LETTERS

ON THE

FACTORY ACT,

As it affects the Cotton Manufacture,

ADDRESSED TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE,

BY

NASSAU W. SENIOR, ESQ.

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LETTERS

FROM MR. SENIOR TO MR. THOMSON.

York Hotel, Manchester, Tuesday, March 28, 1837.

MY DEAR SIR,

We have now been for some time in the centre of the cotton district. Our principal objects of inquiry have been the effects of the Factory Regulation Act, as respects the cotton manufacture, and the consequences which may be expected from further legislative interference. And as Lord Ashley's motion is at hand, and will probably be disposed of before our return, I think you may not be unwilling to hear the results to which we have as yet come; although, in stating them, I have no doubt that I shall say much with which you are familiar.

I have always been struck by the difference between the hours of work usual over the whole world in cotton factories and in other employments; and did not, until now, perceive the reasons. It seems to arise from two causes: first, the great proportion of fixed to circulating capital, which makes long hours of work desirable; and, secondly, the extraordinary lightness of the labour, if labour it can be called, which renders them practicable. I will take them separately:

1. I find the usual computation to be that the fixed capital is in the proportion of four to one to the circulating; so that if a manufacturer has £50,000 to employ, he will expend £40,000 in erecting his mill, and filling it with machinery, and devote only £10,000 to the purchase of raw material (cotton, flour, and coals) and
the payment of wages. I find also that the whole capital is supposed in general to be turned over (or, in other words, that goods are produced and sold representing the value of the whole capital, together with the manufacturer's profit) in about a year; in favourable times in rather less,—in others, such as the present, in rather more. I find also that the net profit annually derived may be estimated at ten per cent., some computations placing it as low as seven and a half, others as high as eleven; ten I believe to be about the average. But in order to realize this net profit, a gross profit of rather more than fifteen per cent. is necessary; for although the circulating capital, being continually restored to its original form of money, may be considered as indestructible, the fixed capital is subject to incessant deterioration, not only from wear and tear, but also from constant mechanical improvements, which in eight or nine years render obsolete, machinery which when first used was the best of its kind.

Under the present law, no mill in which persons under eighteen years of age are employed (and, therefore, scarcely any mill at all) can be worked more than eleven and a half hours a-day, that is, twelve hours for five days in the week and nine on Saturday.

Now, the following analysis will show that in a mill so worked, the whole net profit is derived from the last hour. I will suppose a manufacturer to invest 100,000l. in his mill and machinery, and 20,000l. in raw material and wages. The annual return of that mill, supposing the capital to be turned once a year, and gross profits to be fifteen per cent., ought to be goods worth 115,000l., produced by the constant conversion and reconversion of the 20,000l. circulating capital, from money into goods and from goods into money, in periods of rather more than two months. Of this 115,000l. each of the twenty-three half hours of work produces 5-115ths, or one twenty-third. Of these 23-23ds, (constituting the whole 115,000l.) twenty,
that is to say, 100,000l. out of the 115,000l., simply replace the capital—one twenty-third (or 5,000l. out of the 115,000l.), makes up for the deterioration of the mill and machinery. The remaining 2-23ds., that is, the last two of the twenty-three half hours of every day, produce the net profit of ten per cent. If, therefore, (prices remaining the same,) the factory could be kept at work thirteen hours instead of eleven and a half, by an addition of about 2,600l. to the circulating capital, the net profit would be more than doubled. On the other hand, if the hours of working were reduced by one hour per day (prices remaining the same), net profit would be destroyed—if they were reduced by an hour and a half, even gross profit would be destroyed. The circulating capital would be replaced, but there would be no fund to compensate the progressive deterioration of the fixed capital.

And it is to be remarked, that there are many causes now at work tending to increase the proportion of fixed to circulating capital. The principal, perhaps, is the tendency of mechanical improvement to throw on machinery more and more of the work of production. The self-acting mule is a very expensive machine; but it dispenses with the services of the most highly paid operatives—the spinners. It has acquired, indeed, the sobriquet of "the Cast Iron Spinner." Though of recent introduction, we found it employed in a large proportion of the principal factories. At Orrell's splendid factory, we found a new blower enabling three persons to do the work of four. At Birley's, we found preparation making for a newly invented process, by which the wool was to be conveyed direct from the willow to the blowing machine, without requiring, as it now does, a whole set of work-people for that purpose. At Bollington, we found a new machine, which transfers the sliver direct from the cards to the drawing-frame, and thus dispenses with another class of attendants. At another
place, we found a weaving process, on a vast scale, differing from all others that we observed during our tour. And at Stayley Bridge we found a factory nearly finished, covering two acres and a half of ground, with buildings only one story high, (that is, ground floor and first floor,)—so that on each floor the whole operations will be carried on in one vast apartment or gallery, forming the four sides of a quadrangle, each side 450 feet long; thus saving all the labour employed in mounting or descending. Each of these five last improvements is recent,—so recent, indeed, as not to have been as yet copied by other establishments. One of them, the new weaving process, is still kept so secret, that we were allowed to visit it only as a special favour, and on the promise of not revealing its nature. And the effect of every one of them is to increase fixed, and diminish circulating capital.

Another circumstance, producing the same effect, is the improvement of the means of transport, and the consequent diminution of the stock of raw material in the manufacturer’s hands waiting for use. Formerly, when coals and cotton came by water, the uncertainty and irregularity of supply forced him to keep on hand two or three months’ consumption. Now, a railway brings it to him week by week, or rather day by day, from the port or the mine.

Under such circumstances, I fully anticipate that, in a very few years, the fixed capital, instead of its present proportion, will be as 6 or 7 or even 10 to 1 to the circulating; and, consequently, that the motives to long hours of work will become greater, as the only means by which a large proportion of fixed capital can be made profitable. “When a labourer,” said Mr. Ashworth to me, “lays down his spade, he renders useless, for that period, a capital worth eighteen pence. When one of our people leaves the mill, he renders useless a capital that has cost 100l.”

2d. The exceeding easiness of cotton-factory labour renders long hours of work practicable. With the ex-
ception of the mule spinners, a very small portion of the opera
tives, probably not exceeding 12 or 15,000 in the whole kingdom, and constantly diminishing in number, the work is merely that of watching the machinery, and piecing the threads that break. I have seen the girls who thus attend standing with their arms folded during the whole time that I stayed in the room—others sewing a handkerchief or sitting down. The work, in fact, is scarcely equal to that of a shopman behind a counter in a frequented shop—mere confinement, attention, and attendance.

Under these circumstances, cotton factories have always been worked for very long hours. From thirteen to fifteen, or even sixteen hours, appear to be the usual hours per day abroad. Our own, at their commencement, were kept going the whole twenty-four hours. The difficulty of cleaning and repairing the machinery, and the divided responsibility—arising from the necessity of employing a double staff of overlookers, book-keepers, &c. have nearly put an end to this practice; but until Hobhouse's Act reduced them to sixty-nine, our factories generally worked from seventy to eighty hours per week. Any plan, therefore, which should reduce the present comparatively short hours, must either destroy profit, or reduce wages to the Irish standard, or raise the price of the commodity, by an amount which it is not easy for me to estimate.

The estimate in the paper, signed by the principal fine spinners, is, that it would raise prices by 16 per cent. That the increase of price would be such as to occasion, even in the home market, a great diminution of consumption, I have no doubt; and from all that I read and hear, on the subject of foreign competition, I believe that it would, in a great measure, exclude us from the foreign market, which now takes off three-fourths of our annual production.

It must never be forgotten, that in manufactures, with
every increase of the quantity produced, the relative expense of production is diminished—and, which is the same thing, that with every diminution of production, the relative expense of production is increased. If only ten watches were produced in a year, it is probable, that a watch would cost 100l. If there were an annual demand for 10,000,000 of watches, they would not, in all probability, cost a guinea a-piece. And this general law applies more and more forcibly, in proportion as the manufacture in question employs more expensive machinery and a greater division of labour: to the cotton manufacture, therefore, beyond all others. Up to the present time, production and cheapness have increased together. The yarn that cost forty shillings a pound when we consumed only 10,000,000 of pounds of cotton, now, when we consume 280,000,000, costs two shillings. Increase of price, and diminution of consumption, will therefore act and re-act on one another. Every increase of price will further diminish consumption; and every further diminution of consumption will occasion an increased relative cost of production, and consequently a further increase of price. First will go the foreign market—already in a precarious state, and, once lost, irrecoverable; since, according to the law to which I have referred, the more our rivals produce,—the wider the markets which are opened to their competition, in consequence of the rise of English prices,—the cheaper they will be able to produce. This again, by diminishing the quantity produced at home, will increase its relative cost of production; and that again will increase prices, and diminish consumption;—until I think I see, as in a map, the succession of causes which may render the cotton manufactures of England mere matter of history.

I have no doubt, therefore, that a ten hours' bill would be utterly ruinous. And I do not believe that any restriction whatever, of the present hours of work, could be safely made.
To-morrow, or the next day, I will endeavour to give you the result of our inquiries as to the working of the present Act.

Ever yours,

N. W. SENIOR.

The Right Hon. Charles Poulett Thomson, &c. &c. &c.

My dear Sir,

I now proceed to give you the result of our inquiries as to the operation of the Factory Act.

In considering that Act, care must be taken to distinguish between its substance and its machinery.

1st. The substance is, that, in factories, children under nine years of age shall not be employed at all, and those under thirteen not for more than eight hours a-day; and that they shall pass two hours a-day in school. The hours of working, except on Saturday, being twelve, it was supposed that by means of relays, the services of children might be obtained for the whole twelve hours.

2d. The machinery consists of enactments, that no child under thirteen shall be allowed to remain in a factory without a certificate of age from a surgeon, nor for more than eight hours a-day, nor without a certificate of its having attended school for twelve hours in the preceding week; and also in the appointment of inspectors, empowered to issue regulations and visit factories, and superintendents or sub-inspectors acting under their direction, and empowered to enter all school-rooms and counting-houses, but not those parts of a factory in which manufacturing processes are carried on.

The relay system appears on the whole, as far as this district is concerned, to have failed. Of the factories
that we visited, only four employ it. Three of these are situated in country villages, and the number of children in the whole four is small, being only 243 out of 4,800 operatives, or about 1-20th. The objections urged were, in some places, the difficulty of obtaining children, and in all, the constant trouble and difficulty of making correct entries in the time-books, the exposure to disgrace and loss from the penalties inflicted for unavoidable errors, and the disturbance arising from a change of hands in the middle of work.

On the other hand, the fear that all the children under thirteen would be everywhere dismissed has proved vain. Of the factories that we have inspected, four only have adopted that course, the same number as that of those who employ relays.

The usual plan is to employ one set of children for the first eight hours of the day, and to get on as well as may be during the remaining four without them.

The consequences are—

1st. Loss to the parents who have children under thirteen, by the non-employment of those under nine, and by the reduced wages of those between ten and thirteen.

2d. Loss to the operatives who are the direct employers of the children as their assistants, first, by their having to employ more assistants above thirteen and at higher wages, and secondly, by their being able to get through less work after they lose the assistance of the younger children.

3d. Loss to the mill-owner, whose produce during the last four hours of each day is diminished in quantity, and deteriorated in quality, and who has sometimes to repay to his operatives a part of their loss.

The gainers are the children above thirteen, whose wages have risen, and the children under thirteen, so far as they are better educated and have less fatigue than before.

As to the value of this gain, however, as far as education is concerned, I am sceptical. If good schools and
a good system of instruction were established, no doubt much could be learned in the two hours a-day of compulsory schooling.

But those portions of the bill which provided for the establishment of schools having been thrown out by the Lords, the school appears to be generally rather a place for detaining and annoying the children than of real instruction. Instead of the vast and airy apartments of a well-regulated factory, they are kept in a small, low, close room; and instead of the light work, or rather attendance, of a factory, which really is not more exercise than a child voluntarily takes, they have to sit on a form, supposed to be studying a spelling-book. We found a universal statement that the children could not be got into the school except by force; that they tried every means to remain in the factory, or, if excluded, to ramble over the fields or the streets.

It may easily be supposed that the operatives are outrageous against this state of things. Their original object was to raise the price of their own labour. For this purpose the spinners, who form, as I stated in my first letter, a very small (about 1-20th) but a powerful body among them, finding that they could not obtain a limitation of the hours of work to ten by combination, tried to effect it through the legislature. They knew that Parliament would not legislate for adults. They got up therefore a frightful, and (as far as we have heard and seen) an utterly unfounded picture of the ill treatment of the children, in the hope that the legislature would restrain all persons under 18 years old to ten hours, which they knew would, in fact, restrict the labour of adults to the same period. The Act having not only defeated this attempt, but absolutely turned it against them,—having, in fact, increased their labour and diminished their pay,—they are far more vehement for a ten hours' bill than before, and are endeavouring by every means to impede the working of the existing Act, and to
render its enactments vexatious or nugatory. We hear everywhere of their conspiring to entrap the masters into penalties, by keeping the children too long in the mill, by keeping them from school, and by all the petty annoyances by which trouble can be created.

With respect to the masters, we have found them, with only two exceptions, favourable to the substance of the Act. They maintain, indeed, that the long hours of attendance did not injure the health of the children, provided the work-rooms were sufficiently ventilated: a thing which may be accomplished by the mere addition of a fan, worked by the engine with little trouble or expense, and, as we felt at Ashton's and Ashworth's, with perfect success. They maintain also that the factory children were not worse educated, indeed were better educated, than the children employed in other trades: and they complain that they alone are selected to be charged with the education of their dependants. But they admit that employment, however light, for twelve hours a-day, must prevent education. They are, as far as we have seen, without any exception, most earnest that their work-people should be educated; and they are ready, for that purpose, to submit to their being restricted, while under thirteen, to eight hours a-day of employment; but they do complain most bitterly of the machinery of the Act.

1st. They complain of the clauses by which a master may be called before the magistrates, exposed, and fined, "for overworking a child," because a child has remained a minute too long within the walls of the mill from heedlessness, or from dislike of being turned out in the snow,—or perhaps as part of a conspiracy to make the act intolerable.

2d. They object to being liable to be accused, convicted, and fined, "for making false entries in the time-book," because one of 80 children has one day come at half-past eight and gone at half-past four, instead of coming at eight and going at four, the hours fixed for it; and
entered in the time-book, on the supposition that they had been adhered to. It is to avoid this danger that the relay system has generally been unattempted or disused.

3d. They object to being convicted and fined "for neglecting the education of the children," because they have been unable to force a child to school, or have allowed one to work without a regular certificate of school attendance. They say that the children will work, and will not go to school; and that the mill-owner, whose time is filled with other things, cannot employ it in preventing eighty urchins from truancy.

Under such circumstances, we found, in some of the best regulated establishments, the forms of the Act in this last respect systematically disregarded; the master, relying on his general high character, and not fearing to be suspected of having intentionally violated its substance. Others, however, were in constant anxiety lest it should be infringed; and others we found in a state of absolute exasperation at the convictions which had been obtained against them while they were most diligently endeavouring to carry it into effect.

The same may be said as to the clauses which render the remaining of a child in a factory, without proof of its employment, conclusive evidence of its being over worked. In some mills, indeed in most, this is adhered to. The children are turned into the fields, or the streets, whatever be the weather, the instant the hour begins to strike. In others again it is systematically violated. Care is taken that they shall not work, but they are allowed to remain. But this again can be done with tolerable safety, only by a master who feels that he cannot be suspected of real misconduct, though he may be convicted and fined for noncompliance with forms.

4th. They complain of the power of the inspectors to issue regulations, which, after having been twice published in a county paper, become laws. They say, that regulations, minute and troublesome, are suddenly issued
and suddenly altered or withdrawn; that they are not easily comprehended, and, by the time they have been understood, are revoked.

5th. They complain of the constant recurrence of Parliamentary interference. They are tired of having to come to town, canvass and expostulate every year, in order to keep off a ten hours' bill, or some other equally wild proposal. They say, that if they can once be sure that they shall have nothing worse than the present Act, they shall endeavour to work it, and believe that it may be made to work well; but that any further restrictions will be ruinous, and that even the fear of them is most mischievous.

It will appear from this statement, that the Government is not likely to be much troubled by demands from the manufacturers for improvements in the Factory Act. The manufacturer is tired of regulations—what he asks is tranquillity—implora pace. But, if alterations are to be made, the following are those which have been suggested to us:—

1st. That Government shall provide schools, and, at least, tolerable teachers. At present there seem to be none that deserve the name, except a few whom some opulent and enlightened mill-owners, such as the Gregs, Ashton, and Ashworth, have established themselves.

2d. That the duty of forcing the children to be educated, shall be transferred from the mill-owner to the parent; or (which they, with one exception, prefer) that education shall be enforced only by making a certain amount of it a preliminary to employment—by enacting, for instance, that after a given time no child shall be admitted to a factory till it can read, or be allowed to work full time until it can read and write fluently.

3d. That the mill-owner shall be punishable only for substantial, not for mere formal, violations of the law. That he shall no longer be liable to be fined and disgraced as a violator of the law, for an incorrect entry in
a time-book, inadvertently made by his book-keeper, or because a child has stayed in the mill five minutes too long, in order to tie a shoe, or warm itself by the stove.

4th. That some control shall be exercised over the promulgation of rules by the inspectors; some appeal from their regulations, and some better mode of publishing them.

These seem to be all their wishes; and I must say, that they appear to me to be reasonable. The first appears to be the most important; and I only repeat my own words on the Poor Law Report when I say, that the most pressing duty now incumbent on the Government is, to provide for the religious and moral education of the people. In fact, the Factory Act, by driving many children into other employments, makes the expediency of adopting a general system of education for all children even more urgent than it was before. "What are you doing here?" said Mr. Ashton to a little fellow, whom he found in one of his coal-mines. "Working in mine, till I am old enough to go into factory."

The general impression on us all as to the effects of factory labour has been unexpectedly favourable. The factory work-people in the country districts are the plumpest, best clothed, and healthiest looking persons of the labouring class that I have ever seen. The girls, especially, are far more good-looking (and good looks are fair evidence of health and spirits) than the daughters of agricultural labourers. The wages earned per family are more than double those of the south. We examined at Egerton three of the Bledlow pauper migrants. Being fresh to the trade, they cannot be very expert; yet one family earned 1l. 19s. 6d.; another, 2l. 13s. 6d.; and the other, 1l. 16s. per week. At Hyde we saw another. They had six children, under 13; and yet the earnings of the father and two elder children were 30s. a week. All these families live in houses, to which a Gloucestershire cottage would be a mere out-house. And not only are
factory wages high, but, what is more important, the employment is constant. Nothing, in fact, except the strikes of the work-people themselves, seems to interrupt it. Even now, when the hand-loom weavers and lacemakers are discharged by thousands, the factory operatives are in full employ. This is one of the consequences of the great proportion of fixed capital, and the enormous loss which follows its standing idle for a single day. Nothing can exceed the absurdity of the lamentation over the children as “crowded in factories.” Crowding in a factory is physically impossible. The machinery occupies the bulk of the space; the persons who have to attend to it are almost too distant to converse. Birley’s weaving room, covering an acre of ground, had not space among the looms for more than 170 persons. Bailey’s factory, covering two acres and a half, one story high, and therefore, taking together the ground-floor and first-floor, containing five acres of apartment, was to be worked by about 800 operatives, which gives more than 15 yards square to each. I only wish that my work-room in Southampton Buildings had as much space, in proportion to the people in it.

The difference in appearance when you come to the Manchester operatives is striking; they are sallow and thinner. But when I went through their habitations in Irish Town, and Ancoats, and Little Ireland, my only wonder was that tolerable health could be maintained by the inmates of such houses. These towns, for such they are in extent and population, have been erected by small speculators with an utter disregard to every thing except immediate profit. A carpenter and a bricklayer club to buy a patch of ground, and cover it with what they call houses. In one place we saw a whole street following the course of a ditch, in order to have deeper cellars (cellars for people, not for lumber) without the expense of excavation. Not a house in this street escaped cholera. And generally speaking throughout these suburbs the
streets are unpaved, with a dunghill or a pond in the middle; the houses built back to back, without ventilation or drainage; and whole families occupy each a corner of a cellar or of a garret. A good Building Act, strictly enforced, might give health not only to the factories but to the whole population. We tried, indeed, an experiment as to the comparative appearance of different classes of the Manchester population. We went last Sunday to the great Sunday-school in Bennett-street, where we found about 300 girls in one large room. We desired first all the carders to stand up alone, then all the piecers, then all the reelers, and so on through the various departments. Then we desired all those not employed in factories to stand up; then all those employed in factories; and on each of these trials not one of us could perceive the least difference between the apparent health of the different classes of factory children, or between the children employed in factories and those not so employed.

We inquired very sedulously as to the mode in which Mr. Horner has carried out the Act; and the testimony was generally, I may almost say unanimously, favourable. The mill-owners are angry, indeed, at his last report, and most vehemently opposed to his demand for further powers, and for authority to his superintendents to enter the mills; but, notwithstanding this, they agree that he has performed his very difficult duties mildly and judiciously.

Ever yours,

N. W. SENIOR.

P.S.—On looking back at this letter I see that I have omitted one point which was earnestly pressed on us,—namely, that the superintendents should be appointed by the inspector, and removable by him; and the inspector made responsible for their conduct. Under the present system they may, and I believe often do, pull different ways.

The Right Hon. Charles Poulett Thomson, &c. &c. &c.
York Hotel, Manchester, April 4, 1837.

My dear Sir,

I must own that I am somewhat alarmed at the rumours that the Government propose to render the Factory Act more stringent, in compliance with Mr. Horner's requisitions.

Those requisitions are two:

1st. That magistrates who are mill-owners, or have some property in mills, or who are by trade or near relationship connected with factories, should not sit on the bench on prosecutions connected with offences under the Act.

2d. That the sub-inspectors or superintendents should have free access, without asking permission, to every part of a factory.

1st. The first of these proposed enactments would exclude from the bench on factory questions, all manufacturers or commercial men; for who is there among them, in the manufacturing districts, who is not by trade or near relationship connected with factories? It would therefore leave the enforcement of the Act to the clergy and country gentlemen,—classes generally opposed to the mill-owners in habits and politics, and without practical knowledge of the system in the working of which they would have to interfere. This might not, perhaps, be of great importance if the offences on which they would have to adjudicate were substantial offences. If wilful over-working a child, wilful false entries, or wilful obstructions of education were the punishable acts, the adjudication might, perhaps, be safely left with the country gentlemen; but as the Act is worded, the offences may be mere formal ones. They may be the permitting a child to remain too long in a mill, or an inadvertent error in one among 1000 entries; or non-compliance with the education clauses, with which Mr. Horner himself declares that "in many cases strict compliance is nearly imprac-
ticable.” If for such offences as these the judge is to be a person without sympathy for the accused, or knowledge of the difficulty, I fear that provisions now severely vexatious may become almost intolerable.

2d. The free admission of the sub-inspectors would, however, be still more opposed. The “personel” of a large factory is a machine as complicated as its “material,” and is, I think, on the whole, the great triumph of Sir R. Arkwright’s genius. In such an establishment from 700 to 1400 persons, of all ages and both sexes, almost all working by the piece, and earning wages of every amount between two shillings and forty shillings a-week, are engaged in producing one ultimate effect, which is dependent on their combined exertions. Any stoppage, even any irregularity in one department, deranges the whole. A strict and almost superstitious discipline is necessary to keep this vast instrument going for a single day. Now how, ask the mill-owners, could this discipline be kept up, if the sub-inspectors were at liberty to walk over our establishments at all hours; listen to the complaints and jealousies of all our servants, and at their instigation summon us as criminals before the magistrates? Could the discipline, they ask, of a regiment or of a ship be carried on, if we had sub-inspectors of regiments, with power to ask all the privates for grievances, and summon their officers for penalties?

I firmly believe that if this enactment is carried, the following will be the consequences:—

1st. That a considerable number of the educated and intelligent mill-owners, that is, of those who have the sensibilities of gentlemen, will cease to follow their occupa-
tion within the British Islands.

We have already found one who is preparing, if such a clause is passed, to form an establishment in the Tyrol; and others have told us that they shall resist it by main force. This was probably an idle menace; but it shows the degree of irritation that the mere proposal has excited.
2d. That from a large proportion of the Mills, the children under thirteen will be excluded, and forced, therefore, into other employments, unprotected by any regulations whatever.

I mentioned in my former letter, that this has already been done to some extent. And it is remarkable, that of the four establishments seen by us, which have adopted this manner of escaping from the Act, three,—that is to say, Lambert Hoole and Jackson's, Cheetham's new mill, and Orrell's,—are of first-rate magnitude.

A very slight additional pressure, occurring too at a time of diminished manufacturing activity, would render it prevalent.—Mr. Homer disbelieves the probability of such an event, because "it cuts off the future supply of useful hands; as children, to be profitable to their employer, must begin to learn their trade at a much earlier age than thirteen." I agree as to this fact,—but not as to the inference. A manufacturer who excludes children under thirteen, may still carry on his business with work-people who acquired their skill under the old regulations, or with a supply from other mills. Some years hence, the evil may be great, and may be irremediable;—but, by that time, the manufacturer in question may have quitted business.

3d. I fear a very dangerous state of feeling among the work-people. I need not tell you, that we are approaching a season of great difficulty. Excessive shipments have injured the Asiatic market,—internal supply, the continental,—and financial embarrassment, the American. Already the manufacturers complain of diminished or suspended demands, are holding stocks, and talking of working short time. If the dense and ignorant population of the manufacturing districts, trained in combinations, and accustomed to high wages, is partly thrown out of work, and the remainder reduced in income, scenes of violence may follow, which may frighten away capital, already having a tendency to emigrate.
On the whole, the result of my tour has been a mixture of pain and pleasure. I have seen a vast, well paid, thriving, and apparently happy population. But I see, impending over that population, calamities which may be, and I hope will be averted—but which will inevitably fall on them, if the suggestions of those who call themselves their friends are even partially followed.

To enforce ventilation and drainage, and give means and motives to education, seems to me all that can be done by positive enactment.

Ever yours,

N. W. SENIOR.

The Right Hon. Charles Poulett Thomson,
&c. &c. &c.