

**THE SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL,
AND RELIGIOUS STATES OF THE
MANUFACTURING DISTRICTS:
WITH STATISTICAL RETURNES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649349173

The Social, Educational, and Religious States of the Manufacturing Districts: With Statistical Returns by Jun. Baines

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

JUN. BAINES

**THE SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL,
AND RELIGIOUS STATES OF THE
MANUFACTURING DISTRICTS:
WITH STATISTICAL RETURNES**

THE
SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL,
AND
RELIGIOUS STATE
OF THE
MANUFACTURING DISTRICTS;
WITH
STATISTICAL RETURNS
OF THE
MEANS OF EDUCATION AND RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION
IN THE MANUFACTURING DISTRICTS
OF YORKSHIRE, LANCASHIRE, AND CHESHIRE;
IN
TWO LETTERS
TO
THE RIGHT HON. SIR ROBT. PEEL, BART.

WITH AN APPENDIX CONTAINING
A LETTER TO THE RIGHT HON. LORD WHARNCLIFFE,
ON
SIR JAS. GRAHAM'S FACTORY EDUCATION BILL;
ALSO
THE OBJECTIONS TO THE AMENDED BILL.

By EDWARD BAINES, JUN.

Author of the "History of the Cotton Manufacture."

LONDON:
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & CO; AND T. WARD & CO.
LEEDS; BAINES & NEWSOME.

MDCCLXIII.

A4

DEDICATION.

TO THE MINISTERS OF RELIGION,
SUPERINTENDENTS AND TEACHERS OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS,
AND FRIENDS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY,
IN THE
MANUFACTURING DISTRICTS.

REVEREND SIRS AND GENTLEMEN,

I most respectfully inscribe to you the following pages, as an expression of gratitude for the kind and assiduous exertions made by many of you, in obtaining the Returns which constitute their chief value; and also as an humble testimony of respect to classes of men, who, not merely on this occasion, but by the whole course of their lives, have proved themselves the zealous friends of Religion, Education, and Liberty.

It had become imperatively necessary to vindicate the Manufacturing Districts from the aspersions cast upon them,—aspersions which had created a strong and almost universal prejudice, and even alarm, both in and out of Parliament, and had been made the justification of a Government Bill most seriously interfering with Religious Liberty. To those aspersions the facts contained in the following Letters and Returns are believed to furnish a triumphant answer.

But though this was the immediate object in procuring them, it will not be their chief value. The demonstration here afforded of the power of *voluntary Christian zeal*, to provide the means of Education and Religious Instruction, even for a rapidly increasing population, will give new confidence to those who have most implicitly relied upon Christian principle, and may lead statesmen to doubt the necessity, advantage, and even propriety, of that interference to which rulers and legislators have always been so prone.

The friends of Religious Liberty will no doubt be stigmatized as enemies of Education, for having defeated the Educational Clauses of Sir James Graham's Factory Bill. The injustice of the reproach, however, is proved, first, by the extremely unjust and dangerous provisions of the Bill itself,—(of which, both in its original and amended form, an analysis will be found in the Appendix); second, by the unparalleled unanimity with which all religious denominations combined to repel the attempted usurpations of the Established Church,—a unanimity which could not have existed if there had not been too good ground for alarm; and third, by the evidence afforded in these pages of what has actually been done for Education by those who are strangely accused of undervaluing it. The historian who shall record that thirteen thousand Petitions were presented against the original Bill and nearly twelve thousand against the amended Bill, will not hesitate to conclude that the measure must have been highly objectionable.

I scarcely need remark, that those who vindicate the Manufacturing Districts from odious calumny, are very far from implying that there is not among their inhabitants much ignorance, irreligion, and vice, needing the continual exertions of the Christian and the patriot for their removal. I trust that all who object to compulsory and exclusive education, will feel themselves bound the more zealously to promote, by voluntary effort, every practicable extension and improvement of our educational establishments. May all efforts for this end, whether by Churchmen or Dissenters, be made, not in the low, narrow, and bitter spirit of sectarianism, but in the spirit of genuine benevolence, and from a sincere desire to promote the glory of God and the best interests of men!

I have the honour to be,

Reverend Sirs and Gentlemen,

Your faithful, humble Servant,

EDWARD BAINES, JUN.

Leeds Mercury Office,
July 8th, 1843.

LETTER I.

TO THE RIGHT HON. SIR ROBERT PEEL, BART.

SIR,—The Manufacturing Districts have been the subject of special attention during the present Session of Parliament, and an impression has been produced that their moral state is alarming, and that they are deplorably destitute of the means of Education and Religious Instruction. The speech of Lord Ashley, on the 28th of February, and the Report of the Children's Employment Commission, have been the principal means of creating this impression; and the Bill introduced by Sir James Graham, on the subject of Factory Employment and Education, is professedly based on the facts stated and the views entertained by these parties.

It is important that all legislation should be founded on well ascertained facts; and especially is this necessary when the law proposed is one which proceeds on new principles, imposes new burdens, and is regarded by a very large portion of the people with disapprobation and alarm.

I am deeply convinced, from an intimate acquaintance with the Manufacturing Districts, and still more from a very extensive inquiry which has just been conducted, that the impression produced by Lord Ashley's Speech and the Report of the Children's Employment Commission is excessively erroneous and unjust. I undertake to prove this. And I respectfully claim your attention, as the First Minister of the Crown, responsible, both morally and constitutionally, for the legislative measures of the Government, to the facts which I shall now lay before you.

Of the moral condition of the Manufacturing Districts a dreadful picture was drawn by Lord Ashley, in his speech on moving "That an humble Address be presented to her Majesty, praying that her Majesty will be graciously pleased to take into her instant and serious consideration, the best means of diffusing the benefits and blessings of a moral and religious education amongst the working classes of her people." As it was at the close of

this speech that Sir James Graham first sketched the outline of his Factory Bill, and as this was no doubt arranged between the Noble Lord and the Home Secretary, we must look upon Lord Ashley's speech as containing the grounds of that measure.

Of Lord Ashley I would speak with all respect. I believe him to be a man of true benevolence and of religious principle. But I also believe that he has on this occasion done the utmost possible injustice to the Manufacturing Districts,—not from any design to act unjustly, but from the mode in which he has collected and presented his evidence. He has drawn his materials chiefly from the Reports of the Children's Employment Commissioners, whose business it was to search out whatever was *defective or wrong* in the physical, social, or moral state of the children in the mining and trading districts, and who, in the discharge of their duty, mainly (I do not say exclusively) inquired into and recorded all that was *evil* and that needed *correction*. To this there can be no reasonable objection, provided the inquiry be judiciously conducted. Only it is obvious, first, that the Commissioners have a strong temptation to *make out a case*,—to bring home a *full budget*; and next, that the result of their labours ought to be looked upon as the *accumulation* of all that is *unfavourable* in the districts visited, whilst very slight notice is taken of what is satisfactory and needs no correction.

But not only is the Report of the Children's Employment Commissioners to be regarded as *one-sided*, and presenting all the *shadows* in the picture without the lights. Lord Ashley goes to that Report in the same spirit with which the Commissioners went into the country, or rather with a still more fixed purpose to discover *all that is bad*. He selects the strongest evidences he can find, in their three folio volumes, of ignorance and depravity, especially the records of crime; he brings all these together within the compass of a speech; and thus you have not only the *selected*, but also the *concentrated*, evil of populous districts laid before Parliament and the country,—without one caution thrown in, to prevent this double-distilled essence of evil reports from being taken as a *fair sample* of the condition of the whole manufacturing population!

Nor is this all. Lord Ashley makes all his facts and extracts bear upon the *Manufacturing* and *Mining* districts *exclusively*. He says not one word about the state of the Rural districts,—not one word about London, or Oxford, or any town or village of Dorsetshire. He points out the *Manufacturing* districts alone as hotbeds of vice, impiety, and misery; he affectingly calls for sympathy

with *their* perilous condition; and he represents it as a case of such urgent necessity, that if the Government and Parliament do not make haste and interpose, some dreadful convulsion may be expected.

Lord Ashley, in his speech, declares that "the moral condition of our people is unhealthy, and even *perilous*,"—that "a *tre-*
" *mondous waste* still remains uncultivated, 'a *great and terrible*
" *wilderness*,' that I shall now endeavour to lay open before you," and that in a few years "we shall have, in addition to our present
" *arrears, a fearful multitude of untutored savages!*" He then says—

"Having stated this much in a general way, I will now take a few of those details which form a part of the complement of this mass of *wickedness and mischief*,—we shall thus learn THE PRINCIPAL SEATS of the danger, its character and extent *locally*, and in a great degree the mode and nature of the remedy."

And then his Lordship proceeds to point out the *Manufacturing Districts*, and no others, as these "*principal seats of the danger*,"—the "*great and terrible wilderness*," peopled by "*untutored savages!*" He gives details of vice—very dreadful, but such as, it is to be feared, might, if sought for, be found in any part of the world—at Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, Wolverhampton, Willenhall, Bilston, Sedgley, the Potteries, and Nottingham; and then, referring to "these districts," he quotes the opinion of "a gentleman, whose opportunities of observation are unequalled, and who speaks of 'the present existence of a highly
" *demoralized middle-aged and rising generation, worse and more*
" *debased than, I believe, any previous generation for the last*
" *three hundred years!*" I know not who this gentleman may be, but I should not have thought many men so ignorant were to be found in England. Lord Ashley declares that "this condition of
" things prevails, more or less, throughout the whole of England,
" but *particularly in the Manufacturing and Trading districts*.
" The evil is *not partial*, it is almost *universally diffused* over the
" surface of the country:" "it every where afflicts the country—
" it is *nearly universal throughout the whole of the coal and iron*
" *fields of Great Britain and Wales*." And finally, after alluding to "criminal tables and criminal statistics," Lord Ashley says—

"Crimes, such as they exhibit, are but the *representatives of the mischief spawned by the filth and corruption of the times*. Were the crimes of these offenders the sum total of the crimes of England, although we should lament for the individuals, we might disregard the consequences; but the danger is wider, deeper, fiercer; and no one who has heard these statements and

believes them, can hope that twenty years more will pass without some *mighty convulsion, and displacement of the whole system of society.*"

The impression produced by this speech was one of consternation and disgust, of lively alarm, of absolute panic. Both sides of the House were horror-struck. Sir James Graham rested upon Lord Ashley's induction of facts, as his justification for a measure specially affecting the *factory* population. Sir Robert Inglis spoke of the "*heathenish*" state of the manufacturing districts. Mr. Roebuck was hardly less strong in his expressions, both at Bath and in the House of Commons. The Repeal Association of Ireland has entered the speech upon its minutes, as a monument of the shame of England, to be referred to whenever it is desirable to stimulate hatred and contempt for "the Saxons!" The Bible Society has referred to the "developments" made by Lord Ashley in its annual report. A Church of England quarterly review, quoting the passage of his Lordship's speech concerning Leeds, calls this town "this modern Sodom,"—adding

"And truly the cities of the plain had even more excuse than this town of Leeds! For how faithfully is the Gospel preached, [Dr. Hook labours among us!] how fervently are the prayers of *the Church* offered up to God—what numerous efforts are made to call sinners to repentance! And yet, after all, the green spots in this *moral desert* are as small and as few as the Oases in the natural desert, and thousands upon thousands yet cry, not with their voices, but by their necessities, 'Come ye, come ye, and instruct us!'"*

After this, Sir, you will scarcely be surprised if a native of Leeds feels it his duty to expose these horrible and unparalleled slanders. I have already done this so far as regards my own town, in a "Second Letter to Lord Wharfedale," which I am told you have seen. I have proved, from Statistical Returns of undoubted authenticity, that Leeds, so far from being distinguished above other places for vice and pollution, ranks far above the *best* parishes of Westminster—inhabited by Lord Ashley himself, by most of the Members of both Houses of Parliament, by the Bishop of London and most of the Prelates, and by the Royal Family—in point of provision for religious instruction, and in the amount of education given both in Sunday Schools and Day Schools. I have the strongest conviction that we are as far superior to Westminster in morality as we are in the outward means of religion and in education.

* It must be stated, as some apology for the language of the Reviewer, that he has blunderingly confounded all the worst statements which Lord Ashley made as to Sheffield with those which he made as to Leeds, and thus given Leeds the credit of all the vice of *both* towns! But this is no bad illustration of the way in which the most sweeping deductions are made from mistaken and false premises.