family dynamics and expectations, a quarter of middle class families contained approximately four children whom provided for a significant amount of the family’s income through child labor. This contradicted the family roles of upper class England wherein the expectation lied with the father as the primary financial provider.<sup>16</sup> One parent stated, “I would

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<sup>10</sup> Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 4.

<sup>11</sup> Patrick Bratlinger, “Dickens and the Factories,” *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 26, no. 3 (1971) :270-285, 270.

<sup>12</sup> Bratlinger, 274.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, 271.

<sup>14</sup> Engles, 86.

<sup>15</sup> Crosby, 9.

<sup>16</sup> University of Warwick. “The Victorian Family.” Accessed March 16, 2014. [www2.warwick.ac.uk/.../the\\_victorian\\_family.ppt](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/.../the_victorian_family.ppt).

rather see all my children dead and buried, and myself along with them than see them employed in a mill under the present system.”<sup>17</sup>

Children found themselves employed across the textile industry. They “were employed in cotton, wool, worsted, flax, and silk factories.”<sup>18</sup> Some of their jobs included, but were not limited to piecers, sweepers, doffers, pieceners, cleaners, and fillers.<sup>19</sup> Because children found themselves working at the forefront of industry, many concerns from academic, literary, and political minds of the era about work conditions and children’s employment arose.

Not surprisingly, when such realities became known, middle class Victorians became concerned. After all, this was, as one historian has observed, a “child-dominated society... one out of every three of (Queen Victoria’s) subjects was under the age of fifteen.”<sup>20</sup> Indeed, Charles Dickens and other writers living in the era became advocates for the cause, bringing the issues of child labor to the forefront of people’s minds within the literate upper class who did not work in factories. Because Charles Dickens endured the life of a factory worker as a child he became an advocate for reform during his years as a writer. He created an awareness of the conditions in factories, which educated the public. George Dodd also wrote with the same intentions. He authored *Days at the Factories*, informing his readers of what a day in the life of many different factories looked like in the 1800s. Frederick Engels provided insight as well with his work, *The Conditions of the Working Class in England*. With the ability to witness the proletariat of England firsthand, he wrote this book while working in the manufacturing sector in England. In it he

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<sup>17</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT of the Central Board of His Majesty’s Commissioners for inquiring into the Employment of Children in Factories; with Minutes of Evidence, and Appendix,” In *Irish University Press series of British parliamentary papers: Industrial revolution: Children’s Employment*, Volume 2, (Shannon, Irish University Press, 1833), 23.

<sup>18</sup> Hindman, 556.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Marah Gubar. “The Victorian Child, c.1837-1901.” Accessed March 16, 2014. <http://www.representingchildhood.pitt.edu/victorian.htm>

referenced “The Sadler Reports”, written by the Committee on Child Labor, which played a pivotal role in beginning the factory reform movement in England.

### **The Politics of Reform**

The political context—driven by both domestic and international developments, also had its role to play. In particular, England entered a depression after the Napoleonic Wars. British involvement in the wars began around 1803 and ended in 1815.<sup>21</sup> England entered a depression after the Napoleonic Wars followed by a time of economic recovery and expansion into the 1820s, culminating into an even worse depression in the 1830s.<sup>22</sup> England found itself in severe debt.<sup>23</sup> With the Industrial Revolution already underway, any related legislative pursuits by Parliament could drastically impact the British economy.

Additionally, the overall poor work conditions, perceived by laborers of all ages, constant protests took place.<sup>24</sup> With the Napoleonic era still fresh in the minds of many of those who rioted and protested, revolutionary ideas posed a further “threat to social order... some even adopted slogans of the French Revolution.”<sup>25</sup> These repeated disturbances quickly caught the attention of government officials. They knew that they needed to address the concerns of the rioters to calm them, one of which included children’s employment and work conditions.

Government focus soon shifted to that of the industrial middle class, who became “the dominant power in the country,” in short England’s main labor force and source of income.<sup>26</sup> Sir Robert Peel played a significant role in parliamentary reform. A cotton manufacturer himself, he

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 376.

<sup>22</sup> Travis L. Crosby, *Sir Robert Peel's Administration 1841-1846* (Hamden, Connecticut: The Shoe String Press Inc, 1976), 8.

<sup>23</sup> Ramsay, 49.

<sup>24</sup> Ramsay, 56-58.

<sup>25</sup> Crosby, 9.

<sup>26</sup> Ramsay, 2.



publicly objected to child labor, a stance he took as early as 1796.<sup>27</sup> Due to his political responsibilities, Peel found himself torn between his duties as both a manufacturer and a politician: “I could not be in two places at once,” he said later, “It was not often in my power to visit the factories, but whenever such visits were made, I was struck with the uniform appearance of bad health, and in many cases stunted growth of the children.”<sup>28</sup> Sir Robert Peel witnessed firsthand the need for reform which he brought to Parliament.

Lord Melbourne, a powerful voice in Parliament, strongly believed the innate purpose of government was to prevent crime or any wrongdoing, preserve contracts, and to protect the country’s citizens first and foremost.<sup>29</sup> He sponsored one of the first child labor reform bills introduced in the House of Lords. There were few voices for the children, however, so many like Melbourne, feared that if they reformed the country’s work conditions, it would significantly limit the labor force, further hindering an already crippled economy.<sup>30</sup> Many also believed that they needed to enact reform slowly, and that if they tried to fix all the problems, either too quickly or with too demanding standards, numerous new problems would arise in the factories.<sup>31</sup> Lord Melbourne played the role of the middle man, bridging the gap between the radical reformers and the rest of his own party.<sup>32</sup> So many were hesitant to embrace reform; nonetheless, an effort to reform began despite these hesitations.

The debate over child labor reform began in 1802 because of concerns over work house conditions, which then developed into a general discussion over children and their wellbeing in

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<sup>27</sup> Engels, 234.

<sup>28</sup> Ramsay, 6.

<sup>29</sup> David Ceil, *Melbourne*, (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1954), 249.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, 249.

<sup>31</sup> Ramsay, 56.

<sup>32</sup> Ceil, 240.

the work place.<sup>33</sup> *The Health and Morals of Apprentices Act of 1802* was the first major piece of legislation passed concerning these problems. This act limited the hours in which apprentices could work up to a maximum of twelve and only during the day, while also including provisions for clothing and education. In addition, legislators set standards for keeping the mills clean and ventilated. The act did not contain any provisions for the inspection of the factories which led to a disregard for the rules by factory owners.<sup>34</sup> This highlighted further corruptness and a continued lack of safety in the workplace.

Across the nation there existed similar work conditions in factories. One could describe these conditions as “the systematic destruction of bodies, physically, socially, and spiritually.”<sup>35</sup> Experts from all over began to develop their own opinions. Hygienist J.B. Davis expressed his concerns over, “The division of labour, on which our modern superiority so much depends... has been carried further than the great pliability of the human constitution will allow; and... our manufactories and workshops have become the prolific sources of deformity, sickness, and death.”<sup>36</sup>

In the context of the recent abolition of slavery, fresh in the mind of Parliamentarians, many developed parallel comparisons. Children found themselves “regarded as machines.”<sup>37</sup> Their conditions were compared to “to that of negroes.” These work conditions were sometimes

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<sup>33</sup> Hindman, 555.

<sup>34</sup> Ramsay, 6-7; Engels, 234.

<sup>35</sup> Oliver Hamlin, *Public Health and Social Justice in the Age of Chadwick: Britain, 1800-1854* *Cambridge Studies in the History of Medicine* *Cambridge history of medicine*, (Cambridge University Press, 1998), Google e-books, <http://books.google.com/books?id=fwCPy5V3cOcC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>, 41.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 43.

<sup>37</sup> Hansard, ed, *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates: Forming a Continuation of "The Parliamentary History of England from the Earliest Period to the Year 1803," Third Series; Commencing with the Ascension of William IV, Volume XIII Comprising the Period from the Twenty-Fourth Day of May, to the Third Day of July 1832 Fifth Volume of the Session*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1833), Google e-books.

<http://books.google.com/ebooks/reader?id=Ja1JAAAAYAAJ&num=13&printsec=frontcover&output=reader>, 242.

portrayed as worse in comparison: “blacks had the enjoyment of good air, and the sea-breeze, while these children were subjected to the infected atmosphere of the factories.”<sup>38</sup> With a mutual grasp of the severity of the conditions at hand, Parliament launched an investigation.

With the demonstrated failure of the 1802 Act, the middle class citizens of England desired further reform. By 1815 prominent political voices were calling for reform.<sup>39</sup> The Act of 1819 explicitly demonstrated that it was the duty of the state to protect workers, especially children, from industrial exploitation.<sup>40</sup> Parliament laid the groundwork for the many citizens of England impacted by factory life, both middle class and factory owners alike, with foundational legislation passed, true change could begin.<sup>41</sup>

Michael Sadler, a member of the House of Commons, led the factory reform movement. His passion for child labor reform and involvement stemmed from a personal experience that gave him perspective on the issue at hand. He communicated his familiarities from what he witnessed within factories to other members of Parliament:

The parents rouse them in the morning and receive them tired and exhausted after the day has closed; they see them droop and sicken, and in many cases, become cripples and die, before they reach their prime; and they do all this, because they must otherwise starve. It is a mockery to contend that these parents have a choice. They choose the lesser evil, and reluctantly resign their offspring to the captivity and pollution of the mill.<sup>42</sup>

A common sense of understanding over the need for reform began to develop as shown in Parliamentary records.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ramsay, 56.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 56.

<sup>42</sup> Hansard, ed, *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates: Forming a Continuation of "The Parliamentary History of England from the Earliest Period to the Year 1803," Third Series; Commencing with the Ascension of William IV, Volume XX*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1833), Google e-books. [http://google.com/books?id=6q9JAAAAYAAJ&source=gbs\\_slider\\_user\\_shelves\\_7\\_homepage](http://google.com/books?id=6q9JAAAAYAAJ&source=gbs_slider_user_shelves_7_homepage), 264-265.

In 1832 Parliament chose the Tory, Michael Sadler, to head the investigation.<sup>43</sup> His interest in child labor reform peaked when he witnessed a large group of children on break one day in a church without parental supervision. He took note of the horrid physical condition a majority of them seemed to exhibit.<sup>44</sup> For Sadler, “in the case of the rising generation, no such protection was rendered; their moral and physical welfare was unheeded.” England’s next generation stood in danger and they needed protection.<sup>45</sup> No one could match his passion for the cause as demonstrated in a report before Parliament: “Mr. Sadler had found (that) no case of hardship, no scenes of degradation, could be found to equal those which were endured in the mills and factories of this country.”<sup>46</sup> He and other members of the Committee on Child Labor prepared themselves to do the legwork needed to gain the backing required to facilitate major Parliamentary reform.

This legwork proved extensive, both in work and distances travelled. The Committee went into districts all over England interviewing everyone involved in the factory industry including laborers, owners, overseers, and medical experts. They gathered data from the bookkeepers of factories, as well as medical and population statistics. Those against reform regarded their inquiries with superstition. In addition, many workers were concerned that any questions they would answer concerning conditions and hardships of their occupation would put their jobs at risk. These lower class workers needed to work to survive.<sup>47</sup> They indeed thought the risks of factory life, to make ends meet, outweighed the benefits of not working in industry.

Despite opposition, The Committee on Child Labor of 1832 pursued their investigation. Once they collected all their data, The Committee produced “The Blue Books,” or, as others may

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<sup>43</sup> Crosby, 17; Spartacus Educational, “Michael Sadler,” Accessed November 7, 2013.

<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/IRsadler.htm?menu=Twork>

<sup>44</sup> Hansard, ed, *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Vol XIII*, 242.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, 242.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, 242.

<sup>47</sup> Hamlin, 69.

know them, the “Sadler Reports.”<sup>48</sup> They brought these reports before Parliament as evidence for the conditions in factories, demonstrating in detail what really hurt these children in every aspect of their lives. The physical evidence, illustrated in the following paragraphs, demonstrated within the “Sadler Reports” was extensive. From information collected by the Committee on Child Labor, it is clear that children working for long hours within factories experienced a number of negative health effects impacting their lifespan including, osteopathic health issues and chronic physiological conditions and diseases caused by the factory environment and lack of safety within. This resulted in high death rates and put a whole generation of citizens at risk.

### **Evidence of the Victimization of Generations of Young People**

In the early 1800s the majority of the labor force was composed of children. More than half of the labor force in factories were under age nineteen.<sup>49</sup> The population of Catrine, an industrial city in England, in 1832 consisted largely of children. The population in general, between the ages of five and twenty, consisted of 957 children, of which 426 between the ages of nine and twenty were in the work force.<sup>50</sup> Children of all ages became a pivotal part of fueling the British industrial economy as they worked long hours. Members of parliament held every right to concern themselves over dramatic reform of this abuse which significantly impacted their lifespan.

The ages of employed children and the hours that they worked changed as reform measures passed, and as time progressed through the early 1800s into the 1830s. After 1802 factory owners employed few of them under the age of eight or nine.<sup>51</sup> The “Blue Books” reported that a Mr.

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<sup>48</sup> Hindman, 555.

<sup>49</sup> Hindman, 556.

<sup>50</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT of the Central Board of His Majesty’s Commissioners for inquiring into the Employment of Children in Factories; with Minutes of Evidence, and Appendix,” In *Irish University Press series of British parliamentary papers: Industrial revolution: Children’s Employment*, Volume 3, (Shannon, Irish University Press, 1833), A.1. 84-85.

<sup>51</sup> Engels, 235.

Whitehead stated he had never seen anyone employed in a factory, ever, under the age of five.<sup>52</sup> Michael Sadler interviewed a cloth-dressing worker who began his career at age nine in 1824, which would make him seventeen upon his interview in 1832.<sup>53</sup> William Cooper, also interviewed by Sadler in 1832, began work as a bobbin doffer at age ten in 1814, which made him twenty-eight upon the date of his interview.<sup>54</sup> The age minimum increased with the passing of foundational reform acts.

Children worked long hours which had a detrimental effect on their health. The average nine year old who worked in a mill by 1832 averaged about six and a half hours of labor. Prior to that they worked as much as sixteen hours in one shift. The number of hours children worked decreased with time. In 1832, once a child reached thirteen they could work around twelve hours on average until they reached age eighteen, upon which they could work as much as employers required.<sup>55</sup> Children essentially acted, according to Engels, “completely (as) slaves of their masters.”<sup>56</sup>

Children who grew up in a factory environment also did not live as long as those who did not work in the mills. The Committee on Child Labor interviewed several medical professionals as to their opinion on the longevity of children in factories. One responded that he only saw a few people still employed in factories in old age. As a general consensus, many of these experts concluded that employment in a factory shortened a person’s lifespan, rarely if ever did one reach

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<sup>52</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” *Volume 2*, 18.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

<sup>55</sup> Engels, 235.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, 234.

the age of sixty.<sup>57</sup> Charles Thackrah, a general practitioner in Leeds strongly believed long hours of labor led to “chronic maladies,” and “a shortening of life.”<sup>58</sup>

Children fell ill, which kept them from work in some cases, and/ or died at a high rate. At the Deanston Cotton Works out of 321 workers between the ages of ten and twenty, 149 were sick. They fell ill at the rate of forty six per one hundred workers.<sup>59</sup> In Gloucestershire’s clothing districts between 1813 and 1833, 316 children between the ages of six and twenty died.<sup>60</sup> These numbers seemed to be a direct result of the lifestyle of these children working in factories.

One of the specific issues which resulted from children employed in factories included physical injuries. These physical injuries resulted from the environment and conditions within the factories such as, an overall poor environment, fatigue from long hours, and a general lack of safety. Injuries resulting included accidents involving loss of limbs, lacerations, forms of battery and abuse, and improper physical development. In many cases the nature of the results of these accidents impacted the rest of the victim’s life. There existed numerous causes of physical deformities in factories. The industrial cities themselves caused part of the problem: “Nowhere are so many children run over, nowhere are so many killed by falling, drowning, or burning, as in the great cities and towns of England.”<sup>61</sup> In regards to the factories themselves the “Blue Books” reported that,

There are factories, no means few in number, nor confined to the smaller mills, in which serious accidents are continually occurring, and in which, notwithstanding, dangerous parts of the machinery are allowed to remain unfenced... (Workers were) abandoned from the moment that an accident occurs; their wages are stopped,

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<sup>57</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” *Volume 3*, D.3. 230-231.

<sup>58</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” *Volume 2*, 512, 514.

<sup>59</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” *Volume 3*, A.1. Appendix 82.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, B.1. 96.

<sup>61</sup> Engels, 184.

no medical attendance is provided, and whatever the extent of the injury, no compensation is afforded.<sup>62</sup>

Machinery was not guarded to protect workers from injury and injured workers in many cases did not receive adequate medical care.

The average working nine year old of 1832 lived and worked in extremely adverse conditions. They grew up with barely anything to their name and suffered from privation. The environmental conditions constantly changed around them, often than not cold and damp. They owned insufficient clothing for the weather and their occupation, and lived in the poorest of dwellings.<sup>63</sup> Because of this, many children were prone to illness; they did not develop properly as they grew, and displayed a general all-around unhealthy appearance.<sup>64</sup>

Fatigue from long working hours also contributed to injury in the workplace. Many children were beaten if they slowed down their work: "After ten hours' fatigue, they had their vigilance excited by the whip; they were bound to pillars; they were chased round the factories, lacerated in their bodies, and crippled in their limbs."<sup>65</sup> If not from punishment, then from negligence and sloppiness brought on by fatigue. Children in many industries could not sit while they worked.<sup>66</sup> Most accidents happened towards the end of the day because of exhaustion.<sup>67</sup> Within the factories, excessive work hours, unfenced or unguarded machinery, and overheated and dirty air fatigued and endangered adults and children alike.<sup>68</sup> This often ultimately led to numerous injuries and deaths.

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<sup>62</sup> Spartacus Educational. "Factory Accidents." Accessed November 7, 2013.  
<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/IRaccidents.htm>

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, 235.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, 235.

<sup>65</sup> Hansard, ed, *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, Vol XIII, 242.

<sup>66</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, "The FIRST REPORT," Volume 2, 18.

<sup>67</sup> Hansard, ed, *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, Vol XIII, 242.

<sup>68</sup> Crosby, 9.



Many of these injuries occurred due to a lack of general safety of the machines. Thomas Smith, a weaver in Keighley, got his shirt caught in an engine shaft. Ultimately he broke his arm in three places and damaged his head. Onlookers thought him dead for a few hours, but he survived.<sup>69</sup> Elizabeth Ward confirmed upon her interview by the Committee that she lost two fingers from unboxed machinery as a child.<sup>70</sup> Jane Mackintosh at age fourteen lost a finger and a thumb in the machinery she worked with at Neilson and Company.<sup>71</sup> Factories needed reform to make machinery safer.

Some of these injuries included the loss of limbs and other osteopathic injuries. John Allett, who worked as a blanket manufacturer, witnessed a fatigued child get caught in a machine while preparing wool. The machine dragged the boy up into the mechanism, his body left mangled, and narrowly avoided laceration.<sup>72</sup> Similarly, the daughter of Thomas Bennett, who worked in Mr. Woods Mill in Dewsbury, fell asleep while working, getting her hand caught in a machine which pulled her towards the ceiling. When she came down her neck looked broken to everyone watching, however, she managed to survive.<sup>73</sup> Benjamin Fox's daughter, also from Dewsbury, fell and broke her elbow due to fatigue.<sup>74</sup> It became of the utmost importance to stay awake and alert while at work for one's safety.

At the other end of the physical injury spectrum, less drastic injuries occurred in factories such as lacerations. In some instances the actions performed on a daily basis constantly led to such minor injuries. In the pulling room at one mill, workers performed a task by which a knife was repeatedly rubbed against the worker which tore out hairs from the skin, the finger and thumb only

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<sup>69</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, "The FIRST REPORT," *Volume 2*, 142.

<sup>70</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, "The FIRST REPORT," *Volume 3*, A.1. 2.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, A.2. 11.

<sup>72</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, "The FIRST REPORT," *Volume 2*, 107-108.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, 101-103.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*, 105.

guarded from the knife and injury by a piece of leather.<sup>75</sup> Unguarded machinery at the Brown and Branker's Mill led to a flesh wound of the daughter of Joshua Drake when she reached in to clean the doffer crank.<sup>76</sup> Thirteen year old, Jesse Salmend worked a wet frame. Upon her interview the Committee member noticed, "Her hands all cut, hacked, and bleeding frequently with the hot water, so hot, she can hardly wet the yarn as she is obliged to do with it."<sup>77</sup> Likewise The Committee took note of thirteen year old Isabella Simson and her hands also hacked from warm water.<sup>78</sup>

Another form of physical injury often found in factories included forms of battery as punishment. Abraham Whitehead, a clothier at a woolen mill attested to his firsthand observations of the conduct and management of the mills.<sup>79</sup> He stated that "it (was) the general practice," to strike children in mills.<sup>80</sup> Many "manufactures permitted overlookers to flog and maltreat children and took an active part in doing so themselves."<sup>81</sup> Despite the staggering amount of participation in physical punishment within factories, many did not participate in this practice without some regret. Overseer William Rastrick explained, "I can say I have been disgusted with myself and with my situation; I felt myself degraded and reduced to the level of a slave-driver in such cases."<sup>82</sup>

Beatings occurred within factories for a variety of reasons all with the sole purpose of keeping up with production and maintaining order and safety. The infamous Olive Twist received

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<sup>75</sup> George Dodd, *Days at the Factories: Or, The Manufacturing Industry of Great Britain Described, and Illustrated by Numerous Engravings of Machines and Processes. Series I.* (London. Charles Knight & Company, 1843), [http://books.google.com/books/about/Days\\_at\\_the\\_Factories.html?id=1hQLAQAAIAAJ](http://books.google.com/books/about/Days_at_the_Factories.html?id=1hQLAQAAIAAJ) (accessed September 2, 2013), 141.

<sup>76</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, "The FIRST REPORT," *Volume 2*, 37.

<sup>77</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, "The FIRST REPORT," *Volume 3*, A.1. 13.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, A.1. 13.

<sup>79</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, "The FIRST REPORT," *Volume 2*, 17-19.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*, 22.

<sup>81</sup> Engels, 236.

<sup>82</sup> Spartacus Educational, "Punishment in Factories," Accessed November 7, 2013. <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/IRpunishments.htm>

a beating for “atrociously presuming to be hungry,” and then locked up shortly thereafter.<sup>83</sup> Children who acted “too tired to go home,” and fell asleep in the factory ended up “driven out of the factory with straps.”<sup>84</sup> Many also received punishment simply for lateness.<sup>85</sup> Joseph Hebergram experienced this, “if we were five minutes too late,” the overlooker would beat him with a strap.<sup>86</sup> Mr. Whitehead also observed children beaten for not performing to expectation, which in his experience, usually occurred when they acted fatigued.<sup>87</sup> The overseer struck them with the strap to make them work faster.<sup>88</sup>

In many cases serious physical injury resulted from physical punishment. “Children were beaten, had their ears torn off, and were kicked if they talked, fell asleep, or were too slow.”<sup>89</sup> Joshua Drake witnessed his daughter come home with signs of receiving a severe beating. On many occasions she came home bruised and swollen from being severely kicked and strapped.<sup>90</sup> Sometime even death would result. Sarah Carpenter witnessed a girl kicked to death by her superior, Mr. Newton, where she worked.<sup>91</sup>

Beating occurred in many different manners within factories. Jonathan Down shared his experience with Michael Sadler: “When I was seven years old I went to work at Mr. Marshall’s factory at Shrewsbury. If a child was drowsy, the overlooker touches the child on the shoulder and says, ‘Come here.’ In a corner of the room there is an iron cistern filled with water. He takes the boy by the legs and dips him in the cistern, and sends him back to work.”<sup>92</sup> Robert Arnot

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<sup>83</sup> Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, 11-12.

<sup>84</sup> Engels, 256.

<sup>85</sup> Spartacus Educational, “Punishment in Factories.”

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” *Volume 2*, 19.

<sup>88</sup> Spartacus Educational, “Punishment in Factories.”

<sup>89</sup> Hindman, 555.

<sup>90</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” *Volume 2*, 39.

<sup>91</sup> Spartacus Educational, “Punishment in Factories.”

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

witnessed beating of children using what workers knew as a “cat” at the Spinning Mill of Monifeith. A “cat” was a whip with fur tail used for strapping children.<sup>93</sup> Sarah Carpenter experienced beatings regularly. In one instance she ended up beaten for the actions of other children which caused her frame to stop. “The master started beating me with a stick over the head till it was full of lumps and bled. My head was so bad that I could not sleep for a long time, and I never been a sound sleeper since.”<sup>94</sup>

Sometimes overseers beat children with machinery. One of these was called a billy-roller, “a heavy rod two to three yards long, and of two inches in diameter, with an iron pivot on each end; it runs on top of the cording over the feeding cloth.”<sup>95</sup> According to Mr. Whitehead, “Some have been beaten so violently (by the billy-roller) that they have lost their lives in consequence of their bodies so beaten; and even a young girl had the end of a billy-roller jammed through her cheeks.”<sup>96</sup> In addition he saw the billy-roller used in ways which cracked heads, knocked children down, injured them to the point where they could not work, or in some cases even death.<sup>97</sup> Some injuries lasted a lifetime. Josiah Barker in Leicester received marks on his body, which were still visible in evidence in adulthood, from the billy-roller hitting him as a child.<sup>98</sup>

The overseers went as far as invading the beds of children to enact punishment for tardiness and/or attempting to skip work. One man witnessed children literally “dragged weeping through the snow to their work.”<sup>99</sup> Barbara Watson witnessed a late girl dragged out of bed naked by her

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<sup>93</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” Volume 3, A.1. 39.

<sup>94</sup> Spartacus Educational, “Punishment in Factories.”

<sup>95</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” Volume 2, 19.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, 19-20.

<sup>98</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” Volume 3, C.1. 17.

<sup>99</sup> Hansard, ed, *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates: Forming a Continuation of “The Parliamentary History of England from the Earliest Period to the Year 1803,” Third Series; Commencing with the Ascension of William IV, Volume XX*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1833), Google e-books.

[http://google.com/books?id=6q9JAAAAYAAJ&source=gbs\\_slider\\_user\\_shelves\\_7\\_homepage](http://google.com/books?id=6q9JAAAAYAAJ&source=gbs_slider_user_shelves_7_homepage), 264.

overseer.<sup>100</sup> It was not uncommon for this to occur; for example the report of a “Scotch manufacturer, who rode after a sixteen year old and forced him to return, running after the employer as fast as he master’s horse trotted, and beat him the whole way with a long whip.”<sup>101</sup> Many parents witnessed their children coming home beaten. Their children would come home with bruises all over their bodies.<sup>102</sup> Sadly parents could never do anything about it. Many could not afford to take their children to receive medical attention and they could not complain to the overseers for fear of losing their jobs.<sup>103</sup>

Many children’s occupations involved standing for a long hours at a time which led to developmental issues within their bone structure. David Bywater began work at age twelve cleaning tassels in the steaming department of a mill in Leeds. His legs became crooked from working such long hours standing; however, his legs began to correct themselves when he changed employment.<sup>104</sup> The Committee had Bywater examined at age nineteen by Dr. Loudon: “Left knee is bent very much inwards; the right also slightly inwards; both shins are deformed, having a bow forwards.” The doctor agreed that this resulted from standing long hours.<sup>105</sup> James Kirk explained while working gigs at James Brown’s Mill he, “began to be very weak in (his) knees; one of (his) knees gave way.” His knees bent so drastically to the point where he could barely walk and claimed that this resulted from standing long hours.<sup>106</sup> Other parts of the body were

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<sup>100</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” Volume 3, A.1. 40.

<sup>101</sup> Engels, 236.

<sup>102</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” Volume 2, 130.

<sup>103</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” Volume 2, 193.

<sup>104</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” Volume 2, 32.

<sup>105</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” Volume 3, C.2. 31.

<sup>106</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” Volume 2, 14-15.

affected as well. Some children developed spinal deformities.<sup>107</sup> Legs would swell from standing for so long.<sup>108</sup> Others would develop flat feet from the physical stress.<sup>109</sup>

As a direct result of the many physical deformities and hindrances of physical development the population that worked in factories from a young age grew considerably shorter and weaker in comparison to those before and those who did not work under the same conditions. William Osburn, an overseer in Leeds testified to observing a significant difference between the strength and growth of factory children from other children.<sup>110</sup> James Smellie, a surgeon in Glasgow, concurred that children who worked in cotton factories proved inferior in health and strength to others living in the city.<sup>111</sup> Most children seemed equal at birth, but once they started to grow, the differences in height and weight seemed more noticeable.<sup>112</sup> Charles Dickens illustrated the shift in stature of the factory working generation in *Oliver Twist*. In the text the undertaker explains, "Since the new system of feeding has come in, the coffins are something narrower and more shallow than they used to be."<sup>113</sup> The working class physically became smaller in stature.

The Committee collected an enormous amount of data regarding the size of people working in factories. One woman interviewed at age twenty-six found herself convinced that the mill kept her from growing any more.<sup>114</sup> Gillett Sharpe testified that his son would measure eight inches taller if he did not grow "crooked."<sup>115</sup> Another, William Cooper, only grew to five feet.<sup>116</sup> His father stood at five feet, seven inches.<sup>117</sup> Concrete data gathered by The Committee showed the

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<sup>107</sup> Engels, 16.

<sup>108</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, "The FIRST REPORT," Volume 3, A.1. 3.

<sup>109</sup> Engels, 240.

<sup>110</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, "The FIRST REPORT," Volume 2, 465.

<sup>111</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, "The FIRST REPORT," Volume 3, A.1. 101.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid*, D.3. 241-243.

<sup>113</sup> Dickens, 20.

<sup>114</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, "The FIRST REPORT," Volume 3, A.1. 14.

<sup>115</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, "The FIRST REPORT," Volume 2, 210.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid*, 8.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

comparative height between factory and non-factory children. At ages nine, twelve, fourteen, and sixteen the average heights proved the same or very close in comparison for both males and females. By age eighteen the average male in a factory stood at sixty-three inches while males who had not worked in factories stood at sixty-nine inches, a six inch difference.<sup>118</sup>

If physical harm did not happen to a child then physiological conditions would affect them before long due to the factory conditions including chronic conditions, the consequences of eating bad food and poor medical judgment, physical stresses, and breathing polluted air. Just some of the illnesses, diseases and chronic conditions resulting from working in the factories included chronic bronchitis, consumption, stomach aches, or gastrodynia, dyspepsia, difficulties menstruating, and enlarged glands.<sup>119</sup> Many medical professionals attested to witnessing scrofulous, or an overall unhealthy, sickly look of factory workers. Scrofulous was considered to be very common in factories.<sup>120</sup> Some medical professionals debated whether or not one could inherit it.<sup>121</sup> Rachitis, or rickets, proved extremely common; leading to subsequent deformities because, “the hardening of bones is delayed.”<sup>122</sup> Other medical conditions included nervous disease and ulcers.<sup>123</sup>

General conditions of the factories and factory life affected other aspects of physical health. Because of the diseases which originated from poor conditions and bad food, some children received medical treatment. This treatment in many cases consisted of giving the affected children spirits and opium as remedies. Ultimately this hurt the development and the digestive organs of

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<sup>118</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” Volume 3, D.1. 88.

<sup>119</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” Volume 3, 236-238.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, C.1. 61.

<sup>121</sup> Engels, 175.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, 175.

<sup>123</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” Volume 2, 543-544.

the children.<sup>124</sup> Working in factories played an important role in the mental development of children in the long term as well. In an interview conducted by Michael Sadler he asked William Cooper about his time spent in factories: “Has it not weakened your faculties as well as injured your health?” Cooper replied, “I have a very poor memory; not so good a one as I used to have.”<sup>125</sup>

Physical stresses caused medical issues as well. Many developed a fever from over exertion in confined spaces within the mills.<sup>126</sup> In some instances this fever played a role in the development of typhus.<sup>127</sup> Standing for a long period of time could “(produce) a varicose state of the veins,” according to Samuel Smith, a Leeds surgeon.<sup>128</sup> Many children also ran around barefoot, putting many at risk.<sup>129</sup> Children would develop colds and other illnesses from working in standing water, and medicine in the early 1800s did not demonstrate the strong deterring effect that it does today.<sup>130</sup> In an attempt to heal children doctors would prescribe a medication called Godfrey’s Cordial. This killed many children due to the fact that it contained opiates.<sup>131</sup>

The air in factories created numerous problems as well. Thomas Young, a physician in Lancashire, stated to the Committee on Child Labor that the polluted atmosphere of factories increased injury risk.<sup>132</sup> Particles from whatever they manufactured, flying around the air, such as cotton dust caused these problems. Food would also spoil frequently due to large amounts of dust in the air.<sup>133</sup> The dust would get on the food in the mill.<sup>134</sup> This limited the manufacturer’s ability

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid, 174.

<sup>125</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” *Volume 2*, 12.

<sup>126</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” *Volume 2*, 304.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid, 519.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid, 498.

<sup>129</sup> Engels, 135.

<sup>130</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” *Volume 3*, A.1. 5.

<sup>131</sup> Engels, 178.

<sup>132</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” *Volume 2*, 518.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid, 126.



to sufficiently feed their employees. If they wanted to eat their food they would need to pick the dust off.<sup>135</sup>

The amount of pollution in factories acted as poison to young lungs. “Children toiled in hot, stuffy factories breathing in the cotton flue that hung in the air, to earn as little as four shillings each.”<sup>136</sup> Whatever the factory manufactured ended up in the air. For example, lime from furs, cotton, and flax.<sup>137</sup> The dust would get in eyes and make it hard to breath, choking its victims.<sup>138</sup> This in combination with hot and humid temperatures could create further harm to bodily functions, decreasing overall health, and shorten life spans.<sup>139</sup> Originally, many called any condition related to factory pollution “mill fever.”<sup>140</sup> For many children dusty mills proved hard on their overall health.<sup>141</sup> Margaret Lawson’s voice grew hoarse from the dusty conditions and speaking over noise in the mill.<sup>142</sup> Joseph Sadler complained regularly of shortness of breath from working in a cotton mill since age nine.<sup>143</sup>

Mill pollution brought forth additional medical issues. The dust and the heat could also worsen pre-existing conditions such as those which relate to the heart.<sup>144</sup> Many would develop asthmatic symptoms, which turned out something more severe and fatal.<sup>145</sup> Sometimes asthma symptoms formed making other illnesses worse. This happened to Stephen Binns who worked in

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid, 97.

<sup>136</sup> Hindman, 555.

<sup>137</sup> Spartacus Educational, “Factory Pollution,” Accessed November 7, 2013.

<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/IRpollution.htm?menu=IRchild>

<sup>138</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” Volume 3, A.1. 2.

<sup>139</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” Volume 2, 605.

<sup>140</sup> Spartacus Educational, “Factory Pollution.”

<sup>141</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” Volume 3, C.1. 62.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid, A.1. 13.

<sup>143</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” Volume 2, 274.

<sup>144</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” Volume 2, 548.

<sup>145</sup> Hamlin, 42.

a cotton factory since age seven. His symptoms worsened so much he thought that he would die. At one point his symptoms lasted over a year without diminishing.<sup>146</sup>

Doctor Ward shared his own personal experience while on visit to a textile factory in Manchester. He could not stay inside more than ten minutes without gasping for air. “How is it possible for those who are doomed to remain there twelve or fifteen hours to endure it? If we take into account the heated temperature of the air, and the contamination of the air, it is a matter of astonishment to my mind, how the work people can bear the confinement for so great a length of time.”<sup>147</sup>

On a grander scale a whole generation of England remained at risk because of factory conditions. Surgeon Anthony Carlisle believed “factory children would be, ‘unfit to carry on a succeeding generation of healthy and vigorous human beings.’”<sup>148</sup> Many died prematurely from conditions in the factories.<sup>149</sup> The town of Leeds proves itself as an example of this. The churches in Leeds kept records of its burials. In 1800, 372 persons between the age of two and forty were buried. That number increased to 656 in 1830.<sup>150</sup> With lack of safety and reform, deaths continued to rise.

While in many instances, dangerous machinery played a role, the nature of the job itself often demonstrated its own risks. Elizabeth Fawke, age fifteen, worked at a spinning mill. One day while setting the frame at her work station, she got her hand trapped, almost losing an arm. Luckily for her, her father worked nearby and was able to assist her and saved her from further harm.<sup>151</sup> During an interview with Mr. Drinkwater, on the Committee, Henry Hough, from

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<sup>146</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” *Volume 2*, 178.

<sup>147</sup> Spartacus Educational, “Factory Pollution.”

<sup>148</sup> Hamlin, 41.

<sup>149</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” *Volume 2*, 561.

<sup>150</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” *Volume 3*, C.1. 193.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid*, C.1. 61.

Leicester, testified to witnessing a “young chap (have) his arm taken off” by a tenterhook while reaching in to pull wool out of his machine. The child was only fourteen.<sup>152</sup> Similarly, spinner Jane Millar, age thirteen, lost a finger, “by it slipping in between two cogwheels at the side of the frame.”<sup>153</sup> Accidents occurred for a variety of reasons and encompassed a range of circumstances. In some cases a combination of causes led to physical injury. Christy Maclaren testified that she fell victim to an accident occurring in the spinning room due to fatigue which she claims, combined with ignorance and negligence, led to all of her fingers but one thumb being amputated.<sup>154</sup> In other cases, pure negligence caused accidents, in part from supervisors as well as a lack of education over safety in the workplace. John Craik testified to witnessing, at Mr. Jones Low’s Mill, a child playing under a card machine and hurting his finger.<sup>155</sup> Children often played in dangerous environments when they should have been working.

Many occupations of children did not exist without their own specific health related consequences. Just within the wool industry there existed several hazards. For weavers, longevity proved rare. With burlers, “long employment is injurious to the eyes.”<sup>156</sup> Singer’s digestive organs suffer. For glossers, “some youths cannot bear the employment; some who persist, die in their prime,” while brushers and steamers “suffer distress in breathing... (And) lads look sickly.”

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Many of these sort of incidents left children with injuries which lasted a lifetime. The oldest son of William Swithenbank, a cloth dresser in Leeds, caught his right arm in a machine which tore it off, leaving him crippled for the rest of his life. He also witnessed similar accidents

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid, C.1. 14.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid, A.2. 10.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid, A.1. 2.

<sup>155</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” Volume 3, A.2. 15.

<sup>156</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” Volume 3, C.1. 119.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid, C.1. 119.

in his place of work where another lost an arm and one died.<sup>158</sup> Not only did these injuries last a lifetime, but they could significantly shorten a lifespan.

The stresses placed upon children working in factories significantly impacted their physical development. This could ultimately hurt future generations. Anthony Carlisle, a surgeon at Westminster Hospital, when asked if weak workers led to weak offspring and weak future generations, he agreed. He explained that it may not happen right away but believed people were a product of nurture not nature. He believed that with this lifestyle, “the city of London would not maintain its population for fifty years, if it was not refreshed by accessions from the country.” To further prove his point, he made an attempt to find any fourth generation descendants in the city and failed.<sup>159</sup> This, he argued, was due to factory work which “exhausted and crippled people.”<sup>160</sup> In turn they could not develop properly both physically and physiologically.

### **A Nation Responds**

The Committee on Child Labour gathered and presented evidence demonstrating how factory conditions left children vulnerable to diseases, caused them to suffer from improper physical development, and led to a less than normal overall health which led to a shortened lifespan in turn affecting a whole generation of British citizens. They presented this evidence to the House of Commons of which a vast majority opposed factory reform due to the fear of economic implications and lack of knowledge about the true situation within factories.<sup>161</sup> Because of this a reform movement began. Lord Ashley, a Whig and leading reformer, introduced a bill which

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<sup>158</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, “The FIRST REPORT,” *Volume 2*, 75.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>160</sup> Hamlin, 69.

<sup>161</sup> Spartacus Educational. “Michael Sadler.”

became the 1832 Reform Act in the House of Commons, and set the groundwork for major reform in the years to come.<sup>162</sup>

Michael Sadler on the Thirteenth of March, 1832 gave a speech to the House of Commons to help sway votes during the second reading of the Factories Regulation Bill, in which he advocated for the children, whom he described as “Reduced to the condition of slaves by over exertion, and another to that of paupers by involuntary idleness.”<sup>163</sup> He summarized his intended purpose: “In a word, to rescue them from a stated of suffering and degradation which, it is conceived, the children of the industrious classes in hardly any other country endure, or ever have experienced, and which can no longer be tolerated.”<sup>164</sup> Sadler explained how long hours of labor led to a “permanent deterioration of the physical condition... (and) the production of disease often wholly irremediable.”<sup>165</sup>

### Conclusions

The Committee on Child Labor brought to light a lot of truths about the industrial world: no child should remain subject to such abuses that take place within factories. Victorian values exemplified a necessity for self-respect and respect of others which such treatment violated. Working class children, passive victims of a harsh work environment, who were abused and suffered both short and long term medical consequences from employment. When this finally caught the attention of a child-obsessed middle class, efforts to address the issue led to investigation and a search for truth which revealed that prior information on factory conditions proved highly inaccurate.<sup>166</sup> Once misconceptions were cleared up, reform proved inevitable,

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<sup>162</sup> Spartacus Educational, “Lord Ashley, Earl of Shaftesbury,” Accessed November 7, 2013.

<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/IRashley.htm?menu=Twork>

<sup>163</sup> Hansard, ed, *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates: Vol XX*, 394.

<sup>164</sup> Hansard, ed, *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates: Vol XX*, 933.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid*, 940.

<sup>166</sup> Ramsay, 128-129.

though it still took time in coming. After all, the economic benefits of industrialization, especially to those, who in Marxian terms, owned the means of production, were great and these individuals had power. However, an important step forward was taken with the passing of the 1833 Factory Act, which required that children under the age of nine could no longer work. Children between the ages of nine and thirteen could not work more than eight hours a day. Anyone over the age of thirteen worked a maximum of twelve hours a day.<sup>167</sup> This legislation became the result of a repaired disconnect between legislators and the children in factories, connected by The Committee on Child Labor with publication of “The Sadler Reports”. Future reform followed, which ultimately led to the eradication of child labor all together. The process was complex, a product of the intricate interplay of related and sometimes conflicting impulses and forces.

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<sup>167</sup> Spartacus Educational, “Lord Ashley, Earl of Shaftesbury.”

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[http://books.google.com/books?id=dzBDAAAACAAJ&dq=1834+His+Majesty's+Commissioners+appointed+to+collect+information&source=gbs\\_navlinks\\_s](http://books.google.com/books?id=dzBDAAAACAAJ&dq=1834+His+Majesty's+Commissioners+appointed+to+collect+information&source=gbs_navlinks_s)

Provides primary source documentation of the experiences and conditions within factories in Early 1800s England.

Great Britain. Parliament. "Factories Regulation Act (1833)." In *English Historical Documents 1833-1874*, edited by G.M. Young and W.D. Handcock. Vol. 12 Part One. New York: Oxford University Press, 1956.

This book contains the text of the Factories Regulation Act of 1833. It is a relevant source because of its significance as a landmark in factory labor reform.

Great Britain. Parliament. "The FIRST REPORT of the Central Board of His Majesty's Commissioners for inquiring into the Employment of Children in Factories; with Minutes of Evidence, and Appendix." In *Irish University Press series of British parliamentary papers: Industrial revolution: Children's Employment*. Volume 2. Shannon, Irish University Press, 1833.

Provides primary source documentation of the experiences and conditions within factories in Early 1800s England.

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Provides primary source documentation of the experiences and conditions within factories in Early 1800s England.

Great Britain. Parliament. "Factories Inquiry Commission Second Report Together with Supplementary Report Part I Employment of Children in Factories with Minutes of Evidence and Reports of Medical and District Commissioners." In *Irish University Press series of British parliamentary papers: Industrial revolution: Children's Employment*. Volume 4. Shannon, Irish University Press, 1833-34.

Provides primary source documentation of the experiences and conditions within factories in Early 1800s England.

### ***Period Works***

Dickens, Charles. *Oliver Twist*. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1974.

Provides a literary depiction of the life and times of a working class children and families in the early 1800s. Originally Published in 1846.

Dodd, George. *Days at the Factories: Or, The Manufacturing Industry of Great Britain Described, and Illustrated by Numerous Engravings of Machines and Processes. Series I.- London*. Charles Knight & Company, 1843.  
[http://books.google.com/books/about/Days\\_at\\_the\\_Factories.html?id=1hQLAQAAIAAJ](http://books.google.com/books/about/Days_at_the_Factories.html?id=1hQLAQAAIAAJ)  
 (accessed September 2, 2013).

Describes a day at a variety of different locations significant to the British industrial economy during the 1800s. These locations include anywhere from breweries and distilleries, to various kinds of factories throughout England.

Engels, Friedrich. *The Condition of the Working Class in England: Oxford World's Classics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

This book is a study on the conditions under which England's working class work and live. It is relevant to the topic because of the point of view it provides from Engels, having worked himself in a British factory as management.



### *Secondary Sources*

Boone, Troy. *Youth of Darkest England: Working-Class Children at the Heart of Victorian Empire*. Great Britain, Routledge, 2005.

Boone examines the representation of English working-class. Looks into how the children of the British working-class resisted and “nationalist identification process that tended to eradicate or obfuscate class differences.”

Bratlinger, Partrick. “Dickens and the Factories.” *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 26, no.3 (1971): 270-285. Accessed September 10, 2013. <http://www.jstor.org/sable2933406>

Journal article about the historical context and significance of Charles Dickens’ writings in the 1800s. Argues the validity of Dickens writings as a source of an accurate depiction of factory life.

Cecil, David. Melbourne. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1954.

Biography of the life of Lord Melbourne.

Crosby, Travis L. *Sir Robert Peel's Administration 1841-1846*. Hamden, Connecticut: The Shoe String Press Inc, 1976.

A history and analysis of the Administration under Sir Robert Peel. Helped to provide further context and significance after the passing of the 1833 Factory Act.

Goose, Nigel and Katrina Honeyman, *Childhood and Child Labour in Industrial England: Diversity and Agency, 1750–1914*, London: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2013.

Covers the understanding of children and childhood during the industrial revolution in regards to diversity and culture. The authors look at children as participants in the revolution not just as victims.

Marah Gubar. “The Victorian Child, c.1837-1901.” Accessed March 16, 2014. <http://www.representingchildhood.pitt.edu/victorian.htm>

Discussion of children’s roles within the factory, economy, and the British Empire.

Hamlin, Oliver. *Public Health and Social Justice in the Age of Chadwick: Britain, 1800-1854* *Cambridge Studies in the History of Medicine* Cambridge history of medicine. Cambridge University Press, 1998. Google e-books.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=fwCPy5V3cOcC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

Provides a better understanding from a secondary perspective of the health conditions in early 1800s England. How medicine worked for them, and the various roles it played within society and government.

Himmelfarb, Getrude. *The De-Moralization of Society: From Victorian Virtues to Modern Values*. New York, Random House, Inc. 1996.

An interesting look at the Victorian definition of morals, were their ideas originated, ideas that were both civilized and in some cases radical, and how that influenced subsequent times.

Hindman, Hugh D. *The World of Child Labor: An Historical and Regional Survey*. New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2009.  
<https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=lrKec5YTVYAC&printsec=frontcover&output=reader&authuser=0&hl=en&pg=GBS.PP1> (accessed November 7, 2013).

This text provides a background of child labor issues throughout world history. Helped with factual information and historical context.

Humphries, Jane. *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution*. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Focuses on economy, poverty, socio-economic effects of the industrial revolution.

James, Allison and Alan Prout, *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood*, London: Psychology Press, 1997.

Discusses children as passive victims of the industrial revolution, by depowering and demeaning them.

Kirby, Peter. *Child Labour in Britain, 1750-1870*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Kirby argues that during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, child labor provided an invaluable contribution both to economic growth and to the incomes of working-class households.

Mokyr, Joel "Editor's Introduction: The New Economic History and the Industrial Revolution," *The British Industrial Revolution: An Economic Perspective 2* (1999).

This introduction explains the diversity of the history of the Industrial Revolution.

Poovey, Mary. *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England*. London, Virago Press Limited, 1998.

Poovey examined various controversies that provide glimpses of the ways in which representations of gender were simultaneously constructed, deployed, and contested. Poovey does this by looking at women's issues from both economic and political histories. "Poovey turns to broader historical concerns in an analysis of how notions of gender shape ideology."

Ramsay, A.A.W. *Sir Robert Peel*. New York, New York: Barnes and Nobel Incorporated, 1971.

A biography of Sir Robert Peel.

Rose, Sonya O. *Limited Livelihoods: Gender and Class in Nineteenth-century*. California, University of California Press, 1992.

Integrated analytical tools from feminist theory, cultural studies and sociology to illuminate detailed historical evidence. Sonya Rose argued that gender was a central principle of the 19th century industrial transformation in England.

Spartacus Educational. "Factory Accidents." Accessed November 7, 2013.  
<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/IRaccidents.htm>

An article depicting some stories of general factory accidents, along with further information on social context and political ramifications.

Spartacus Educational. "Factory Pollution." Accessed November 7, 2013.  
<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/IRpollution.htm?menu=IRchild>

This article explains the affects factory pollution had on workers in great detail with primary source evidence. Explained medical conditions caused by the pollution.

Spartacus Educational. "Lord Ashley, Earl of Shaftesbury." Accessed November 7, 2013.  
<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/IRashley.htm?menu=Twork>

Article containing a biography concerning Lord Ashley and his involvement in factory reform.

Spartacus Educational. "Michael Sadler." Accessed November 7, 2013.  
<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/IRsadler.htm?menu=Twork>

Article containing a biography concerning Michael Sadler and his involvement in factory reform.

Spartacus Educational. "Punishment in Factories." Accessed November 7, 2013.  
<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/IRpunishments.htm>

This Article explains the reasoning behind and the extent to which punishment in factories occurred. Packed with primary source evidence.

University of Warwick. "The Victorian Family." Accessed March 16, 2014.  
[www2.warwick.ac.uk/.../the\\_victorian\\_family.ppt](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/.../the_victorian_family.ppt)

Power Point discussing ideals of the family, middle-class families, working-class families, family structures, and roles.