CONTEXTS

HARD TIMES CALENDAR

August 1853: Dickens finished writing *Bleak House*; residing in France.
September: Finished *A Child's History of England*.
October–December: Trip to Italy. News of strike in Preston.
Mid-December: Return to England: public reading in Birmingham.
January 23, 1854: First page of *Hard Times* written.
January 29: Visit to Preston during the strike.
April 1: First installment of *Hard Times* published.
June: Moved back to France with his family.
July 19: Finished writing *Hard Times*.
August 12: Publication of final number of *Hard Times*.

Dickens' Comments on the Composition of *Hard Times*†

[From Letter to W. H. Wills,[1] July 27, 1853]

I have also thought of another [article], to be called *Frauds upon the Fairies—apropòs* of George Cruikshank's editing.[2] Half playfully and half seriously, I mean to protest most strongly against alteration—for any purpose—of the beautiful little stories which are so tenderly and humanly useful to us in these times when the world is too much with us early and late; * * * I shall not be able to do it until after finishing "Bleak House."

[From Letter to Angela Burdett Coutts,[3] September 18, 1853]

Do you see Household Words in Paris? If not, I will send you two papers I should like you to read. The first, called *Frauds on the Fairies*, I think would amuse you, and enlist you on my side—which is for a little more fancy among children and a little less fact.

[From Dickens' Article, "Frauds on the Fairies," in *Household Words*, October 1, 1853]

In a utilitarian age * * * it is a matter of grave importance that Fairy tales should be respected. * * * A nation without fancy, without some romance, never did, never can, never will, hold a great place under the sun.

† The letters here reprinted are from the Pilgrim Edition, *The Letters of Charles Dickens*, Volume 7, *1853–1855*, ed. Graham Storey, Kathleen Tillotson, and Angus Easson (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1993).

1. Editorial assistant for *Household Words*.
2. Dickens had recently read a book review about George Cruikshank's retelling of traditional fairy tales. Because Cruikshank was an ardent teetotaller, his "editing" of *Hop o' my Thumb and the Seven League Boots* consisted of inserting warnings into the story about the dangers of alcohol and other failings such as "card-playing, betting on horse races, and all sorts of foolish gambling" (*The Examiner*, July 23, 1853, p. 469).
3. A wealthy philanthropist with whom Dickens worked closely as an adviser.

[From Letter to Angela Burdett Coutts (from Italy), November 27, 1853]

I am sorry to see that there have been some disturbances in Lancashire, arising out of the unhappy strikes. I read in an Italian paper last night, that there had been symptoms of rioting at Blackburn. The account stated that the workers of that place, supposing some of the obnoxious manufacturers of Preston to be secreted "nel palazzo Bull" assembled before that Palazzo, and demanded to have them produced * * * I suppose the Palazzo Bull to be the Bull Hotel, but the paragraph gave no hint of such a thing.

(I wish you would come to Birmingham and see *those* working people on the night when I have so many of them together. I have never seen them collected in any number in that place, without extraordinary pleasure—even when they have been agitated by political events.)

[From Dickens' Speech in Birmingham Town Hall, December 30, 1853]

I have no fear of being misunderstood—of being supposed to mean too much in this.[4] If there ever was a time when any one class could of itself do much for its own good, and for the welfare of society—which I greatly doubt—that time is unquestionably past. It is in the fusion of different classes, without confusion; in the bringing together of employers and employed; in the creating of a better common understanding among those whose interests are identical, who depend upon each other, and who can never be in unnatural antagonism without deplorable results, that one of the chief principles of a Mechanics' Institution should consist. In this world a great deal of the bitterness among us arises from an imperfect understanding of one another. Erect in Birmingham a great Educational Institution, properly educational; educational of the feelings as well as of the reason; to which all orders of Birmingham men can contribute; in which all orders of Birmingham men can meet; wherein all orders of Birmingham men are faithfully represented; and you will erect a Temple of Concord here which will be a model edifice to the whole of England.

[From Letter to Angela Burdett Coutts, January 14, 1854]

I have had a long talk with Charley[5] this morning. * * * He is very gentle and affectionate * * * His inclinations are all good; but I think he has less fixed purpose and energy than I could have supposed possible

4. Dickens had been urging that working men ought to be invited to serve on the committee of the Birmingham Institute, an organization concerned with improving working men's education.
5. Dickens' eldest son, sixteen-year-old Charles, had been studying in Germany, without much success, after having left Eton.

in my son. He is not aspiring, or imaginative in his own behalf. With all the tenderer and better qualities which he inherits from his mother, he inherits an indescribable lassitude of character—a very serious thing in a man—which seems to me to express the want of a strong, compelling hand always beside him.

[From Letter to W. F. de Cerjat,[6] January 16, 1854]

The sad affair of the Preston strike remains unsettled; and I hear, on strong authority, that if that were settled, the Manchester people are prepared to strike next. Provisions very dear, but the people very temperate and quiet in general.

[From Letter to John Forster,[7] January 20, 1854]

I wish you would look at the enclosed titles for the *H. W.* story, between this and two o'clock or so, when I will call. * * * It seems to me that there are three very good ones among them. I should like to know whether you hit upon the same. [*The enclosure reads*:]
1. According to Cocker. 2. Prove it. 3. Stubborn Things. 4. Mr. Gradgrind's Facts. 5. The Grindstone. 6. Hard Times. 7. Two and Two are Four. 8. Something Tangible. 9. Our Hard-headed Friend. 10. Rust and Dust. 11. Simple Arithmetic. 12. A Matter of Calculation. 13. A Mere Question of Figures. 14. The Gradgrind Philosophy.

[From Letter to Angela Burdett Coutts, January 23, 1854]

I have fallen to work again. My purpose is among the mighty secrets of the world at present; but there is such a fixed idea on the part of my printers and copartners in Household Words, that a story by me, continued from week to week, would make some unheard-of-effect with it, that I am going to write one. It will be as long as five Nos. of Bleak House, and will be five months in progress. The first written page now stares at me from under this sheet of note paper. The main idea of it, is one on which you and I and Mrs. Brown have often spoken; and I know it will interest you as a purpose.

[From Letter to John Forster, January 29, 1854][8]

I am afraid I shall not be able to get much here. Except the crowds at the street-corners reading the placards pro and con; and the cold

6. A Swiss friend of Dickens.
7. Essayist, biographer, and Dickens' close friend and literary adviser.
8. Written from Preston, a textile-manufacturing town, which Dickens was visiting to observe a strike.

absence of smoke from the mill-chimneys; there is very little in the streets to make the town remarkable. I am told that the people 'sit at home and mope.' The delegates with the money from the neighbouring places come in to-day to report the amounts they bring; and tomorrow the people are paid. When I have seen both these ceremonies, I shall return. It is a nasty place (I thought it was a model town); and I am in the Bull Hotel, before which some time ago the people assembled supposing the masters to be here, and on demanding to have them out were remonstrated with by the landlady in person. I saw the account in an Italian paper, in which it was stated that "the populace then environed the Palazzo Bull, until the padrona of the Palazzo heroically appeared at one of the upper windows and addressed them!" One can hardly conceive anything less likely to be represented to an Italian mind by this description, than the old, grubby, smoky, mean, intensely formal red brick house with a narrow gateway and a dingy yard, to which it applies.

[From Letter to Mark Lemon,[9] February 20, 1854]

Will you note down and send me any slang terms among the tumblers and Circus-people, that you can call to mind? I have noted down some— I want them in my new story—but it is very probable that you will recall several which I have not got.

[From Letter to John Forster (concerning *Hard Times*), February 1854]

The difficulty of the space is CRUSHING. Nobody can have an idea of it who has not had an experience of patient fiction-writing with some elbow-room always, and open places in perspective. In this form, with any kind of regard to the current number, there is absolutely no such thing.

[From Letter to Bradbury & Evans,[1] March 7, 1854]

Throughout Hard Times, will you arrange when you get the corrected revises back from me (I now send those of the two first parts) to have *then* pulled, for my reference copy at work, a proof folded in any easy form for reference that may not give much trouble to your people. I want to avoid the botheration, both the long slips, and of having to cut my working copy out of the Nos. week by week.

9. The founder and editor of *Punch* magazine and Dickens' close friend.
1. Dickens' publisher.

[From Letter to Émile de la Rue,[2] March 9, 1854]

It was considered, when I came home, such a great thing that I should write a story for Household Words, that I am at present up to the eyes in one. It is to be published in Household Words, weekly, through five months, and will be altogether as long as five Nos. of Copperfield or Bleak House. I did intend to be as lazy as I *could* be through the summer, but here I am with my armour on again.

[From Letter to Peter Cunningham,[3] March 11, 1854]

Being down at Dover yesterday, I happened to see the Illustrated London News lying on the table, and there read a reference to my new book[4] which I believe I am not mistaken in supposing to have been written by you.

I don't know where you may have found your information, but I can assure you that it is altogether wrong. The title was many weeks old, and chapters of the story were written, before I went to Preston or thought about the present Strike. The mischief of such a statement is twofold. First, it encourages the public to believe in the impossibility that books are produced in that very sudden and Cavalier manner (as poor Newton used to feign that he produced the elaborate drawings he made in his madness, by winking at his table); and Secondly in this instance it has this pernicious bearing: It localizes (so far as your readers are concerned) a story which has a direct purpose in reference to the working people all over England, and it will cause, as I know by former experience, characters to be fitted on to individuals whom I never saw or heard of in my life.

I do not suppose that you can do anything to set this mis-statement right, being made; nor do I wish you to set it right. But if you will, at any future time, ask me what the fact is before you state it, I will tell you, as frankly and readily as it is possible for one friend to tell another, what the truth is and what it is not.

[From Letter to Charles Knight,[5] March 17, 1854]

I earnestly entreat your attention to the point (I have been working upon it, weeks past, in Hard Times) * * * The English are, so far as I know, the hardest-worked people on whom the sun shines. Be content

2. A Swiss businessman living in Italy with whom Dickens became friendly and whose wife he had attempted to help with mesmerism.
3. British writer and friend of Dickens.
4. See *Illustrated London News* (March 4, 1854, p. 194): "The title of Mr. Dickens's new work is 'Hard Times.' His recent inquiry into the Preston strike is said to have originated the title, and, in some respects, suggested the turn of the story."
5. British author and publisher.

if in their wretched intervals of pleasure they read for amusement and do no worse. They are born at the oar, and they live and die at it. Good God, what would we have of them!

[From Letter to Angela Burdett Coutts, March 17, 1854]

* * *

A lady-friend of ours broke her leg at about the same time in very much the same manner. Do you think it would be good for her to hear half an hour of my new story? It contains that dawn of the idea and is not at all distressing—yet. If you would like it, as the publication begins tomorrow fortnight, I would come up any evening in the meantime, except Wednesdays.

[From Letter to H. W. Wills, April 18, 1854]

I am in a dreary state, planning and planning the story of Hard Times (out of materials for I don't know how long a story), and consequently writing little.

[From Letter to Mrs. Elizabeth Gaskell,[6] April 21, 1854]

I have no intention of striking.[7] The monstrous claims at domination made by a certain class of manufacturers, and the extent to which the way is made easy for working men to slide down into discontent under such hands, are within my scheme; but I am not going to strike. So don't be afraid of me.

[From Letter to Frank Stone,[8] May 30, 1854]

I stand engaged to dine * * * with one Buckle[9] * * * a man who has read every book that ever was written * * * and is a perfect Gulf of information. Before exploding a mine of knowledge he has a habit of closing one eye and wrinkling up his nose, so that he seems to be perpetually taking aim at you and knocking you over with a terrific charge. Then he loads again, and takes another aim. So you are always on your back, with your legs in the air.

6. Elizabeth Gaskell (1810–1865), British novelist, author of *Mary Barton* (1848) and *Cranford* (1853).
7. Mrs. Gaskell's novel, *North and South*, which was to be published in *Household Words*, portrays a strike. She was concerned that if Dickens were to include scenes from a strike in *Hard Times* there might be duplication.
8. A successful self-taught British painter and Dickens' close friend.
9. H. T. Buckle, author of the *History of Civilization*. His emphasis on facts and statistics and his general set of values have similarities with the point of view of Mr. Gradgrind.

[From Letter to Mark Lemon, June (?), 1854]

But let us go somewhere, say to the public by the Thames where those performing dogs go at night. I think the travestie may be useful to me, and I may make something out of such an expedition; it will do us good after such a blue-devilous afternoon as this has been.

[From Letter to Henry Cole,[1] June 17, 1854]

I often say to Mr. Gradgrind that there is reason and good intention in much that he does—in fact, in all that he does—but that he over-does it. Perhaps by dint of his going his way and my going mine, we shall meet at last at some halfway house where there are flowers on the carpets, and a little standing-room for Queen Mab's Chariot[2] among the Steam Engines.

[From Letter to Thomas Carlyle,[3] July 13, 1854]

I am going, next month, to publish in One Volume a story now coming out in Household Words, called Hard Times. I have constructed it patiently, with a view to its publication altogether in a compact cheap form. It contains what I do devoutly hope will shake some people in a terrible mistake of these days, when so presented. I know it contains nothing in which you do not think with me, for no man knows your books better than I. I want to put in the first page of it, that it is inscribed to Thomas Carlyle. May I?

[From Letter to W. H. Wills (from Boulogne, France) July 14, 1854]

I am so stunned with work, that I really am not able * * * to answer your questions. * * * I doubt if there will not be too much of Hard Times, to admit of the conclusion all going in together. There will probably be either 14 or 15 sides of my writing. But the best thing will be for me to come over with it, the moment I have finished. *On Wednesday night* [July 19] *at a quarter past ten*, <u>I hope to be at London Bridge.</u> * * * The MS now sent, contains what I have looked forward to through many weeks.

[From Letter to John Forster, July 14, 1854]

I am three parts mad, and the fourth delirious, with perpetual rushing at *Hard Times*. I have done what I hope is a good thing with Stephen,

1. Secretary of the government's Department of Science and Art.
2. *Romeo and Juliet* 1.4.53 and 57.
3. See p. 2.

taking his story as a whole; and hope to be over in town with the end of the book on Wednesday night. * * * I have been looking forward through so many weeks and sides of paper to this Stephen business, that now—as usual—it being over, I feel as if nothing in the world, in the way of intense and violent rushing hither and thither, could quite restore my balance.

[From Letter to W. H. Wills, July 17, 1854]

I am happy to say that I have finished Hard Times this morning.

[From Letter to Henry Carey,[4] August 24, 1854]

I think it possible that I may have considered the powers and purposes of Fiction, a little longer and a little more anxiously and attentively, than your lady friend. To interest and affect the general mind in behalf of anything that is clearly wrong—to stimulate and rouse the public soul to a compassionate or indignant feeling that it *must not be*—without obtruding any pet theory of cause or cure, and so throwing off allies as they spring up—I believe to be one of Fiction's highest uses. And this is the use to which I try to turn it.

Nevertheless I promise myself the pleasure of reading your books. I am much obliged to you for the orders you send me, and will not fail to use them.

[From Letter to Mrs. Richard Watson,[5] November 1, 1854]

Why I found myself so "used up," after Hard Times, I scarcely know. Perhaps because I had intended to do nothing in that way for a year, when the idea laid hold of me by the throat in a very violent manner; and because the compression and close condensation necessary for that disjointed form of publication, gave me perpetual trouble. But I really was—tired!

[From Letter to Charles Knight, December 30, 1854]

Indeed there is no fear of my thinking you the owner of a cold heart. * * * My satire is against those who see figures and averages, and nothing else—the representatives of the wickedest and most enormous vice of this time—the men who, through long years to come, will do more to damage the real useful truths of political economy, than I could do (if I tried) in my whole life—the addled heads who would take the aver-

4. An American publisher and political scientist.
5. An aristocratic friend whose home, Rockingham Castle, Dickens used as the model for Chesney Wold in *Bleak House*.

age of cold in the Crimea during twelve months, as a reason for clothing a soldier in nankeen[6] on a night when he would be frozen to death in fur—and who would comfort the labourer in travelling twelve miles a day to and from his work, by telling him that the average distance of one inhabited place from another in the whole area of England, is not more than four miles. Bah! What have you to do with these?

6. Cotton cloth.

Industrialism

During the period in which *Hard Times* was conceived and written, a topic frequently brought to Dickens' attention was that of a bitterly contested strike that had broken out in the industrial north of England. This was at Preston, a textile-manufacturing town in Lancashire which Dickens himself eventually visited in late January 1854, and about which he wrote his article "On Strike" for *Household Words*. Other newspapers and magazines also made extensive reports on this strike, for Preston was regarded as a test case of the power of the trade unions, which after having declined in influence during the 1830s had made a remarkable recovery in the 1850s. At Preston, however, the union cause suffered a severe and painful defeat following a struggle that lasted more than eight months.

In the summer of 1853, after the Preston weavers were refused a 10 percent increase in wages, strikes were called at some of the textile mills. The mill owners responded, in late October, by closing all the mills in the town, and to obtain food and clothing the Preston strikers had thereafter to rely on subscriptions collected from union members in other manufacturing towns where the factories were still operating. In addition to such subscriptions, the union leaders relied on speeches and rallies to sustain morale throughout the lock-out, but as *The Illustrated London News* noted:

> Ignorant and violent speeches may keep up a fading enthusiasm for a short time longer, but the wintry cold, the fireless grate, the empty cupboard * * * will deprive the oratory of their leaders of the power to persuade them that no bread is better than half a loaf, or that charity wrung from their fellows is pleasanter to live upon than their own honest earnings.

This prediction, made on December 10, 1853, was accurate but premature. Not until late April 1854 did the strike collapse and the dispirited participants resume work in the mills. By May 1 the *Times* reported with satisfaction that 7,700 strikers had returned to their looms. Their leaders, George Cowell and Mortimer Grimshaw, whose speeches Dickens described, had been arrested in March on charges of conspiracy (although after the failure of the strike they were never brought to trial), but the principal reason for giving in seems to have been the drying up of the funds contributed from other towns, funds on which the Preston strikers had become entirely dependent.

Dickens' interest in factory conditions, stimulated by these events at Preston, led to his concern with another controversial topic: industrial safety. A gruesome report on accidents in factories, "Ground in the Mill," submitted

by one of his contributors to *Household Words*, stirred Dickens deeply as an expression of his own feelings about the alleged negligence of factory owners and mine owners. So deeply was he stirred, in fact, that he inserted into the proofsheets of *Hard Times* a footnote specifically recommending this magazine article to the attention of his readers. Just before publication he decided to delete the footnote, a decision he could have made simply for artistic reasons, inasmuch as the intrusion of this kind of documentation would distract his readers from the realities of his fictional world. A more immediate reason for the deletion, however, was that he seemingly changed his mind about how openly and prominently the topic of industrial accidents ought to be treated in his novel. As the textual note indicates, he had originally planned to feature the topic in an important exchange between Stephen Blackpool and Rachael in Book I, chapter XIII. In this original version, Stephen makes a "promise" to Rachael that he will refrain from meddling in controversies about industrial problems. This promise is made after Stephen has given vent to an outburst of indignation about persons in authority who are indifferent to industrial accidents, an outburst prompted by his recalling how Rachael's angelic little sister had suffered when her arm had been torn off by a factory machine.

Although the original scene and its footnote were canceled before publication, Dickens did not altogether bury his own indignation on the score of industrial accidents. Elsewhere in his novel he let stand a number of references to them, as in his account of the Old Hell Shaft in Book III, chapter VI. These implied allegations against callous mill owners prompted a reply (included below) by the essayist and novelist, Harriet Martineau—one of the most biting attacks ever made on Dickens as a social critic. Miss Martineau's animosity may have been engendered not only by Dickens' general satire of *laissez-faire* economic theories (of which she was a passionate adherent) but also by some satirical references in chapter VIII of *Hard Times* to the kind of stories she herself had written and by which she had made her mark as a popular author. Her *Illustrations of Political Economy* (1831), with its tales of how to adapt to the capitalist system, might have provided the model for Dickens' reference to "leaden little books * * * showing how the good grown-up baby invariably got to the savings-bank, and the bad grown-up baby invariably got transported."

For an informative study of this topic, see K. J. Fielding and Anne Smith, "*Hard Times* and the Factory Controversy: Dickens vs. Harriet Martineau," *Dickens Centennial Essays*, ed. Nisbet and Nevius (1971) 22–45, and R. D. Butterworth, "Dickens the Novelist: The Preston Strike and *Hard Times*," *Dickensian* 88 (Summer 1992): 91–102 (included below).

[The Preston Strike: A History]†

THE WAGES MOVEMENT.—TERMINATION OF THE PRESTON STRIKE.

In the CHRONICLE of 1853, p. 56, will be found a short account of the general movement of the operative classes to obtain an advance of

† From the *Annual Register*, May 1854.

wages—an attempt which originated in the extraordinary extension of manufacturers and the export trade, and the high price of provisions. The plan of the leaders of the movement was avowedly to select a particular town for their operations, and particular firms in that town; by compelling the firms to succumb individually, to accomplish their aim in that particular district, and then to enforce the same move in another; by this means also the great mass of the workmen would always be employed and able to support such portion of them as might be "out on strike." The employers, on the other hand, were fully aware of the nature of the blow designed for them, and determined to meet the attack by a correspondent movement; and refusing to be plucked leaf by leaf, whenever a strike took place in one factory, the other firms in the same district instantly closed their works.

The contest was conducted on the part of the working classes with astonishing endurance. Preston and Burnley were the places chosen for their first operations, and in consequence the whole mass of workmen in those towns were thrown out of employment, and were supported by general contributions. In many other places there were partial strikes; but for the most part they were soon terminated, either by concession on the part of the employers, or by the people being persuaded that they would hurt the general cause by persevering. The great interest of the movement centred in Preston, where between 15,000 and 16,000 idle hands were supported by weekly contributions from the employed. The committee had a thorough organisation for collecting the funds, which were so successful, that upwards of 3000*l*. was thus distributed weekly; equal to about 5*s*. a-head. The amount of misery entailed by this course of proceeding is fearful to contemplate. Of course, each person did not receive this sum—the skilled operative received more, the girl or boy less; and on such miserable pittances did they support life, in utter idleness, for thirty-seven weeks. The savings of the careful man, the deposits of the provident, the sums insured for age and sickness, melted away in support of the struggle. Their clothes and personal ornaments were sold for trifles, where there were none to purchase; their food became scanty, their habits sordid, their intercourse morose—still they struggled on with surprising endurance. Nor were the evils confined to their own class. The retail trades of the towns fell to nothing, and the shop-keepers were ruined; numerous poor persons who, though not operatives, lived by the requirements induced by active business, were reduced to utter extremity, while the sources of charity were cut off. The numerous trades, which in all parts of the kingdom are urged into activity by the demands of the factories, languished, and the effects were thus indirectly felt in all quarters. Again, though the operatives in other seats of manufacture did not share in the strike, yet they maintained the large number who did; and their contributions were so much deducted from their own earnings, and abstracted from their own sustenance; if they could part with this

and not feel it, the condition of the working class is not that of oppression that they represent; if they did feel it, the privation induced by the subtraction of a small percentage from a scanty income is very severe. Thus, the suffering produced by the struggle they had entered into must have been great and widely extended. But they bore it not with patience merely, but with enthusiasm. "Ten per cent. and no surrender!" was the general cry. The passion produced by this abstract idea is one of the singular phenomena of the human mind. It seemed to have possessed the minds of the working classes, in some districts, *as a religious faith; nay, in one place, the people assembled in a chapel and sung a hymn to Ten per Cent.*!

An incident occurred in March which showed the perfect control under which the operatives kept themselves, and their complete submission to their leaders. The employers of Preston, whose mills had been idle all this time, sought labour in markets where it was to be had, and introduced into the town some hundreds of Irish and others. These persons the native workmen, by a watchful obstruction, and, perhaps, by a little bribery, prevented from fulfilling their engagements. The employers then ventured on the dangerous step of arresting the leaders, Cowell and others, on a charge of conspiracy, and the magistrates committed them for trial. But this proceeding produced no disturbance, and the workmen persevered in their plan of impoverishing the mill-owners into submission. But this contest between capital and labour never, save under very exceptional circumstances, can terminate in favour of the latter. The capitalist loses his gains, and some of his principal; he knows, too, that if he yields he is but postponing the loss of both for a short term, when it will come upon him with accumulated ruin; he therefore holds on in diminished splendour—in anxiety, perhaps, but free from physical suffering. With the day-labourer it is different: his misery is instant and personal, and destitution is heaped upon him in his wife, his children, in every one who approaches him. The contest can terminate but one way. In the course of April it became evident that matters were tending to this result. Nearly 8000 hands were found to be employed; and although still more than 12,000 persons were relieved, their allowances were reduced to a miserable pittance—the card-room hands received but 1*s*. a week. The subscriptions also from other towns began to fall off; and although large sums were contributed to their fund in a very mysterious manner, they could go but a small way in the support of so many. The movement was brought to an abrupt close by a departure from the plan of campaign laid down. The operatives of Stockport threw themselves out of work to the number of 18,000; and although this movement was speedily terminated by an advance of wages, the additional burden thrown on the industrious, and the withdrawal of the large sum contributed by Stockport to the Preston fund (200*l*. weekly), proved fatal to the strike at that place, in the 37th week of the struggle. On the 1st

of May the Committee announced that the employers had succeeded in "their unholy crusade." They denounced the most bitter reproaches on the operatives generally, for deserting them "at a time when they more than ever needed their friendly counsel and assistance to conduct them with honour to the end;" and they admitted that the large donations said to have been found in their box were in fact loans, which required to be instantly repaid.

The men could not, of course, restore themselves instantly to the position they had voluntarily abandoned, and several thousands remained unemployed and in the utmost destitution for a long period after the termination of this misguided movement.

The sums expended in maintaining the idle workmen in Preston alone amounted to 100,000*l.*; the amount of earnings they forewent was certainly not less than thrice that sum; and it has been computed, on good grounds, that the abortive Preston strike cost the working classes, in direct losses, not less than 500,000*l.*

Cowell, the leader of the workmen, was soon after thrown into gaol, for debts incurred by him in promoting the strike.

[An Ostracized Workman]†

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Allow a working man to thank you for your able article on "strikes" in *The Times* of yesterday, and, to avoid waste of your valuable space, I will proceed at once to give you a case in point.

I was three months ago at work for a good master in a good shop, one among 200, and quite content, as was the majority, with the remuneration received—viz., 5s. per day. About this time trade meetings were convened to discuss the propriety of demanding an advance of 10 per cent., or 5s. 6d. per day, and a few of our men attended. A deputation was appointed and waited on our employer, with an intimation that, unless their demand was complied with, a "strike" would be the result. The master plainly stated that, having contracts on hand to a very great amount, the completion of which in a few months was insured by heavy penalties, he could not, without great pecuniary loss,—indeed, not without risk of failure,—at once grant their request, but that, if his men would remain at their work on the then terms, he would endeavour to make such arrangements as would enable him to meet their demand when a portion of his present contracts were worked out,—say, in five or six months; but, no; the deputation were not inclined to entertain anything so reasonable as this. Other meetings were called, at which some half-dozen "speakers" and "grand movers" used all their eloquence to prove

† Letter to *The Times*, October 10, 1853.

employers tyrants and workmen slaves. The result was a "turn-out;" the great majority going out because they were afraid to be marked men, and because they had no confidence in each other, although they were convinced they were thereby doing their employer an injustice and running a risk of gaining a questionable advantage for themselves. After remaining idle some time the contracts pressed so much that our employer was compelled to succumb, and we all returned with the advance demanded. But mark the sequel. I and a great many others were in a short time discharged, and arrangements were made to extend the time for several large contracts, thereby dispensing with our services. Another result is, that the high rate of wages in town has drawn so many hands from the country, although there was no lack of workmen before the advance, that I have not been able since to procure a job at the new rate of wages; and, Sir, my case is the case of hundreds besides. To keep myself from starving, I offered to work in a large shop at the old rate of 5s., but as soon as this became known I was literally hunted out of the shop, and I am now, no doubt, what is so much dreaded by all my class—a marked man.

I am not allowed to work for what my own conviction tells me is a fair remuneration, and cannot procure employment at the advanced rate, as no master is inclined to set on more workmen, under present circumstances, than will just complete what he is compelled by heavy penalties to finish in a given time.

Thus, Sir, you see that numbers may remain out of employment—a burden to themselves and to society—that those who are so lucky as to be retained may exult in having obtained a trifling advantage, which they are all along afraid (and not without reason) of losing every day. At the same time it is certain that had the "supply and demand" been duly considered, a strike or a rise would not have taken place, to throw us into this uncomfortable and ruinous state of affairs.

Your willingness to give ear to a poor man's grievances, and my cause to complain, must be my apology for troubling you with so long a letter.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

October 8. A SUFFERER.

JAMES LOWE

The Preston Lock-Out†

Preston—situated upon the banks of the Ribble, some fifteen miles from the mouth of that river—is a good, honest, work-a-day looking town,

† From "Locked Out," in *Household Words*, December 1853.

built upon a magnificent site, surrounded by beautiful country; and, for a manufacturing town, wears a very handsome and creditable face. * * *

We pass out of the station, astonished to perceive that the atmosphere, instead of being thick and smoky, is as clear here as the air upon Hampstead Heath. An intelligent Prestonian explains that now, there are fifty tall chimneys cold and smokeless, and that ought to make a difference. Forty-one firms have "locked out" their hands, and twenty-one thousand workpeople are obliged to be at play. * * *

By this time we find ourselves on a level plain of marshy ground, upon the banks of the Ribble, and below the town of Preston. This is called THE MARSH, and it is at once the Agora and the Academe of the place. Here * * * do the mob-orators appear in times of trouble and contention, to excite, with their highly spiced eloquence, the thoughtless crowd; over whom they exercise such pernicious sway. * * * On one part of the marsh an old punt has stranded, and its deck forms a convenient rostrum for the hypæthral or open-air orators of Preston. A meeting is about to take place, over which John Gruntle is to preside, and at which Cowler, Swindle, and O'Brigger are expected to address the people. Presently, a small knot of persons get upon the deck of the punt, the crowd thickens round them. * * * Gruntle is voted into the chair, and one of those meetings which thirty years ago would have been a criminal offence is formally opened.

Gruntle is not very prolix—he is an old stager, and used to these things. In a few words he states the object of the meeting, and announces to the audience that their friend Cowler will address them. At this name a shout rends the air. Cowler is evidently the chosen of the people; rightly or wrongly, they hold him in great regard. His appearance is very much in his favour, for he wears the look of a straightforward honest man; a smile plays round his mouth as he steps forward with the air of a man sure of his audience; but the feverish and anxious expression of the eyes tells of sleepless nights and of constant agitation. "Respected friends," he begins; and, in a trice, he has plunged into the middle of the question. He has been accused, he says, of fostering agitation, and gaining advantage from the strike. Why, how can they say that, when his constant cry has been for the masters to open their mills, and give the operatives their just rights? Let them only do that, and he'll soon show them how glad he'll be to give over agitating. It's not such very pleasant work, either, is agitating. For example, he himself hasn't been to bed for these two nights. Last night they got the money that their good friends in the neighbouring towns had sent them; so he sat up to take care of it, for fear some one should come and borrow it from them. (Laughter.) The editor of the London *Thunderer* had been abusing him. Well! here was a thing! Twenty years ago such a thing was never thought of as that a working man should be noticed by a London paper. But the editor had not been very courteous; he had called him "a fool," because he said

that it was a shame for the wives of the cotton lords to wear silks and satins, whilst the factory lasses were forced to be contented with plain cotton. Was he a fool for that? ("Noa! Noa!" Great excitement among the lasses, and exclamations of "Eh! Lord!")

To Cowler succeeds Swindle, a lean and hungry Cassius, the very example of an agitator; a man who has lived by literary garbage, without fattening upon the unwholesome stuff. He seems half tipsy; his eyes roll, and his gesticulations are vehement. One more glass of whisky and he would be prepared to head an insurrection. He rants and raves for a quarter of an hour, and we are pleased to observe that his audience are too sensible to care much about him.

Then comes O'Brigger, oily-tongued, and with a brogue. He complains that it has been charged against 'um that he is an Irishman. So he is, faith! and he's moighty proud av it. The manufacturers are all av them toirants. However, this toime they will learrn that the people av England are not to be opprissed; for they will get such a flogging as never they had in the course av their lives. * * *

When O'Brigger has concluded, it is the turn of a crowd of the delegates to have their say. There is the delegate from this town, and the delegate from that factory; all with marvellous stories about the tyranny of the masters, the woes of the operatives, and the determination of each particular district to stand by Preston to the last. They all end by fiercely denouncing the manufacturers, whom they term "the miserable shoddyocracy," * * *

We walk sadly from "the Marsh," and reach a locked-up and smokeless factory, at the gates of which a knot of young girls are singing and offering for sale some of the Ten Per Cent. Songs, taking their name from the origin of the strike. In eighteen hundred and forty-seven, when trade was very bad, the masters told their workpeople that they could no longer afford to pay them the wages they had been paying, and that they must take off ten per cent.; upon the understanding, as the workpeople allege, that when times got better they would give them the ten per cent. back again. Whether such a promise was, or was not, actually given, we cannot presume to determine, for the masters emphatically deny it; but it is quite certain that, at the beginning of the present year, the Stockport operatives combined successfully to force the ten per cent. from *their* masters, and the Preston operatives aided them with funds. They acted upon Napoleon's principle of combining forces upon single points in succession, and so reducing the enemy in detail. Then it was that the Preston masters, fearing that similar tactics would be turned against themselves, combined to oppose the attempt, and eventually "locked out" their operatives. * * *

Again we sally out into the dingy streets, and find that the evening is closing in over them. More knots of "lads and lasses" idling about the corners, more bands of singers, solitary famine-stricken faces, too, plead

mutely for bread, and even worse expedients are evidently resorted to for the purpose of keeping body and soul together: in Preston, as elsewhere, the facilities for crime are too abundant, and we repeat to ourselves those lines of Coleridge: —

> Oh I could weep to think, that there should be
> Cold-bosomed lewd ones, who endure to place
> Foul offerings on the shrine of misery,
> And force from Famine the caress of Love.

Ignorance of the most deplorable kind is at the root of all this sort of strife and demoralizing misery. Every employer of labour should write up over his mill door, that Brains in the Operative's Head is Money in the Master's Pocket.

CHARLES DICKENS

On Strike†

Travelling down to Preston a week from this date, I chanced to sit opposite to a very acute, very determined, very emphatic personage, with a stout railway rug so drawn over his chest that he looked as if he were sitting up in bed with his great coat, hat, and gloves on, severely contemplating your humble servant from behind a large blue and grey checked counterpane. In calling him emphatic, I do not mean that he was warm; he was coldly and bitingly emphatic as a frosty wind is.

"You are going through to Preston, sir?" says he, as soon as we were clear of the Primrose Hill tunnel.

The receipt of his question was like the receipt of a jerk of the nose; he was so short and sharp.

"Yes."

"This Preston strike is a nice piece of business!" said the gentleman. "A pretty piece of business!"

"It is very much to be deplored," said I, "on all accounts."

"They want to be ground. That's what they want, to bring 'em to their senses," said the gentleman; whom I had already began to call in my own mind Mr. Snapper, and whom I may as well call by that name here as by any other.

I deferentially enquired, who wanted to be ground?

"The hands," said Mr. Snapper. "The hands on strike, and the hands who help 'em."

I remarked that if that was all they wanted, they must be a very unreasonable people, for surely they had had a little grinding, one way and

† From *Household Words*, February 11, 1854.

another, already. Mr. Snapper eyed me with sternness, and after opening and shutting his leathern-gloved hands several times outside his counterpane, asked me abruptly, "Was I a delegate?"

I set Mr. Snapper right on that point, and told him I was no delegate.

"I am glad to hear it," said Mr. Snapper. "But a friend to the Strike, I believe?"

"Not at all," said I.

"A friend to the Lock-out?" pursued Mr. Snapper.

"Not in the least," said I.

Mr. Snapper's rising opinion of me fell again, and he gave me to understand that a man *must* either be a friend to the Masters or a friend to the Hands.

"He may be a friend to both," said I.

Mr. Snapper didn't see that; there was no medium in the Political Economy of the subject. I retorted on Mr. Snapper, that Political Economy was a great and useful science in its own way and its own place; but that I did not transplant my definition of it from the Common Prayer Book, and make it a great king above all gods. Mr. Snapper tucked himself up as if to keep me off, folded his arms on the top of his counterpane, leaned back, and looked out of window.

"Pray what would you have, sir," enquired Mr. Snapper, suddenly withdrawing his eyes from the prospect to me, "in the relations between Capital and Labor, *but* Political Economy?"

I always avoid the stereotyped terms in these discussions as much as I can, for I have observed, in my little way, that they often supply the place of sense and moderation. I therefore took my gentleman up with the words employers and employed, in preference to Capital and Labor.

"I believe," said I, "that into the relations between employers and employed, as into all the relations of this life, there must enter something of feeling and sentiment; something of mutual explanation, forbearance, and consideration; something which is not to be found in Mr. McCulloch's dictionary, and is not exactly stateable in figures; otherwise those relations are wrong and rotten at the core and will never bear sound fruit."

Mr. Snapper laughed at me. As I thought I had just as good reason to laugh at Mr. Snapper, I did so, and we were both contented.

"Ah!" said Mr. Snapper, patting his counterpane with a hard touch. "You know very little of the improvident and unreasoning habits of the common people, *I* see."

"Yet I know something of those people, too," was my reply. "In fact, Mr.———," I had so nearly called him Snapper! "in fact, sir, I doubt the existence at this present time of many faults that are merely class faults. In the main, I am disposed to think that whatever faults you may find to exist, in your own neighbourhood for instance, among the hands, you will find tolerably equal in amount among the masters also, and

even among the classes above the masters. They will be modified by circumstances, and they will be the less excusable among the better-educated, but they will be pretty fairly distributed. I have a strong expectation that we shall live to see the conventional adjectives now apparently inseparable from the phrases working people and lower orders, gradually fall into complete disuse for this reason."

"Well, but we began with strikes," Mr. Snapper observed impatiently. "The masters have never had any share in strikes."

"Yet I have heard of strikes once upon a time in that same county of Lancashire," said I, "which were not disagreeable to some masters when they wanted a pretext for raising prices."

"Do you mean to say those masters had any hand in getting up those strikes?" asked Mr. Snapper.

"You will perhaps obtain better information among persons engaged in some Manchester branch trades, who have good memories," said I.

Mr. Snapper had no doubt, after this, that I thought the hands had a right to combine?

"Surely," said I. "A perfect right to combine in any lawful manner. The fact of their being able to combine and accustomed to combine may, I can easily conceive, be a protection to them. The blame even of this business is not all on one side. I think the associated Lock-out was a grave error. And when you Preston masters—"

"*I* am not a Preston master," interrupted Mr. Snapper.

"When the respectable combined body of Preston masters," said I, "in the beginning of this unhappy difference, laid down the principle that no man should be employed henceforth who belonged to any combination—such as their own—they attempted to carry with a high hand a partial and unfair impossibility, and were obliged to abandon it. This was an unwise proceeding, and the first defeat."

Mr. Snapper had known, all along, that I was no friend to the masters.

"Pardon me," said I, "I am unfeignedly a friend to the masters, and have many friends among them."

"Yet you think these hands in the right?" quoth Mr. Snapper.

"By no means," said I; "I fear they are at present engaged in an unreasonable struggle, wherein they began ill and cannot end well."

Mr. Snapper, evidently regarding me as neither fish, flesh, nor fowl, begged to know after a pause if he might enquire whether I was going to Preston on business?

Indeed I was going there, in my unbusiness-like manner, I confessed, to look at the strike.

"To look at the strike!" echoed Mr. Snapper, fixing his hat on firmly with both hands. "To look at it! Might I ask you now, with what object you are going to look at it?"

"Certainly," said I. "I read, even in liberal pages, the hardest Political Economy—of an extraordinary description too sometimes, and certainly

not to be found in the books—as the only touchstone of this strike. I see, this very day, in a to-morrow's liberal paper, some astonishing novelties in the politico-economical way, showing how profits and wages have no connexion whatever; coupled with such references to these hands as might be made by a very irascible General to rebels and brigands in arms. Now, if it be the case that some of the highest virtues of the working people still shine through them brighter than ever in their conduct of this mistake of theirs, perhaps the fact may reasonably suggest to me—and to others besides me—that there is some little thing wanting in the relations between them and their employers, which neither political economy nor Drum-head proclamation writing will altogether supply, and which we cannot too soon or too temperately unite in trying to find out."

Mr. Snapper, after again opening and shutting his gloved hands several times, drew the counterpane higher over his chest, and went to bed in disgust. He got up at Rugby, took himself and counterpane into another carriage, and left me to pursue my journey alone.

When I got to Preston, it was four o'clock in the afternoon. The day being Saturday and market-day, a foreigner might have expected, from among so many idle and not over-fed people as the town contained, to find a turbulent, ill-conditioned crowd in the streets. But, except for the cold smokeless factory chimnies, the placards at the street corners, and the groups of working people attentively reading them, nor foreigner nor Englishman could have had the least suspicion that there existed any interruption to the usual labours of the place. The placards thus perused were not remarkable for their logic certainly, and did not make the case particularly clear; but, considering that they emanated from, and were addressed to, people who had been out of employment for three-and-twenty consecutive weeks, at least they had little passion in them, though they had not much reason. Take the worst I could find:

> "Friends and Fellow Operatives,
>
> "Accept the grateful thanks of twenty thousand struggling Operatives, for the help you have showered upon Preston since the present contest commenced.
>
> "Your kindness and generosity, your patience and long-continued support deserve every praise, and are only equalled by the heroic and determined perseverance of the outraged and insulted factory workers of Preston, who have been struggling for some months, and are, at this inclement season of the year, bravely battling for the rights of themselves and the whole toiling community.
>
> "For many years before the strike took place at Preston, the Operatives were the down trodden and insulted serfs of their Employers, who in times of good trade and general prosperity, wrung from their labour a California of gold,

which is now being used to crush those who created it, still lower and lower in the scale of civilization. This has been the result of our commercial prosperity! — *more wealth for the rich and more poverty for the Poor*! Because the workpeople of Preston protested against this state of things, — because they combined in a fair and legitimate way for the purpose of getting a reasonable share of the reward of their own labour, the *fair dealing* Employers of Preston, to their eternal shame and disgrace, *locked up* their Mills, and at one fell swoop deprived, as they thought, from twenty to thirty thousand human beings of the means of existence. Cruelty and tyranny always defeat their own object; it was so in this case, and to the honour and credit of the working classes of this country, we have to record, that, those whom the rich and wealthy sought to destroy, the poor and industrious have protected from harm. This love of justice and hatred of wrong, is a noble feature in the character and disposition of the working man, and gives us hope that in the future, this world will become what its great architect intended, not a place of sorrow, toil, oppression and wrong, but the dwelling place and the abode of peace, plenty, happiness and love, where avarice and all the evil passions engendered by the present system of fraud and injustice shall not have a place.

"The earth was not made for the misery of its people; intellect was not given to man to make himself and fellow creatures unhappy. No, the fruitfulness of the soil and the wonderful inventions — the result of mind — all proclaim that these things were bestowed upon us for our happiness and well-being, and not for the misery and degradation of the human race.

"It may serve the manufacturers and all who run away with the lion's share of labour's produce, to say that the *impartial* God intended that there should be a *partial* distribution of his blessings. But we know that it is against nature to believe, that those who plant and reap all the grain, should not have enough to make a mess of porridge; and we know that those who weave all the cloth should not want a yard to cover their persons, whilst those who never wove an inch have more calico, silks and satins, than would serve the reasonable wants of a dozen working men and their families.

"This system of giving everything to the few, and nothing to the many, has lasted long enough, and we call upon the working people of this country to be determined to establish a new and improved system — a system that shall give to all who labour, a fair share of those blessings and comforts

which their toil produce; in short, we wish to see that divine precept enforced, which says, 'Those who will not work, shall not eat.'

"The task is before you, working men; if you think the good which would result from its accomplishment, is worth struggling for, set to work and cease not, until you have obtained the *good time coming*, not only for the Preston Operatives, but for yourselves as well.

"*By Order of the Committee.*

"*Murphy's Temperance Hotel, Chapel Walks,*
"*Preston, January 24th,* 1854."

It is a melancholy thing that it should not occur to the Committee to consider what would become of themselves, their friends, and fellow operatives, if those calicoes, silks, and satins, were *not* worn in very large quantities; but I shall not enter into that question. As I had told my friend Snapper, what I wanted to see with my own eyes, was, how these people acted under a mistaken impression, and what qualities they showed, even at that disadvantage, which ought to be the strength and peace—not the weakness and trouble—of the community. I found, even from this literature, however, that all masters were not indiscriminately unpopular. Witness the following verses from the New Song of the Preston Strike:

"There's Henry Hornby, of Blackburn, he is a jolly brick,
He fits the Preston masters nobly, and is very bad to trick;
He pays his hands a good price, and I hope he will never sever,
So we'll sing success to Hornby and Blackburn for ever.

"There is another gentleman, I'm sure you'll all lament,
In Blackburn for him they're raising a monument,
You know his name, 'tis of great fame, it was late Eccles of honour,
May Hopwood, and Sparrow, and Hornby live for ever.

"So now it is time to finish and end my rhyme,
We warn these Preston Cotton Lords to mind for future time.
With peace and order too I hope we shall be clever,
We sing success to Stockport and Blackburn for ever.
"Now, lads, give your minds to it."

The balance sheet of the receipts and expenditure for the twenty-third week of the strike was extensively posted. The income for that week was two thousand one hundred and forty pounds odd. Some of the contributors were poetical. As,

"Love to all and peace to the dead,
May the poor now in need never want bread.

three-and-sixpence." The following poetical remonstrance was appended to the list of contributions from the Gorton district:

"Within these walls the lasses fair
Refuse to contribute their share,
Careless of duty—blind to fame,
For shame, ye lasses, oh! for shame!
Come, pay up, lasses, think what's right,
Defend your trade with all your might;
For if you don't the world will blame,
And cry, ye lasses, oh, for shame!
Let's hope in future all will pay,
That Preston folks may shortly say—
That by your aid they have obtain'd
The greatest victory ever gained."

Some of the subscribers veiled their names under encouraging sentiments, as Not tired yet, All in a mind, Win the day, Fraternity, and the like. Some took jocose appellations, as A stunning friend, Two to one Preston wins, Nibbling Joe, and The Donkey Driver. Some expressed themselves through their trades, as Cobbler Dick, sixpence, The tailor trúe, sixpence, Shoemaker, a shilling, The chirping blacksmith, sixpence, and A few of Maskery's most feeling coachmakers, three and threepence. An old balance sheet for the fourteenth week of the Strike was headed with this quotation from MR. CARLYLE. "Adversity is sometimes hard upon a man; but for one man who can stand prosperity, there are a hundred that will stand adversity." The Elton district prefaced its report with these lines:

"Oh! ye who start a noble scheme,
For general good designed;
Ye workers in a cause that tends
To benefit your kind!
Mark out the path ye fain would tread,
The game ye mean to play;
And if it be an honest one,
Keep stedfast in your way!

"Although you may not gain at once
The points ye most desire;
Be patient—time can wonders work;
Plod on, and do not tire:
Obstructions, too, may crowd your path,
In threatening, stern array;
Yet flinch not! fear not! they may prove
Mere shadows in your way.

"Then, while there's work for you to do,
Stand not despairing by,
Let 'forward' be the move ye make,
Let 'onward' be your cry;

And when success has crowned your plans,
'Twill all your pains repay,
To see the good your labour's done—
Then droop not on your way."

In this list, "Bear ye one another's burthens," sent one Pound fifteen. "We'll stand to our text, see that ye love one another," sent nineteen shillings. "Christopher Hardman's men again, they say they can always spare one shilling out of ten," sent two and sixpence. The following masked threats were the worst feature in any bill I saw:

"If that fiddler at Uncle Tom's Cabin blowing room does not pay Punch will set his legs straight.

"If that drawer at card side and those two slubbers do not pay, Punch will say something about their bustles.

"If that winder at last shift does not pay next week, Punch will tell about her actions."

But, on looking at this bill again, I found that it came from Bury and related to Bury, and had nothing to do with Preston. The Masters' placards were not torn down or disfigured, but were being read quite as attentively as those on the opposite side.

That evening, the Delegates from the surrounding districts were coming in, according to custom, with their subscription lists for the week just closed. These delegates meet on Sunday as their only day of leisure; when they have made their reports, they go back to their homes and their Monday's work. On Sunday morning, I repaired to the Delegates' meeting.

These assemblages take place in a cockpit, which, in the better times of our fallen land, belonged to the late Lord Derby for the purpose of the intellectual recreation implied in its name. I was directed to the cockpit up a narrow lane, tolerably crowded by the lower sort of working people. Personally, I was quite unknown in the town, but every one made way for me to pass, with great civility, and perfect good humour. Arrived at the cockpit door, and expressing my desire to see and hear, I was handed through the crowd, down into the pit, and up again, until I found myself seated on the topmost circular bench, within one of the secretary's tables, and within three of the chairman. Behind the chairman was a great crown on the top of a pole, made of parti-coloured calico, and strongly suggestive of May-day. There was no other symbol or ornament in the place.

It was hotter than any mill or factory I have ever been in; but there was a stove down in the sanded pit, and delegates were seated close to it, and one particular delegate often warmed his hands at it, as if he were chilly. The air was so intensely close and hot, that at first I had but a confused perception of the delegates down in the pit, and the dense crowd of eagerly listening men and women (but not very many of the

latter) filling all the benches and choking such narrow standing-room as there was. When the atmosphere cleared a little on better acquaintance, I found the question under discussion to be, Whether the Manchester Delegates in attendance from the Labor Parliament, should be heard?

If the Assembly, in respect of quietness and order, were put in comparison with the House of Commons, the Right Honorable the Speaker himself would decide for Preston. The chairman was a Preston weaver, two or three and fifty years of age, perhaps; a man with a capacious head, rather long dark hair growing at the sides and back, a placid attentive face, keen eyes, a particularly composed manner, a quiet voice, and a persuasive action of his right arm. Now look'ee heer my friends. See what t' question is. T' question is, sholl these heer men be heerd. Then 't cooms to this, what ha' these men got t' tell us? Do they bring mooney? If they bring mooney t'ords t' expenses o' this strike, they're welcome. For, Brass, my friends, is what we want, and what we must ha' (hear hear hear!). Do they coom to us wi' any suggestion for the conduct of this strike? If they do, they're welcome. Let 'em give us their advice and we will hearken to 't. But, if these men coom heer, to tell us what t' Labor Parliament is, or what Ernest Jones's opinions is, or t' bring in politics and differences amoong us when what we want is 'armony, brotherly love, and con-cord; then I say t' you, decide for yoursel' carefully, whether these men ote to be heerd in this place. (Hear hear hear! and No no no!) Chairman sits down, earnestly regarding delegates, and holding both arms of his chair. Looks extremely sensible; his plain coarse working man's shirt collar easily turned down over his loose Belcher neckerchief. Delegate who has moved that Manchester delegates be heard, presses motion—Mr. Chairman, will that delegate tell us, as a man, that these men have anything to say concerning this present strike and lock-out, for we have a deal of business to do, and what concerns this present strike and lock-out is our business and nothing else is. (Hear hear hear!)—Delegate in question will not compromise the fact; these men want to defend the Labor Parliament from certain charges made against them.—Very well, Mr. Chairman, Then I move as an amendment that you do not hear these men now, and that you proceed wi' business—and if you don't I'll look after you, I tell you that. (Cheers and laughter)—Coom lads, prove 't then!—Two or three hands for the delegates; all the rest for the business. Motion lost, amendment carried, Manchester deputation not to be heard.

But now, starts up the delegate from Throstletown, in a dreadful state of mind. Mr. Chairman, I hold in my hand a bill; a bill that requires and demands explanation from you, sir; an offensive bill; a bill posted in my town of Throstletown without my knowledge, without the knowledge of my fellow delegates who are here beside me; a bill purporting to be posted by the authority of the massed committee sir, and of which my fellow delegates and myself were kept in ignorance. Why are we to

be slighted? Why are we to be insulted? Why are we to be meanly stabbed in the dark? Why is this assassin-like course of conduct to be pursued towards us? Why is Throstletown, which has nobly assisted you, the operatives of Preston, in this great struggle, and which has brought its contributions up to the full sevenpence a loom, to be thus degraded, thus aspersed, thus traduced, thus despised, thus outraged in its feelings by un-English and unmanly conduct? Sir, I hand you up that bill, and I require of you, sir, to give me a satisfactory explanation of that bill. And I have that confidence in your known integrity, sir, as to be sure that you will give it, and that you will tell us who is to blame, and that you will make reparation to Throstletown for this scandalous treatment. Then, in hot blood, up starts Gruffshaw (professional speaker) who is somehow responsible for this bill. O my friends, but explanation is required here! O my friends, but it is fit and right that you should have the dark ways of the real traducers and apostates, and the real un-English stabbers, laid bare before you. My friends when this dark conspiracy first began—But here the persuasive right hand of the chairman falls gently on Gruffshaw's shoulder. Gruffshaw stops in full boil. My friends, these are hard words of my friend Gruffshaw, and this is not the business—No more it is, and once again, sir, I, the delegate who said I would look after you, do move that you proceed to business!—Preston has not the strong relish for personal altercation that Westminster hath. Motion seconded and carried, business passed to, Gruffshaw dumb.

Perhaps the world could not afford a more remarkable contrast than between the deliberate collected manner of these men proceeding with their business, and the clash and hurry of the engines among which their lives are passed. Their astonishing fortitude and perseverance; their high sense of honor among themselves; the extent to which they are impressed with the responsibility that is upon them of setting a careful example, and keeping their order out of any harm and loss of reputation; the noble readiness in them to help one another, of which most medical practitioners and working clergymen can give so many affecting examples; could scarcely ever be plainer to an ordinary observer of human nature than in this cockpit. To hold, for a minute, that the great mass of them were not sincerely actuated by the belief that all these qualities were bound up in what they were doing, and that they were doing right, seemed to me little short of an impossibility. As the different delegates (some in the very dress in which they had left the mill last night) reported the amounts sent from the various places they represented, this strong faith on their parts seemed expressed in every tone and every look that was capable of expressing it. One man was raised to enthusiasm by his pride in bringing so much; another man was ashamed and depressed because he brought so little; this man triumphantly made it known that he could give you, from the store in hand, a hundred pounds in addition next week, if you should want it; and that man pleaded that he hoped

his district would do better before long; but I could as soon have doubted the existence of the walls that enclosed us, as the earnestness with which they spoke (many of them referring to the children who were to be born to labor after them) of "this great, this noble, gallant, godlike struggle." Some designing and turbulent spirits among them, no doubt there are; but I left the place with a profound conviction that their mistake is generally an honest one, and that it is sustained by the good that is in them, and not by the evil.

Neither by night nor by day was there any interruption to the peace of the streets. Nor was this an accidental state of things, for the police records of the town are eloquent to the same effect. I traversed the streets very much, and was, as a stranger, the subject of a little curiosity among the idlers; but I met with no rudeness or ill-temper. More than once, when I was looking at the printed balance-sheets to which I have referred, and could not quite comprehend the setting forth of the figures, a bystander of the working class interposed with his explanatory forefinger and helped me out. Although the pressure in the cockpit on Sunday was excessive, and the heat of the room obliged me to make my way out as I best could before the close of the proceedings, none of the people whom I put to inconvenience showed the least impatience; all helped me, and all cheerfully acknowledged my word of apology as I passed. It is very probable, notwithstanding, that they may have supposed from my being there at all—I and my companion were the only persons present, not of their own order—that I was there to carry what I heard and saw to the opposite side; indeed one speaker seemed to intimate as much.

On the Monday at noon, I returned to this cockpit, to see the people paid. It was then about half filled, principally with girls and women. They were all seated, waiting, with nothing to occupy their attention; and were just in that state when the unexpected appearance of a stranger differently dressed from themselves, and with his own individual peculiarities of course, might, without offence, have had something droll in it even to more polite assemblies. But I stood there, looking on, as free from remark as if I had come to be paid with the rest. In the place which the secretary had occupied yesterday, stood a dirty little common table, covered with five-penny piles of halfpence. Before the paying began, I wondered who was going to receive these very small sums; but when it did begin, the mystery was soon cleared up. Each of these piles was the change for sixpence, deducting a penny. All who were paid, in filing around the building to prevent confusion, had to pass this table on the way out; and the greater part of the unmarried girls stopped here, to change, each a sixpence, and subscribe her weekly penny in aid of the people on strike who had families. A very large majority of these girls and women were comfortably dressed in all respects, clean, wholesome and pleasant-looking. There was a prevalent neatness and cheerfulness, and an almost ludicrous absence of anything like sullen discontent.

Exactly the same appearances were observable on the same day, at a not numerously attended open air meeting in "Chadwick's Orchard"—which blossoms in nothing but red bricks. Here, the chairman of yesterday presided in a cart, from which speeches were delivered. The proceedings commenced with the following sufficiently general and discursive hymn, given out by a workman from Burnley, and sung in long metre by the whole audience:

"Assembled beneath thy broad blue sky,
To thee, O God, thy children cry.
Thy needy creatures on Thee call,
For thou art great and good to all.

"Thy bounty smiles on every side,
And no good thing hast thou denied;
But men of wealth and men of power,
Like locusts, all our gifts devour.

"Awake, ye sons of toil! nor sleep
While millions starve, while millions weep;
Demand your rights; let tyrants see
You are resolved that you'll be free."

Mr. Hollins's Sovereign Mill was open all this time. It is a very beautiful mill, containing a large amount of valuable machinery, to which some recent ingenious improvements have been added. Four hundred people could find employment in it; there were eighty-five at work, of whom five had "come in" that morning. They looked, among the vast array of motionless power-looms, like a few remaining leaves in a wintry forest. They were protected by the police (very prudently not obtruded on the scenes I have described), and were stared at every day when they came out, by a crowd which had never been large in reference to the numbers on strike, and had diminished to a score or two. One policeman at the door sufficed to keep order then. These eighty-five were people of exceedingly decent appearance, chiefly women, and were evidently not in the least uneasy for themselves. I heard of one girl among them, and only one, who had been hustled and struck in a dark street.

In any aspect in which it can be viewed, this strike and lock-out is a deplorable calamity. In its waste of time, in its waste of a great people's energy, in its waste of wages, in its waste of wealth that seeks to be employed, in its encroachment on the means of many thousands who are laboring from day to day, in the gulf of separation it hourly deepens between those whose interests must be understood to be identical or must be destroyed, it is a great national affliction. But, at this pass, anger is of no use, starving out is of no use—for what will that do, five years hence, but overshadow all the mills in England with the growth of a bitter remembrance?—political economy is a mere skeleton unless it has

a little human covering and filling out, a little human bloom upon it, and a little human warmth in it. Gentlemen are found, in great manufacturing towns, ready enough to extol imbecile mediation with dangerous madmen abroad; can none of them be brought to think of authorised mediation and explanation at home? I do not suppose that such a knotted difficulty as this, is to be at all untangled by a morning-party in the Adelphi; but I would entreat both sides now so miserably opposed, to consider whether there are no men in England, above suspicion, to whom they might refer the matters in dispute, with a perfect confidence above all things in the desire of those men to act justly, and in their sincere attachment to their countrymen of every rank and to their country. Masters right, or men right; masters wrong, or men wrong; both right, or both wrong; there is certain ruin to both in the continuance or frequent revival of this breach. And from the ever-widening circle of their decay, what drop in the social ocean shall be free!

HENRY MORLEY

Ground in the Mill†

"It is good when it happens," say the children,—"that we die before our time." Poetry may be right or wrong in making little operatives who are ignorant of cowslips say anything like that. We mean here to speak prose. There are many ways of dying. Perhaps it is not good when a factory girl, who has not the whole spirit of play spun out of her for want of meadows, gambols upon bags of wool, a little too near the exposed machinery that is to work it up, and is immediately seized, and punished by the merciless machine that digs its shaft into her pinafore and hoists her up, tears out her left arm at the shoulder joint, breaks her right arm, and beats her on the head. No, that is not good; but it is not a case in point, the girl lives and may be one of those who think that it would have been good for her if she had died before her time.

She had her chance of dying, and she lost it. Possibly it was better for the boy whom his stern master, the machine, caught as he stood on a stool wickedly looking out of window at the sunlight and the flying clouds. These were no business of his, and he was fully punished when the machine he served caught him by one arm and whirled him round and round till he was thrown down dead. There is no lack of such warnings to idle boys and girls. What right has a gamesome youth to display levity before the supreme engine. "Watch me do a trick!" cried such a youth to his fellow, and put his arm familiarly within the arm of the

† From *Household Words*, April 22, 1854.

great iron-hearted chief. "*I'll* show you a trick," gnashed the pitiless monster. A coil of strap fastened his arm to the shaft, and round he went. His leg was cut off, and fell into the room, his arm was broken in three or four places, his ankle was broken, his head was battered; he was not released alive.

Why do we talk about such horrible things? Because they exist, and their existence should be clearly known. Because there have occurred during the last three years, more than a hundred such deaths, and more than ten thousand (indeed, nearly twelve thousand) such accidents in our factories, and they are all, or nearly all, preventible.

These few thousands of catastrophes are the results of the administrative kindness so abundant in this country. They are all the fruits of mercy. A man was lime-washing the ceiling of an engine-room: he was seized by a horizontal shaft and killed immediately. A boy was brushing the dust from such a ceiling, before whitewashing: he had a cloth over his head to keep the dirt from falling on him; by that cloth the engine seized and held him to administer a chastisement with rods of iron. A youth while talking thoughtlessly took hold of a strop that hung over the shaft: his hand was wrenched off at the wrist. A man climbed to the top of his machine to put the strap on the drum: he wore a smock which the shaft caught; both of his arms were then torn out of the shoulder-joints, both legs were broken, and his head was severely bruised: in the end, of course, he died. What he suffered was all suffered in mercy. He was rent asunder, not perhaps for his own good; but, as a sacrifice to the commercial prosperity of Great Britain. There are few amongst us—even among the masters who share most largely in that prosperity—who are willing, we will hope and believe, to pay such a price as all this blood for any good or any gain that can accrue to them.

These accidents have arisen in the manner following. By the Factory Act, passed in the seventh year of Her Majesty's reign, it was enacted, among other things, that all parts of the mill-gearing in a factory should be securely fenced. There were no buts and ifs in the Act itself; these were allowed to step in and limit its powers of preventing accidents out of a merciful respect, not for the blood of the operatives, but for the gold of the mill-owners. It was strongly represented that to fence those parts of machinery that were higher than the heads of workmen—more than seven feet above the ground—would be to incur an expense wholly unnecessary. Kind-hearted interpreters of the law, therefore, agreed with mill-owners that seven feet of fencing should be held sufficient. The result of this accommodation—taking only the accounts of the last three years—has been to credit mercy with some pounds and shillings in the books of English manufacturers; we cannot say how many, but we hope they are enough to balance the account against mercy made out on behalf of the English factory workers thus:—Mercy debtor to justice, of poor men, women, and children, one hundred and six lives, one hun-

dred and forty-two hands or arms, one thousand two hundred and eighty-seven (or, in bulk, how many bushels of) fingers, for the breaking of one thousand three hundred and forty bones, for five hundred and fifty-nine damaged heads, and for eight thousand two hundred and eighty-two miscellaneous injuries. It remains to be settled how much cash saved to the purses of the manufacturers is a satisfactory and proper off-set to this expenditure of life and limb and this crushing of bone in the persons of their work-people.

For, be it strictly observed, this expenditure of life is the direct result of that good-natured determination not to carry out the full provision of the Factory Act, but to consider enough done if the boxing-off machinery be made compulsory in each room to the height of seven feet from the floor. * * *

Manufacturers are to do as they please, and cut down in their own way the matter furnished for their annual of horrors. Only of this they are warned, that they must reduce it; and that, hereafter, the friends of injured operatives will be encouraged to sue for compensation upon death or loss of limb, and Government will sometimes act as prosecutor. What do we find now in the reports? For severe injury to a young person caused by gross and cognisable neglect to fence or shaft, the punishment awarded to a wealthy firm is a fine of ten pounds twelve shillings costs. For killing a woman by the same act of indifference to life and limb, another large firm is fined ten pounds, and has to pay one guinea costs. A fine of a thousand pounds and twelve months at the treadmill would, in the last case, have been an award much nearer the mark of honesty, and have indicated something like a civilised sense of the sacredness of human life. If the same firm had, by an illegal act of negligence, caused the death of a neighbour's horse, they would have had forty, fifty, sixty pounds to pay for it. Ten pounds was the expense of picking a man's wife, a child's mother, limb from limb.

HARRIET MARTINEAU

The Factory Legislation: A Warning Against Meddling Legislation (Manchester 1855)

* * * A good many people have wondered before that Mr. Dickens, who has such a horror of Poor-law reform, and who acted the part of sentimental philanthropist in "Oliver Twist," by charging the faults of the repealed law upon the new one, and other devices common to that order of pleaders,[1] should have fallen foul afterwards of the prison

1. On the publication of *Oliver Twist* (1837) Dickens was criticized for damning poor laws that had already been repealed in favor of somewhat more humane regulations [*Editor*].

reformers and the African missionaries,[2] and certain other philanthropic adventurers. But there was the excuse that he was a novelist; and no one was eager to call to account on any matter of doctrine a very imaginative writer of fiction. It might be a pity, as a matter of taste, that a writer of fiction should choose topics in which political philosophy and morality were involved; but the criticism was willingly restricted to this. But Mr. Dickens himself changed the conditions of his responsibilities and other people's judgments when he set up "Household Words" as an avowed agency of popular instruction and social reform. From that time, it was not only the right but the duty of good citizens to require from him some soundness of principle and some depth of knowledge in political philosophy. It is not within our scope now to show how conspicuous has been Mr. Dickens's proved failure in the department of instruction upon which he spontaneously entered. We need refer to only a single instance out of many,—as his Tale of "Hard Times." On this occasion, again, the plea of those who would plead for Charles Dickens to the last possible moment is that "Hard Times" is fiction. A more effectual security against its doing mischief is that the Tale, in its characters, conversations, and incidents, is so unlike life,—so unlike Lancashire or English life,—that it is deprived of its influence. Master and man are as unlike life in England, at present, as Ogre and Tom Thumb: and the result of the choice of subject is simply, that the charm of an ideal creation is foregone, while nothing is gained in its stead. But a much greater responsibility is incurred by Mr. Dickens, in the more recent papers in "Household Words," in which this Factory Controversy is treated of. Who wrote the papers we do not know, and it is of no importance to inquire. Mr. Dickens is responsible for them and, whoever may be his partner in the disgrace of them, he alone stands before the world as answerable for their contents * * *

A very few citations will sustain our rebuke. The society of mill-occupiers is entitled, by Mr. Dickens or his contributor (p. 495), "The National Association for the Protection of the Right to Mangle Operatives." * * * He makes the extraordinary statement (p. 495) that "these deadly shafts" "mangle or murder, every year, two thousand human creatures:" and, considering the magnitude of this exaggeration (our readers will remember that the average of deaths by factory shafts is twelve per year), it is no wonder that he finds fault with figures, when used in reply to charges so monstrous. When the manufacturers produced facts in answer to romance about the numbers concerned, he presents them as reading out of "Death's cyphering book," and proceeds to beg the question, as usual, in such language as this:—"As for ourselves, we admit freely that it never did occur to us that it was possible to justify, by arithmetic, a thing unjustifiable by any code of morals, civilized or sav-

2. An allusion to Dickens' novel *Bleak House*, in which he had satirized Mrs. Jellyby's zealous philanthropic activities on behalf of an imaginary African state, Borrioboola-Gha [*Editor*].

age;" this "justification" being a quoting of the coroners' returns by which "it appears that, out of 858 accidents occasioning loss of life, only 29, or 3½ per cent, had been occasioned by factory machinery" of any kind whatever. "Three and a half per cent!" exclaims Mr. Dickens or his contributor. "The argument is of a substantial character." If he assigns his number, of 2,000 a year. his opponents may surely cite theirs, of 3½ per cent, or 12 in a year. But Mr. Dickens cannot endure a comparative number which may diminish the show he makes with a positive one. He follows up, and improves upon, Mr. Horner's horror at the penalty of Ten Pounds,—adopting, of course, without a hint of there being a doubt in the case, the statement that a few hooks, costing a few shillings, would have saved the life of the poor reckless fellow Ashworth, who, as we have seen, threw it away. "When," says the writer (p. 243), "the mill-owner sets that price (ten pounds) on his workman's brains, who can wonder if the workman sets a price still lower on his master's heart!" The mingled levity and fustian of the style of the specimens we have quoted will neutralise their mischief to educated people; but the responsibility of presenting such pictures, and offering such sentiment, to a half-educated order of readers, is such as few writers would like to be burdened with. We do not believe that there will be any outbreak in factory districts about this matter, with or without Mr. Dickens's incitement; because the factory people understand the value of casings and hooks better than he does; and because an amendment and elucidation of the law may be considered only a question of time; but Mr. Dickens had better consider, for the sake of his own peace of mind, as well as the good of his neighbors, how to qualify himself for his enterprise before he takes up his next task of reform. If he must give the first place to his idealism and sensibilities, let him confine himself to fiction; and if he will put himself forward as a social reformer, let him do the only honest thing,—study both sides of the question he takes up. * * *

We must say that a mission to Borrioboola-Gha is an innocent enterprise, in comparison with that which Mr. Dickens has undertaken on behalf of meddling and mischievous legislation like that of the fencing clauses of the Factory Acts. If we had room, and if our object was to convict the humanity-monger in "Household Words" of all his acts of unfairness and untruth, we should go into the case of the boy in Mr. Cheetham's factory, who, in defiance of remonstrance, thrust himself into the extremity of danger, and was killed on the instant; and of the overlooker at Bury, George Hoyle, aged 50, of whom his comrades said at the inquest, "It was entirely his own fault; the shaft was quite out of the way of everybody, and unless a person wilfully did something that he ought not to do, he could not be injured by that shaft." * * * Such cases as these, set off with ironical descriptions of split brain, puddles of blood, crushed bones, and torn flesh, are exhibited as spectacles for which the masters are answerable, and which they obstinately prefer to

an expenditure of a few shillings to make all safe. If Mr. Dickens really believes in such a state of things as he describes, he should not meddle with affairs in which rationality of judgment is required; and if he can be satisfied to represent the great class of manufacturers—unsurpassed for intelligence, public spirit, and beneficence—as the monsters he describes, without seeking knowledge of their actual state of mind and course of life, we do not see how he can complain of being himself classed with the pseudo-philanthropists whom he delights to ridicule. He has exposed philo-criminal, and philo-heathen cant; but his own philo-operative cant is quite as irrational as either, while it has the distinction of being far more mischievous. The danger is less than it was. In Luddite times, Mr. Dickens might have been answerable for the burning of mills and the assassination of masters; and if no deadly mischief follows now, it will be because the workers understand their own case better than he does. The benevolence of their employers, educating them long before the Factory Law made education compulsory, and feeding them in times of hardship, has generated a mutual understanding, and a common intelligence, which go far to render Mr. Dickens's representations harmless; but not for this is his responsibility the less. If the names of Dickens and Jellyby are joined in a firm as humanity-mongers in the minds of his readers, the gentleman may resent being so yoked with a noodle; but the lady might fairly plead that her mission had no mischief in it, if no good,—no exciting fierce passions and class hostilities through false principles and insufficient knowledge. In conceit, insolence, and wilful one-sidedness, the two mission-managers may compare with each other; but the people of Borrioboola-Gha could hardly be so lowered and insulted by any ministrations of Mrs. Jellyby as the Lancashire operatives would be if Mr. Dickens could succeed in reviving on their behalf the legislation which their ancestors outgrew some centuries ago.

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R. D. BUTTERWORTH

Dickens the Novelist: The Preston Strike and *Hard Times*†

Dickens's visit to Preston in January 1854 was made as he was planning the novel which began to be serialised in *Household Words* in April of the same year as *Hard Times*. It remains contentious, however, whether he eventually made much direct use of his Preston visit in *Hard Times*;

† From *Dickensian* 88.2 (Summer 1992): 91–102.

and it is questionable how much he could have hoped to get out of a visit of a bare forty-eight hours. He could remind himself, but little more, of the general cast of life in the industrial North, his depiction of which remains that of an outsider. His descriptions of Coketown lack the intimacy of someone who had lived in industrial Lancashire rather than merely visited it: the two extended descriptions of Coketown, in *Hard Times* 1,5 and II,1, are mainly of the outsides of the buildings, and in the latter case, of the town seen from a distance. His brief and vague description of the inside of Stephen Blackpool's lodgings—'A few books and writings were on an old bureau in a corner, the furniture was decent and sufficient, and though the atmosphere was tainted, the room was clean' (I,10)[1]—contrasts starkly with, for instance, Elizabeth Gaskell's very detailed description of the interior of the Barton household in chapter two of *Mary Barton;* and the bitterly ironic key image of the factories as 'Fairy Palaces' is significantly that of 'travellers by express-train' (I,10), who have not lingered in Coketown, have not seen the factories close up, and know little of conditions inside them.

What Dickens could hope to gain, however, was some first-hand experience of what unions were like and of the temper of a town on strike. Such experience was indeed what interested Dickens in Preston, as his article 'On Strike[2] reveals, and it has usually been assumed that it is the chapters in *Hard Times* dealing with the union that are most directly derived from what he saw during his Preston visit.

It has often been pointed out, however, that the picture of Slackbridge and the United Aggregate Tribunal does not accurately reflect what is known about George Cowell and the activities of the Preston weavers' union;[3] even the account in 'On Strike' gives a very different, much more sympathetic picture than the hostile portrait in *Hard Times*. Dickens's surprising portrayal of the union has furthermore become, at least since F. R. Leavis's important essay on the novel, the major crux of the novel; for as Leavis comments, 'Dickens has no glimpse of the part to be played by Trade Unionism in bettering the conditions he deplored'.[4] In essence this is perhaps an argument from history. Unions were later to play a very important role in improving the lot of working people, and were not to be the mere instruments of demagogues for causing civil strife that seems to be Dickens's version of them. This in turn raises the question of how Dickens could be so wrong about the nature and intentions of unions, especially after observing the Preston weavers' union at first hand.

The matter is more complicated than might be imagined. One of the

1. All quotations from *Hard Times* are from the Oxford Illustrated Dickens edition (Oxford, 1955).
2. *Household Words*, 8, 11 Feb. 1854.
3. This problem has been discussed in, for instance, 'Dickens, Mrs. Gaskell, and the Preston Strike'—G. Carnall, *Victorian Studies*, vol. 13, 1964, pp. 31–48 and '*Hard Times* and the *Times* Newspaper'—A. Smith, *Dickensian*, vol. 69, 1973, pp. 153–62.
4. F. R. Leavis, *The Great Tradition* (London, 1948), p. 246.

bases on which it has been contended that Dickens deliberately falsified his own experience in creating his fictional union has been the character of George Cowell. For Cowell, a Methodist and teetotaler[5] who became pre-eminent among the union leaders in the Preston Strike, was upright, restrained and reasonable, and not at all of the same mettle as Dickens's Slackbridge. Initially Cowell had been antipathetic to the idea of striking.[6] In July 1853, strikes at two Preston mills were ended when Cowell persuaded the operatives to return to work and not long after he was associated with a view that 'extreme measures in the shape of a strike should not be resorted to.'[7] After the Masters' Association announcement on 15 September 1853 that a general lock-out would begin one month later, he urged the opening of negotiations so that a peaceful settlement could be reached.[8] His attitude during the strike itself remained conciliatory. In January 1854 he made a major concession in expressing a willingness that negotiations should proceed mill by mill, the masters holding discussions with their own employees rather than with the delegates' committee,[9] and at the very time of Dickens's visit to Preston, Cowell was declaring that the strike could be ended by a meeting of equal numbers of masters and operatives 'to discuss the question calmly with a view to an amicable settlement' or by submitting the matter to arbitration.[1] Even as antagonistic an observer as the industrialist Henry Ashworth was to acknowledge that 'he may be pronounced a man who would do honour to a juster cause'.[2]

Cowell, however, seems to have played no prominent part at the Sunday delegates' meeting that Dickens attended, and may not even have been present;[3] certainly he was not present at the Monday meeting for he was in London on that day attending the Society of Arts' conference on strikes. Furthermore, the Sunday meeting was, as H. I. Dutton and J. E. King comment, 'more than usually fractious',[4] full of what the *Preston Chronicle* called 'wordy wars'.[5] In the course of the meeting, Mor-

5. H. I. Dutton and J. E. King, *'Ten Per Cent and No Surrender': The Preston Strike* 1853–1854 (Cambridge, 1981), vol. 1. p. 46.
6. Dutton and King, I, p. 31.
7. "'A fallacy, a delusion, and a snare': Arbitration and Conciliation in the Preston Strike, 1853–4"—H. I. Dutton and J. E. King, *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, vol 131. Dutton and King, II, p. 70.
8. Dutton and King I, p. 42. See also Dutton and King II, p. 70.
9. Dutton and King II, p. 71.
1. In addressing the Society of Arts' Conference on Strikes and Lockouts: cf. *Supplement to the Journal of the Society of Arts*, vol. 2, 1854, p. 204.
2. Henry Ashworth, *The Preston Strike, An Enquiry into its Causes and Consequences* (Manchester, 1854), p. 27. Ashworth later acknowledges (p. 29) that the leaders of the strike 'exerted, upon the whole, a useful influence in repressing violence, and restraining the operatives within the limits of moral force'.
3. The reports of the Sunday meeting in the *Preston Chronicle* (4 Feb. 1854), *Preston Guardian* (4 Feb. 1854), *Preston Pilot* (4 Feb. 1854), *The Times* (31 Jan. 1854), *Manchester Guardian* (1 Feb. 1854) and *Reynolds's Newspaper* (5 Feb. 1854) make no mention of Cowell, though it should be noted that some of these reports are very brief.
4. Dutton and King I, p. 111.
5. *Preston Chronicle*, 4 Feb. 1854.

timer Grimshaw (Dickens's Gruffshaw), on whom Slackbridge seems to be based, 'poured out a volley of invective',[6] or in the words of the *Manchester Guardian*, 'poured out the vials of his wrath upon the committee and the operatives' of Warrington.[7]

Grimshaw, prominent at both the Sunday and Monday meetings Dickens attended (though his contribution to the latter meeting was probably after Dickens's departure), had something of the firebrand about him. Known as the 'Thunderer of Lancashire', Mortimer Grimshaw was a weaver who, by his own account, was blacklisted in every mill in Lancashire. He had been involved in earlier campaigning in the industrial field, both the strengthening and full enforcement of the Factory Acts, and against the victimisation of political activists at a mill in Royton, where he had lived: and he had taken part in the 'Ten per cent' campaign from as early as March 1853 in Stockport.[8] At the end of the strike, Charles Hardwick recorded some impressions of Grimshaw in an article in *Eliza Cook's Journal*:

> He was well known by his white hat, which, I suppose, he wore after the fashion of Hunt and Cobbett, to indicate the depth of his 'Radical' propensities. . . . Mortimer Grimshaw advocates liberty to the oppressed 'factory slaves' with a dogmatical invective . . . more worthy of a Russian despot than an English patriot. I do not assert that he is insincere. . . . He appears to me to be an enthusiast, and that the warmth of his feelings, when excited, overpowers his judgment.[9]

Henry Ashworth, as might be expected, gives a less sympathetic account.

> Of Mr. Grimshaw, the less that is said the better. We have heard it alleged, that every wild and violent sentiment which was uttered during the Preston strike came from his lips. He was commonly introduced as the 'Thunderer of Lancashire'. In his speeches we find the perfection of mob oratory. 'He's a stunner,' exclaimed an old woman at the close of one of his perorations; to which an admiring operative who had heard her, replied, perhaps truthfully, — 'he's nowt else.'[1]

How Grimshaw earned his living was something of a mystery, and this gave rise to accusations that he was a 'self-interested professional agitator'.[2] He can thus be seen as a clear source for much of the character of Slackbridge; and to this extent, given the prominence of Grimshaw

6. *Ibid.*
7. *Manchester Guardian*, 1 Feb. 1854.
8. Dutton and King I, p. 46.
9. *Eliza Cook's Journal*, 227, 19 August, 1854: cited in Dutton and King I, p. 47.
1. Ashworth, *op.cit.*, pp. 28–9. On the personalities and behaviour of Cowell and Grimshaw, see also Carnall, *op.cit.* esp. pp. 34ff, 40f.
2. Dutton and King I, p. 46.

rather than Cowell at these meetings, Dickens's portrait might be said to be a reflection of what he saw.

Nevertheless, other strike leaders Dickens observed were quite unlike Grimshaw. The chairman of the two meetings Dickens attended, Kinder Smith, a man of similar ilk to Cowell, is described sympathetically by Dickens as a man with 'a placid attentive face, keen eyes, a particularly composed manner, a quiet voice', who glances at other delegates 'earnestly' and 'Looks extremely sensible'.[3] His is a successfully restraining influence on wilder men: 'the persuasive right hand of the chairman falls gently on Gruffshaw's shoulder. Gruffshaw stops in full boil.'[4] The whole meeting, indeed, is commended for its 'quietness and order'.[5]

Such pieces of description also indicate that Dickens's perception of unions was not blinkered by the sort of prejudices which Humphry House identifies as common at the time, such as that 'the leaders of such unions were bound to be demagogic frauds',[6] though such attitudes are not hard to find reflected in accounts of the Preston Strike. A letter in the *Preston Chronicle* of the weekend of Dickens's visit for instance refers to 'these paid demagogues' and 'the vagabond banditti styling themselves delegates, who, with the basest effrontery, are sucking to the very heart's-core the life's-blood of their deluded victims'.[7] In similar vein, Henry Ashworth writes of the workers' 'ignorance', which makes them 'the more docile', for 'where they do not see clearly, they submit to be led'; and 'a mass of operatives of this character offers a fine field for the demagogue'.[8] Dickens, however, was hardly a natural ally of men like Henry Ashworth, and it is questionable whether their views would coincide very much. Indeed, as P. Brantlinger points out, Dickens scorns such attitudes through Stephen Blackpool's rejection of Bounderby's theory of 'mischievous strangers',[9] and the evidence of 'On Strike' is that Dickens sees the strikers and their union in a rather different light.

It is, then, not easy to explain Dickens's attitude to the unions on the basis of his visit to Preston; and an explanation is perhaps to be found rather in considering the broader background to the writing of the novel. For, if 'On Strike' is an impressionistic account of the Preston Strike, it can be argued that *Hard Times* is also impressionistic—this time about the state of England—and that it is a novel to which Dickens's visit to Preston was in some ways incidental. It does not concern itself with a particular real-life union, let alone a particular strike (there is, of course, no strike in the novel); Dickens is concerned no more than in 'On Strike'

3. 'On Strike', *op.cit.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. H. House, *The Dickens World* (Oxford, 1960 edition), p. 209.
7. *Preston Chronicle*, 28 Jan. 1854.
8. Ashworth, *op.cit.*, pp. 26–7.
9. P. Brantlinger, 'The Case Against Trade Unions in Early Victorian Fiction', *Victorian Studies*, vol. 13, 1969, p. 48.

with minutiae, but rather with a perception of a diseased society. Part of the context is that of other 'Condition of England' novels. There are, however, some specific features of the background to the novel that are particularly important to *Hard Times*.

The period of the Preston Strike was a time of considerable industrial unrest. Though none of them was epoch-making, strikes were rampant:

> In the spring of 1853 there developed throughout the country a movement for higher wages.... The Manchester brickmakers struck in January, followed in February by masons and joiners at Ashton, and by farm labourers near Salisbury. March saw strikes in several Liverpool crafts, in the Batley and Dewsbury woollen mills, and on the land in Oxfordshire. In April boys struck at a Liverpool engine works and a shipyard at Birkenhead, and strikes broke out among waggonwrights and bricklayers at South Shields, seamen at Ipswich, Liverpool shoemakers, brickmakers and joiners at Wigan, and the joiners of Sutherland and Hartlepool.[1]

Henry Ashworth recalled industrial unrest over wages running through 'the whole of 1852 and the first half of 1853', agitation which, he noted, 'was not confined to those northern districts, or indeed to any particular trade, but spread pretty equally throughout the kingdom':

> Commencing with those employed in the production of iron and coal, it passed through most of the building trades, affected the branches of industry which are connected with Nottingham and Leicester, and even extended to the porters and dock labourers of such towns as Liverpool, Bristol and Hull. In some places, as in Manchester and Liverpool, the police struck for an advance of wages. ... Agricultural strikes were now heard of. ... A rise of wages was also universal in the ship-yards of the Clyde and the Wear, the Mersey and the Thames.[2]

It is little wonder that an article which appeared in the same issue of the *Illustrated London News* as a piece on the Preston Strike adopted a tone intended to be reassuring. 'Sketches of Strikes and Riots in the Cotton Districts' sought to calm any anxieties the reader may have had about the spate of strikes by emphasising that strikes, far from being a worrying new phenomenon, pre-dated the Industrial Revolution:

> though most persons who have written of them date their commencement at the period when spinning mills arose—namely, between 1765 and 1769. Strikes were as frequent before the invention of the jenny in 1765 as since; but they affected fewer persons.[3]

1. Dutton and King I, p. 27.
2. Ashworth, *op.cit.*, pp. 5–6.
3. *Illustrated London News*, 12 Nov. 1853.

It was in the context of a society in this state that Dickens came to write about the industrial world and to portray an England splitting into contentious factions willing to use their collective power to gain the ends of their members.[4]

Contemporary views of industrial relations, unions and strikes, furthermore, included certain elements somewhat uncommon in later views. 'On Strike' itself raises the issue of whether terms like 'Capital' and 'Labour' should be used in preference to 'employers' and 'employed' and the phenomenon of contemporary documents, which sometimes use the one set of terms and sometimes the other, indicates that this was a period of transition in the public's perception of the industrial world.[5] To use words like 'Capital' and 'Labour' in connection with industrial relations is to see them from what may be very broadly called a political point of view; and this is probably the most common view of industrial relations today. In the 1850s, however, many people's perspective on them was rather, the evidence suggests, moral, and religious. It is necessary to go no further than 'On Strike' to find evidence of this. The placard transcribed by Dickens refers to

> This love of justice and hatred of wrong . . . a noble feature in the character and disposition of the working man . . . gives us hope that in the future this world will become what its great architect intended, not a place of sorrow, toil, oppression and wrong, but the dwelling place and abode of peace, plenty, happiness and love, where avarice and all the evil passions engendered by the present system of fraud and injustice shall not have a place.

The manufacturers, furthermore, are attacked for their contention that 'the *impartial* God intended that there should be a *partial* distribution of his blessings'. Much Biblical or pseudo-Biblical phraseology and imagery—'the fruitfulness of the soil', 'plant and reap all the grain', 'a mess of porridge'—is used, and the Biblical precept 'Those who will not work, shall not eat' is cited. Soubriquets on a balance-sheet include 'Bear ye one another's burthens' and 'We'll stand to our text, see that ye love one another'. A hymn sung—at the Monday meeting of the strikers is quoted:

> To thee, O God, thy children cry
> Thy needy creatures on thee call

4. Preston itself formed a good example of the factionalism Dickens attacks in *Hard Times*, and not only because the workers had become organised into unions. The Preston employers had long had an association: 'As early as the 1820s the Masters' Association in Preston was regarded as one of the strongest in Lancashire' (Dutton and King I, p. 21). Its history went back continuously, however, 'no further than the great strike of 1836' (*Ibid*. p. 20). Nevertheless, as such, it was one of the oldest Masters' Associations. In 1853, the Masters' Association was revived before the Preston spinners' union began its agitation; the Preston weavers only formed a combination a couple of months later: cf. Dutton and King I, pp. 28–31.
5. Cf. the vacillation between the two sets of terms among speakers at the Society of Arts' Conference on Strikes and Lockouts in the account given in *Supplement to the Journal of the Society of Arts, op.cit.*, pp. 189–207.

> . . . no good thing hast thou denied
> But men of wealth and men of power
> Like locusts, all our gifts devour.

The hymn ends with an exhortation to 'ye sons of toil' to

> Demand your rights; let tyrants see
> You are resolved that you'll be free.

Many similar references may be cited. Around the time of Dickens's visit, a correspondent of the *Preston Pilot*, deploring 'these ruinous and devastating "strikes" which are the order of the day, and which rage like a pestilence around us', averred that 'In that blessed curse,—"By the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat bread", we have politics in perfection'.[6] A letter to the *Preston Chronicle* refers to the strike as 'the present unfortunate, un-English, anti-Christian struggle[7] and one to the *Preston Guardian* to 'the present unchristian warfare.'[8] In the same week's issue of the *Preston Pilot*, a correspondent bemoaned that 'It will require many years of prosperity, unity and peace to remedy the sad evils, both temporal and spiritual' resulting from the strike. The writer, 'Clericus', went on to suggest that ministers of religion might act as mediators between the two sides. He expressed the hope that the masters 'as God has been pleased to bless many of them with great and long-continued prosperity . . . will be induced, in a kind, conciliatory spirit, to make as large concessions as they possibly can'. From the workers, Clericus asked for 'A disposition to meet their employers in a friendly manner', which 'would . . . contribute much to their future happiness and welfare, and, above all, it would be pleasing and acceptable to Him whose name is LOVE'.[9]

The leaders of the strike too viewed matters from a religious perspective. Geoffrey Carnall noted a speech made by George Cowell which is echoed in *Hard Times*,[1] and which appeared in print in the *Preston Guardian* on the very day Dickens arrived in Preston.

> Political economy! What is it? The doctrine of buying cheap and selling dear—a doctrine utterly irreconcilable with the divine precept, 'Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you.' The sooner we can rout political economy from the world, the better it will be for the working classes of this country.[2]

Mortimer Grimshaw picked up this idea, and extended it in a lecture given at Accrington soon after, in which, in addition to arguing from the

6. *Preston Pilot; and County Advertiser*, 4 Feb. 1854.
7. *Preston Chronicle*, 28 Jan. 1854.
8. *Preston Guardian*, 28 Jan. 1854.
9. *Preston Pilot*, 28 Jan. 1854.
1. Carnall, *op.cit.*, pp. 41–2.
2. *Preston Guardian*, 28 Jan. 1954. These sentiments were also reported in the other local newspapers, the *Preston Chronicle* and the *Preston Pilot*, of the same date.

text 'the labourer is worthy of his hire', he maintained political economy to be 'at variance with Christianity, true reason, equity, and justice':

> Christianity is either false or political economy is false. Buy cheap and sell dear! The great founder of Christianity said—'Love thy neighbour as thyself. Do unto others as you would have others do to you.' The 'buy cheap and sell dear' principle says no such thing.[3]

The chairman of that same meeting, the Baptist minister; Rev. Charles Williams, made an interesting qualification when acknowledging the cogency of Grimshaw's argument:

> I have no hesitation in saying that I think buying cheap and selling dear, when carried on rigorously and without mercy, is unchristian in its character. Both parties, however, act upon it, and what is wanted, in my opinion, is this, the introduction of a moral principle to modify the working of this hard maxim, and except there be the moral principle of justice, love and brotherhood, that principle will prove the ruin of Lancashire and of England. I wish there were a little less of selfishness; to fill a man's pockets appears to be the order of the day . . . Political economy must ever have its place in political life . . . but there are higher considerations, and when the lower considerations are found to clash with the higher, then I say you ought to make interest give way to principle and morality.[4]

Much of this reflects Dickens's views as presented in the novel, in particular the argument that both sides act upon the same unholy precepts, with workers following the example set by industrialists ('Both sides, however, act upon it') and the emphasis on the need for the Christian virtues of 'justice, love and brotherhood'. For if the widespread use of the strike weapon in the years immediately preceding the writing of the novel forms part of the background to *Hard Times*, the Victorian religious perspective on the industrial world greatly influences Dickens's novel. The Britain he depicts in *Hard Times* is a nation splitting into factions, a society in which men no longer recognise all other men as their fellows. The concept of the brotherhood of man has been lost as the powerful in this society have in effect ceased to recognise ordinary workers as fully human. Instead, conceived of not as individuals but 'generically', they are merely 'the Hands' and are 'a race who would have found more favour with some people, if Providence had seen fit to make them only hands, or, like the lower creatures of the seashore, only hands and stomachs' (I,10) [45]. Once the powerful no longer acknowledge their common humanity with working people, they have little conscience about the suffering their deeds or negligence cause to their fellow human beings; it is vain that miners, themselves, as Stephen points out, 'fathers,

3. *Preston Guardian*, 4 Feb. 1854.
4. *Ibid.*

sons, brothers, dear to thousands an' thousands, an' keeping 'em fro' want and hunger' have in vain

> pray'n and pray'n the lawmakers for Christ's sake not to let their work be murder to 'em, but to spare 'em for th' wives and children that they loves as well as gentlefok loves theirs (III,6).

Without a sense of identification with the workers and lacking a sense of their Christian obligation to them, the industrialists appear undisturbed by the deaths of such as Rachael's sister whose demise 'young and misshapen' was 'awlung o' sickly air as had'n no need to be' (III,6). It is, of course, this trend that Stephen Blackpool is deploring when he describes what he pathetically expresses as a lack of 'drawin nigh to fok' which is accompanied by

> rating 'em as so much Power, and reg'latin' 'em as if they was figures in a soom, or machines: wi'out loves and likens, wi'out memories and inclinations, wi'out souls to weary and souls to hope—when aw goes quiet, draggin on wi' 'em as if they'd nowt o' th' kind, and when aw goes onquiet, reproachin 'em for their want o' sitch humanly feelins in their dealins wi' yo (II,5)

Hence, also, his dying wish 'that aw the world may on'y coom toogether more, an' get a better únnerstan'in o' one another' (III,6).

Against this perspective, unions, far from providing a cure for society's ills, are merely another symptom of the disease. In an article published in 1851 on 'Railway Strikes[5] it was precisely the tendency to factionalism—to identifying only with a sector of the community, rather than with all one's fellow men—that made Dickens deplore the railmen's strike, even though he had 'friendly feelings' towards the railmen. He there emphasised the interlocking nature of the work of all the people who had contributed to the establishment of the railway, and then bade them not to identify only with their fellow railwaymen, and thus feel it their duty to show solidarity with them, but to give regard to a much wider constituency of their fellow citizens. Each should think, Dickens wrote, of 'my duty to the public' and 'my duty to my fellow workmen of all denominations: not only here, upon this Railway, but all over England'. His fictional mouthpiece among the railwaymen sums up the issue:

> I leave you to judge how it serves the workman's case, at such a time, to show a small body of his order, combined, in a misuse of power, against the whole community!

To identify oneself with only one restricted group is to deny the brotherhood of all men; and as such, it is unchristian. The world of *Hard Times* is one in which Christianity and Christian values count for little:

5. *Household Words*, 2, 11 Jan. 1851.

the Good Samaritan is 'a bad Economist' (II,12); right-headed people like Sissy are scorned for thinking that the first principle of political economy, as of everything in the human sphere, is 'To do unto others as I would that they should do unto me'. (I,9); only at the very end does Mr Gradgrind come to make 'his facts and figures subservient to Faith, Hope, and Charity' (III,9).

Unions, in Dickens's view, augment the evil in the industrial world by following, in their proceedings, the agenda set by the masters.[6] If the masters do not acknowledge the workers as fellow men, but only as 'hands', the union encourages the workers to regard the masters as enemies, 'the oppressors' that workers are to 'crumble into dust' (I,4). It creates division even among the workers: each man either becomes a unionist or is treated as an outcast, and no longer a brother. The unchristian nature of this is reflected in the rejection of the philosophy and behaviour of the Good Samaritan; as Stephen comments,

> if I was a lyin parisht i' th' road, yo'd feel it right to pass me by, as a forrenner and stranger. (II,4)

Union leaders like Slackbridge speak the language of brotherhood and Christian principles, urging 'my friends and fellow-sufferers, and fellow-workmen, and fellow-men' to fight for 'the God-created glorious rights of Humanity' and 'the holy and eternal privileges of Brotherhood' (II,4)—but they do not adhere to the values embodied in the words. As the case of Stephen and his workmates, in which 'private feeling must yield to the common cause' (II,4), shows, they encourage workers to regard each other not as individuals and fellow men, but as members, or not, of the faction that makes up the union.

A fundamental question Dickens raises in *Hard Times* is whether an industrial society, or, at least, one based on the principles of that he observes around him, is compatible with Christianity; and if those acting on the principles on which this society is founded are in effect being anti-Christian, this in turn raises the question of how a man should face the evil of the world in which he finds himself. At root, it is a matter of either dealing pragmatically with an evil world and making accommodations to it or of making a stand for the principles in which he believes and which he knows to be right. Even in his journalistic pieces, Dickens's position is uncompromising. He insists on an adherence to moral principle no matter what the particular circumstances. 'We dismiss from consideration, the merits of the case' is his starting point in his article about the 1851 railways dispute;[7] in 'On Strike', he is interested in depicting the character of the strike but not in arguing the rights and wrongs of the workers' or the masters' cases:

6. In the novel the formation of a union by the workers is directly following the example of the employers who are, as Bitzer points out, 'united' (II, 1).
7. 'Railway Strikes', *op.cit.*

> Masters right, or men right; masters wrong, or men wrong; both right, or both wrong; there is certain ruin to both in the continuance of or frequent revival of this breach.[8]

It is thus that Dickens can call the strike 'this mistake' even as he praises the operatives as motivated to persist in their strike by 'the good that is in them, and not by the evil'.[9]

The position he adopts reflects his philosophy: refusing to take part in the factionalism of Mr Snapper—'a man *must* either be a friend to the Masters or a friend to the Hands'—he declares himself 'a friend to both'[1] Consistent with this, he rejects as a fallacy that there are real differences between people in different sections of society:

> I doubt the existence at this present time of many faults that are merely class faults. In the main, I am disposed to think that whatever faults you may find to exist, in your own neighbourhood for instance, among the hands, you will find tolerably equal in amount among the masters also, and even among the class above the masters.[2]

Dickens does not pretend that for those immediately involved, it is easy to take such a stance. In the novel Dickens does not shirk, in his presentation of Stephen Blackpool as adopting this position, the difficulties and suffering entailed in it. In a society in which the concept of brotherhood has been debased or rejected, the man who refuses to join one faction or the other in the industrial world, is cast out by, and suffers at the hands of both. The suffering is very real: on the one hand, in the wake of the workers' refusal to speak to Stephen, he finds that he 'had never known before the strength of the want in his heart for the frequent recognition of a nod, a look, a word' and he finds the experience 'appalling' (II,4); on the other hand, Bounderby's displeasure leads to dismissal, which deprives Stephen not only of his livelihood, but also, with the resulting need to leave Coketown, of the company of Rachael. Ultimately, of course, the consequence of his refusal to join the union, is, at the end of a long chain of events, his death. There is indeed a price to be paid for refusing to compromise with the evil of the world.

In 'On Strike', Dickens eventually identifies the 'some little thing wanting in the relations between them [working people] and their employers' as a recognition by all of the humanity of those they are dealing with and a consequent modification of behaviour, with the introduction of 'a little human covering', 'a little human bloom', 'a little human warmth' to transform the 'skeleton' of political economy[3] It is

8. 'On Strike', *op.cit.*
9. *Ibid.*
1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*

this, rather than what Stephen Blackpool calls 'Vict'ry and triumph' (II,5) by either side, that will set society on a better foundation.

Viewed from this perspective, Dickens's view of unions, if still controversial, can be seen to be more than merely naive or ill-informed. And as an historical perspective can be used to criticise Dickens's stance over unions, it can be used as well to vindicate it, as witness all those industrial disputes in which class conflict has formed a text or unacknowledged sub-text to the actions of employers and employed. If unions have been responsible for much in the improvement in the lot of workers, it has inevitably been at the price of contributing to the fragmentation of British society, particularly along class lines.

Hard Times, then, seems to have been influenced in a relatively marginal way by Dickens's stay in Preston. He may have derived some of the religious ideas in the novel from his visit. The union figures he observed in Preston—the firebrand, the more restrained chairman—are recreated in the novel. The character of the meeting has been changed, however, from one dominated by 'quietness and order' in real life to one dominated by the rabble-rousing rhetoric of a professional agitator in the novel. Partly this is to be explained by Dickens's stance, for reasons already explained, of remaining neutral, the unsympathetic master, Bounderby, is balanced by the unsympathetic workers' leader, Slackbridge. But it is also perhaps to be explained by reference to the difference between journalism and fiction. In his journalism, derived directly from real life, Dickens makes some acknowledgement that unions may serve in the immediate term a valid purpose—'The fact of their being able to combine may, I can easily conceive, be a protection to them'[4] and that the strikers are sincere. Fiction, on the other hand, is no place in which to make compromises, but to argue what the writer thinks is right. It is a place for vision and analysis; and in the process of conveying his vision of a society in the very throes of being riven into fragments, Dickens looks not to the short-term but argues rather for the fundamental reform of society on the basis of principles which will, he thinks, ensure its long-term health and happiness.

4. *Ibid.*

Education

J. M. M'CULLOCH

Preface to *A Series of Lessons*†

Till within the last few years, the system of Education which prevailed in the majority of our initiatory schools was in the highest degree artificial. The qualification most highly valued in a Teacher was a practical acquaintance with some popular theory of Elocution; and the chief, and, in some instances, the sole end aimed at in Teaching, seems to have been—to burden the memory of the pupil with "Rules" and "Extracts" utterly unsuited to his capacity. No one who has escaped the misfortune of toiling through the works of the fashionable Teachers of the last generation,—their "Speakers," "Rhetorical Readers," "Pronouncing Vocabularies," &c.—can form any conception of the ingenuity that has been expended in rearing up barriers in the Scholar's way to the temple of learning.— But a better order of times has now dawned; and the increased demand which has arisen, within the last few years, for Class-books compiled on more simple and natural principles, seems to justify the hope,—that the artificial system is on the wane,—that the success of the experiments recently made in such admirable institutions as the Edinburgh Sessional School, Circus-Place School, &c. is beginning to be admitted,—and that the time is nearly gone by, when children of seven and eight years of age are to be compelled to waste their time and their faculties on such preposterous and unsuitable exercises as enacting dramatic scenes, reciting parliamentary speeches, and reading the latest

† One of the most popular writers of textbooks in Dickens' lifetime was J. M. M'Culloch, whose *A Series of Lessons in Prose and Verse* went through fifty printings after its first appearance in 1831. M'Culloch (1801–1883) is described on the title page of his text as having been "formerly Head-Master of Circus-Place School, Edinburgh," and it is tempting to speculate whether such a title page might, by association, have inspired the creation not only of M'Choakumchild but of Mr. Sleary of the circus.

Being a clergyman as well as a school-master, M'Culloch was the author of some volumes of sermons and also a manual of devotion for schools, *Pietas Juvenilis*, but his fame rested primarily on the success of his textbooks, in particular, *A Series of Lessons*. In his revised "Preface" to the thirty-seventh reprinting of this work, M'Culloch pointedly restated the principle on which his success was based: that the readings he had selected were designed to "enrich the mind with the knowledge of useful and interesting facts."

sentimental poetry. The change of system is the more deserving of gratulation, as it is as decidedly favorable to the morals as it is to the mental culture of our youth. It is truly deplorable to think of the amount of bad morality and false religion that must have been disseminated among the youth of this country, through the medium of school-books which were mainly compiled from such writers as Shakespeare, Chesterfield, and Hume.

The following little Work has been compiled in adaptation to the Improved System of Teaching, and belongs to the same class of books with the "Lessons for Schools" of Dr. Thomson, the Edinburgh Sessional School Books, and the Author's "Course of Elementary Reading"—to which last it is meant to be introductory. Being intended for schools, where the Teacher makes it his business to instruct his Pupils in the *meaning* of what is read, as well as in the "art of reading," it has been compiled on the principle of admitting only such lessons as appeared well adapted to stimulate juvenile curiosity, and store the mind with useful knowledge. Simple extracts, relating to Natural History, Elementary Science, Religion, &c. have taken the place of Dramatic Scenes, Sentimental Poetry, and Parliamentary Orations. And while only such pieces have been admitted as seemed likely to form and interest the youthful mind, care has been taken so to abridge and otherwise alter them, as to adapt their style as well as their sentiments to the juvenile capacity.

* * *

CHARLES DICKENS

[A Conference of Statisticians]†

"MR. SLUG stated to the section the result of some calculations he had made with great difficulty and labour, regarding the state of infant education among the middle classes of London. He found that, within a circle of three miles from the Elephant and Castle, the following were the names and numbers of children's books principally in circulation:—

"Jack the Giant-killer	7,943
Ditto and Bean-stalk	8,621
Ditto and Eleven Brothers	2,845
Ditto and Jill	1,998
Total	21,407

† From *Full Report of the First Meeting of the Mudfog Association*, 1837. Among Dickens' earliest writings is a series of satirical sketches portraying events in the town of Mudfog. The following, from his account of a conference of statisticians in Mudfog, features a report by Mr. Slug, "so celebrated for his statistical researches."

"He found that the proportion of Robinson Crusoes to Philip Quarlls was as four and a half to one. * * * The ignorance that prevailed, was lamentable. One child, * * * a little boy of eight years old, was found to be firmly impressed with a belief in the existence of dragons, and openly stated that it was his intention when he grew up, to rush forth sword in hand for the deliverance of captive princesses, and the promiscuous slaughter of giants. Not one child among the number interrogated had ever heard of Mungo Park,—some inquiring whether he was at all connected with the black man that swept the crossing; and others whether he was in any way related to the Regent's Park. They had not the slightest conception of the commonest principles of mathematics, and considered Sinbad the Sailor the most enterprising voyager that the world had ever produced.

"A Member strongly deprecating the use of all the other books mentioned, suggested that Jack and Jill might perhaps be exempted from the general censure, inasmuch as the hero and heroine, in the very outset of the tale, were depicted as going *up* a hill to fetch a pail of water, which was a laborious and useful occupation,—supposing the family linen was being washed, for instance.

"MR. SLUG feared that the moral effect of this passage was more than counterbalanced by another in a subsequent part of the poem, in which very gross allusion was made to the mode in which the heroine was personally chastised by her mother

" 'For laughing at Jack's disaster;'

besides, the whole work had this one great fault, *it was not true*.

"THE PRESIDENT complimented the honourable member on the excellent distinction he had drawn. Several other Members, too, dwelt upon the immense and urgent necessity of storing the minds of children with nothing but facts and figures; which process the President very forcibly remarked, had made them (the section) the men they were."

* * *

[Joe Whelks and Education]†

As one half of the world is said not to know how the other half lives, so it may be affirmed that the upper half of the world neither knows nor greatly cares how the lower half amuses itself. Believing that it does not care, mainly because it does not know, we purpose occasionally recording a few facts on this subject.

† From "The Amusements of the People," in *Household Words*, March 30 and April 30, 1850. Joe Whelks is the name of a person invented by Dickens to be representative of a working-class Cockney living in "New Cut," a street in London.

The general character of the lower class of dramatic amusements is a very significant sign of a people, and a very good test of their intellectual condition. We design to make our readers acquainted in the first place with a few of our experiences under this head in the metropolis.

It is probable that nothing will ever root out from among the common people an innate love they have for dramatic entertainment in some form or other. It would be a very doubtful benefit to society, we think, if it could be rooted out. The Polytechnic Institution in Regent Street, where an infinite variety of ingenious models are exhibited and explained, and where lectures comprising a quantity of useful information on many practical subjects are delivered, is a great public benefit and a wonderful place, but we think a people formed *entirely* in their hours of leisure by Polytechnic Institutions would be an uncomfortable community. We would rather not have to appeal to the generous sympathies of a man of five-and-twenty, in respect of some affliction of which he had had no personal experience, who had passed all his holidays, when a boy, among cranks and cog-wheels. We should be more disposed to trust him if he had been brought into occasional contact with a Maid and a Magpie; if he had made one or two diversions into the Forest of Bondy; or had even gone the length of a Christmas Pantomime. There is a range of imagination in most of us, which no amount of steam-engines will satisfy; and which The-great-exhibition-of-the-works-of-industry-of-all-nations, itself, will probably leave unappeased. The lower we go, the more natural it is that the best-relished provision for this should be found in dramatic entertainments; as at once the most obvious, the least troublesome, and the most real, of all escapes out of the literal world. Joe Whelks, of the New Cut, Lambeth, is not much of a reader, has no great store of books, no very commodious room to read in, no very decided inclination to read, and no power at all of presenting vividly before his mind's eye what he reads about. But put Joe in the gallery of the Victoria Theatre; show him doors and windows in the scene that will open and shut, and that people can get in and out of; tell him a story with these aids, and by the help of live men and women dressed up, confiding to him their innermost secrets, in voices audible half a mile off; and Joe will unravel a story through all its entanglements, and sit there as long after midnight as you have anything left to show him. Accordingly, the Theatres to which Mr. Whelks resorts, are always full; and whatever changes of fashion the drama knows elsewhere, it is always fashionable in the New Cut.

The question, then, might not unnaturally arise, one would suppose, whether Mr. Whelks's education is at all susceptible of improvement, through the agency of his theatrical tastes. How far it is improved at present, our readers shall judge for themselves.

In affording them the means of doing so, we wish to disclaim any grave imputation on those who are concerned in ministering to the dra-

matic gratification of Mr. Whelks. Heavily taxed, wholly unassisted by the State, deserted by the gentry, and quite unrecognised as a means of public instruction, the higher English Drama has declined. Those who would live to please Mr. Whelks, must please Mr. Whelks to live. It is not the Manager's province to hold the Mirror up to Nature, but to Mr. Whelks—the only person who acknowledges him. If, in like manner, the actor's nature, like the dyer's hand, becomes subdued to what he works in, the actor can hardly be blamed for it. He grinds hard at his vocation, is often steeped in direful poverty, and lives, at the best, in a little world of mockeries. It is bad enough to give away a great estate six nights a-week, and want a shilling; to preside at imaginary banquets, hungry for a mutton chop; to smack the lips over a tankard of toast and water, and declaim about the mellow produce of the sunny vineyard on the banks of the Rhine; to be a rattling young lover, with the measles at home; and to paint sorrow over, with burnt cork and rouge; without being called upon to despise his vocation too. If he can utter the trash to which he is condemned, with any relish, so much the better for him, Heaven knows; and peace be with him!

A few weeks ago, we went to one of Mr. Whelks's favourite Theatres, to see an attractive Melo-Drama called *May Morning*, or *The Mystery of 1715, and the Murder!* We had an idea that the former of these titles might refer to the month in which either the mystery or the murder happened; but we found it to be the name of the heroine, the pride of Keswick Vale; who was "called May Morning" (after a common custom among the English Peasantry) "from her bright eyes and merry laugh." Of this young lady, it may be observed, in passing, that she subsequently sustained every possible calamity of human existence, in a white muslin gown with blue tucks; and that she did every conceivable and inconceivable thing with a pistol, that could anyhow be effected by that description of fire-arms.

The Theatre was extremely full. The prices of admission were, to the boxes, a shilling; to the pit, sixpence, to the gallery, threepence. The gallery was of enormous dimensions (among the company, in the front row, we observed Mr. Whelks); and overflowing with occupants. It required no close observation of the attentive faces, rising one above another, to the very door in the roof, and squeezed and jammed in, regardless of all discomforts, even there, to impress a stranger with a sense of its being highly desirable to lose no possible chance of effecting any mental improvement in that great audience.

The company in the pit were not very clean or sweet-savoured, but there were some good-humoured young mechanics among them, with their wives. These were generally accompanied by "the baby," insomuch that the pit was a perfect nursery. No effect made on the stage was so curious, as the looking down on the quiet faces of these babies fast asleep,

after looking up at the staring sea of heads in the gallery. There were a good many cold fried soles in the pit, besides; and a variety of flat stone bottles, of all portable sizes.

The audience in the boxes was of much the same character (babies and fish excepted) as the audience in the pit. A private in the Foot Guards sat in the next box; and a personage who wore pins on his coat instead of buttons, and was in such a damp habit of living as to be quite mouldy, was our nearest neighbour. In several parts of the house we noticed some young pickpockets of our acquaintance; but as they were evidently there as private individuals, and not in their public capacity, we were little disturbed by their presence. For we consider the hours of idleness passed by this class of society as so much gain to society at large; and we do not join in a whimsical sort of lamentation that is generally made over them, when they are found to be unoccupied.

* * *

We will add that we believe these people have a right to be amused. A great deal that we consider to be unreasonable, is written and talked about not licensing these places of entertainment. We have already intimated that we believe a love of dramatic representations to be an inherent principle in human nature. In most conditions of human life of which we have any knowledge, from the Greeks to the Bosjesmen, some form of dramatic representation has always obtained. We have a vast respect for county magistrates, and for the Lord Chamberlain; but we render greater deference to such extensive and immutable experience, and think it will outlive the whole existing court and commission. We would assuredly not bear harder on the fourpenny theatre, than on the four shilling theatre, or the four guinea theatre; but we would decidedly interpose to turn to some wholesome account the means of instruction which it has at command, and we would make that office of Dramatic Licenser, which, like many other offices, has become a mere piece of Court favour and dandy conventionality, a real, responsible, educational trust. We would have it exercise a sound supervision over the lower drama, instead of stopping the career of a real work of art, as it did in the case of Mr. Chorley's play at the Surrey Theatre, but a few weeks since, for a sickly point of form.

* * *

Ten thousand people, every week, all the year round, are estimated to attend this place of amusement. If it were closed to-morrow—if there were fifty such, and they were all closed to-morrow—the only result would be to cause that to be privately and evasively done, which is now publicly done; to render the harm of it much greater, and to exhibit the suppressive power of the law in an oppressive and partial light. The

people who now resort here, *will be* amused somewhere. It is of no use to blink that fact, or to make pretences to the contrary. We had far better apply ourselves to improving the character of their amusement. It would not be exacting much, or exacting anything very difficult, to require that the pieces represented in these Theatres should have, at least, a good, plain, healthy purpose in them.

* * *

JANE SINNETT

[Dickens as a Critic of Education]†

"Hard Times" decidedly reads better in a volume than it did in detached chapters; we can hasten over those parts which are painful to dwell upon towards those of more pleasing interest.

When it was announced, amid the strikes and consequent derangements of commerce, that Mr. Dickens was about to write a tale in "Household Words" to be called "Hard Times," the general attention was instantly arrested. It was imagined the main topic of the story would be drawn from the fearful struggle which was being then enacted in the north, in which loss of money on the one side and the pangs of hunger on the other, were the weapons at command. The inner life of those great movements would, it was thought, be exhibited, and we should see the results of the wrongs and the delusions of the workman, and the alternations of hope and fear which must from day to day have agitated him at the various crises of the conflict, delineated in many a moving scene. Mr. Dickens—if any one—it was considered, could be intrusted with this delicate task, and would give us a true idea of the relations of master and workman, both as they are and as they might be. Some of this is done in the book now before us, only this purpose is subordinated and made incidental to another, which is to exhibit the evil effects of an exclusive education of the intellect, without a due cultivation of the finer feelings of the heart and the fancy. We suppose it is in anticipation of some change of the present educational system for one that shall attempt to kill "outright the robber Fancy," that Mr. Dickens launches forth his protest, for we are not aware of such a system being in operation anywhere in England. On the contrary, it is the opinion of various continental professors, very competent to form a judgment on this subject, that more play is given to the imagination and will by the English system of instruction than by any other. If we look to our public schools and

† From a review of *Hard Times*, by Jane Sinnett, published anonymously in *The Westminster Review*, October 1854.

universities, we find great part, too great part, we think, of the period of youth and adolescence devoted to the study of the mythology, literature, and history of the most poetic people of all time. The "gorgeous Tragedies" of Athens,

> "Presenting Thebes' or Pelops' line.
> Or the tale of Troy divine,"

under the name of Greek Play, have produced no slight consumption of birch-rod in this country. In almost every school in the kingdom, passages of our finest poets are learned by heart; and Shakespeare and Walter Scott are among the Penates of every decent family. If there are Gradgrind schools, they are not sufficiently numerous to be generally known. Now, at the very commencement of "Hard Times," we find ourselves introduced to a set of hard uncouth personages, of whose existence as a class no one is aware, who are engaged in cutting and paring young souls after their own ugly pattern, and refusing them all other nourishment but facts and figures. The unpleasant impression caused by being thus suddenly introduced into this cold and uncongenial atmosphere, is never effaced by the subsequent charm of narrative and well-painted characters of the tale. One can have no more pleasure in being present at this compression and disfigurement than in witnessing the application of the boot—nor in following these poor souls, thus intellectually halt and maimed, through life, than in seeing Chinese ladies hobbling through a race. It is not then with the truth Mr. Dickens wishes to enforce, but with the manner in which it is enforced, that we find fault. It was possible to have done this in a less forbidding form, with actors whom we should have recognised as more natural and less repulsive than the Gradgrinds, Bounderbys, and Crakemchilds; to have placed in contrast persons educated after an ordinary and *practicable* plan, and persons of higher aesthetic training; but, at the same time, the task would have required a deeper acquaintance with human nature. The most successful characters in "Hard Times," as is usual with Mr. Dickens, are those which are the *simplest* and least cultivated. Stephen Blackpool, Rachel and Sissy, Mr. Thleary of the 'horth-riding,' and his single-hearted troupe, all act and talk with such simplicity of heart and nobleness of mind, that their appearance on the stage is a most welcome relief from the Gradgrinds, Bounderbys, Sparsits, &c., who are all odd characters portrayed in a quaint style; and we regret that more of the story is not devoted to objects who are so much more within Mr. Dickens's power of representation.

CHARLES DARWIN

[Atrophy of Imagination in a Scientist]†

* * * I have said that in one respect my mind has changed during the last twenty or thirty years. Up to the age of thirty, or beyond it, poetry of many kinds, such as the works of Milton, Gray, Byron, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley, gave me great pleasure, and even as a schoolboy I took intense delight in Shakespeare, especially in the historical plays. I have also said that formerly pictures gave me considerable, and music very great delight. But now for many years I cannot endure to read a line of poetry: I have tried lately to read Shakespeare, and found it so intolerably dull that it nauseated me. I have also almost lost any taste for pictures or music.—Music generally sets me thinking too energetically on what I have been at work on, instead of giving me pleasure. * * *

This curious and lamentable loss of the higher aesthetic tastes is all the odder, as books on history, biographies and travels (independently of any scientific facts which they may contain), and essays on all sorts of subjects interest me as much as ever they did. My mind seems to have become a kind of machine for grinding general laws out of large collections of facts, but why this should have caused the atrophy of that part of the brain alone, on which the higher tastes depend, I cannot conceive. A man with a mind more highly organised or better constituted than mine, would not I suppose have thus suffered; and if I had to live my life again I would have made a rule to read some poetry and listen to some music at least once every week; for perhaps the parts of my brain now atrophied could thus have been kept active through use. The loss of these tastes is a loss of happiness, and may possibly be injurious to the intellect, and more probably to the moral character, by enfeebling the emotional part of our nature.

* * *

PHILIP COLLINS

[Horses, Flowers, and the Department of Practical Art]‡

* * * Mr Gradgrind having elicited the correct definition of a horse, his companion (the Government gentleman) takes over, and asks the

† From *The Autobiography of Charles Darwin* (1876, 1958), pp. 138–39.

‡ From Philip Collins, *Dickens and Education* (New York, 1963) © 1963 by St. Martin's Press. Pp. 156, 157–158, 159. Reprinted by permission of St. Martin's Press, Inc., The Macmillan Company of Canada, Ltd., & Macmillan & Co. Ltd., London.

children whether they would paper a room with representations of horses. * * *

The Government gentleman never appears nor is mentioned again, and he has a curious genesis, as has been neatly demonstrated by Dr K. J. Fielding, to whom I owe most of what follows.[1] One of his clues is Dickens's manuscript Number-plan for this chapter. 'Marlborough House Doctrine', it reads. '*Cole.*'

Marlborough House was the headquarters of the Department of Practical Art, set up in 1852 to promote the study of industrial design for textiles, pottery, and other consumer goods. Henry Cole, one of the moving spirits behind the 1851 Exhibition, was appointed General Superintendent. In lectures and pamphlets, Cole and his colleagues argued against the excessive and inappropriate representational decoration on many such products; one of the passages Dr Fielding quotes is, indeed, an attack on wallpapers consisting of 'repetitions of the same subject, men and horses standing on each other's heads', and on carpets vivid with 'flowers and tropical plants' upon which 'the feet would fear to tread'. The Department recommended conventional designs for such purposes, and the avoidance of 'superfluous and useless ornament'. *Household Words* had already attacked this artistic policy, and now Dickens took the opportunity to join in. There are several odd features about this episode in *Hard Times*. Firstly, the object of Dickens's satire seems to have gone unnoticed by readers and reviewers at the time, except Cole himself, between whom and Dickens there passed a friendly exchange of letters. (This is not the only example of his using a novel for what was virtually a private joke.) Secondly, Marlborough House had no connection with ordinary schools, and it was entirely unlikely that one of its staff would be thus addressing the Coketown school-children, or that they would be having lessons on Taste at all. (The lessons on Statistics and Political Economy were almost as improbable.) Thirdly, Dickens misunderstood the idea he was satirising. Cole and his colleagues were not utilitarian killjoys: they were protesting against the horrible vulgarities of mid-Victorian decoration. Cole himself was, in fact, a great advocate of colour and fancy: as editor of the *Home Treasury*, under the affable pseudonym of Felix Summerly, he championed fairy-stories and other imaginative reading for children, against a colleague who stood for the factual type of children's book.[2]

Dr Fielding considers the episode a flaw in the ideas and action of

1. K. J. Fielding, "Charles Dickens and the Department of Practical Art," *Modern Language Review*, XLVIII (1953), 91.
2. Cornelia Meigs, ed., *A Critical History of Children's Literature in English*, New York (1953), pp. 206, 271.

the novel. 'The satire was at once too pointed to have a proper general significance, and not sufficiently obvious to be directly effective; it either shows a complete misunderstanding of the issues involved, or it was a calculated misrepresentation made for the sake of scoring points on an easy target like a government department.' Very likely, he thinks, Dickens knew what he was doing, but 'probability and consistency were sacrificed to the need for a striking first instalment'. I cannot agree; Dickens was luckier than he deserved. Partly because the object of the satire (or, at least, the impulse behind the scene) went almost unrecognized until a century later, readers were not disturbed by its inadequacy and injustice as a comment on Cole's Department. Though in fact very improbable as an item in a school's work, the catechism on Taste does not seem implausible in its context, particularly in relation to the obviously heightened 'moral fable' style of the novel. Moreover, though distorting the policy of the Department of Practical Art, Dickens made the episode both amusing in itself, and a prime illustration of his theme—the emotional and aesthetic barrenness of the industrial town and of the 'utilitarian' ideas used to justify such an environment and outlook. For though Gradgrind's preoccupation with Hard Facts should not be equated with the Utilitarianism of John Stuart Mill or his father, Gradgrind and his coadjutors do represent, in a form simplified and heightened after the Dickensian fashion, important impulses in the life and in the schooling of the period, which masqueraded as 'utilitarian' and which were indeed derived from a crude half-knowledge of Benthamite ideas. (Dickens's intention is clear enough, when he makes Gradgrind name his younger sons after two of the elders of the tribe, Adam Smith and Malthus.)[3]

The horses and flowers introduced in this episode recur frequently in the novel; they are important images in the 'fancy' theme. * * * The horses, of course, belong with Sleary's circus, the antithesis of Gradgrindery; suitably enough, the sneak Bitzer is kept at bay in the final episode by a dancing horse. Gradgrind, we are told, 'had tumbled about, annihilating the flowers of existence with greater singleness of purpose than many of the blatant personages whose company he kept,' while his son Tom literally destroys flowers in the notable chapter where, in a state of panic and despair, he sits in the rose-garden, plucking buds and tearing them to pieces. The Government-gentleman episode has, then, a place in the theme and imagery, and, if its reference to the Marlborough House doctrine is inaccurate, it does express a spirit active in some of

3. *Hard Times*, I, iv, 20. Cf. K. J. Fielding, "Mill and Gradgrind," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, XI (1956), 148–51; and Francis Jacox, "Mr. Gradgrind Typically Considered," *Bentley's Miscellany*, LX (1866), 613–20, a collection of passages from nineteenth-century authors, as parallels to *Hard Times*.

the schools of that time and place. In a school in North-West England (the Coketown area) in 1853, the year before *Hard Times*, the managers tore down some drawings which had been pinned on the classroom walls. Such refinements, they said, should only be enjoyed by middle-class children.

Utilitarianism and the Science of Political Economy

Of the three aspects of the Victorian age that Dickens represents most often in *Hard Times*—industrialism, education, and Utilitarianism—the third is much the most difficult to illustrate or describe. Such critics as E. P. Whipple, whose *Atlantic Monthly* article on *Hard Times* is included below, have argued that Dickens did not understand Utilitarianism, and that the "Gradgrind philosophy" misrepresents the philosophical position of Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832), the founder of the Utilitarian school. In defense of Dickens it could be said that even if his understanding of Utilitarian philosophy was incomplete, he nevertheless had a shrewd understanding of the Utilitarian temperament as illustrated by his creation of Mr. Gradgrind. Bentham himself, as he appears in J. S. Mill's portrait of him (included below), has much in common with Dickens' Gradgrind (at least in the first half of the novel).

Also in defense of Dickens it could be argued that the philosophy of Utilitarianism was itself such a complicated one that it is no wonder if the novelist did not understand it. Bentham was primarily a legal reformer, "the great questioner of things established," as J. S. Mill described him. He and his followers were responsible for many of the most important reforms in the nineteenth century, fearlessly investigating traditional procedures in law or government, and, on the basis of statistical evidence, pushing through drastic changes. Theoretically, on the other hand, Bentham and his followers were committed to the economic point of view of Adam Smith, that man is a self-seeking creature who thrives best when no one interferes to regulate his activities. As G. D. Klingopulos writes:

> Utilitarianism itself was full of paradoxes. * * * Though it theoretically favoured *laissez-faire* it, nevertheless, came to stand for efficient centralized administration and a strong civil service. Though in some matters, such as the agitation for cheap bread, the utilitarians were friends of the working man, in others, such as the regulation of conditions in the factories, they were his enemies.[1]

In *Hard Times* (unlike his earlier attacks on Utilitarianism in *Oliver Twist* and *The Chimes*) Dickens is little concerned with the Utilitarians as reform-

1. In *From Dickens to Hardy*, ed. Boris Ford (Penguin Books, 1958) 30–31 [vol. 6 of *The Pelican Guide to English Literature*].

ers. Instead he concentrates on the basic Utilitarian views of human nature and of economic drives, views widely shared in the world of Victorian commerce. Included in the following selections are some more theoretical demonstrations of the values of unrestricted self-help as favored by both the Utilitarians and a larger group of Victorian economists. Typical of such writers was John Ramsey McCulloch, (1789–1864), a statistician and at one time a professor of political economy at the University of London, whose popular and influential books (such as his *Principles of Political Economy*) summed up the economic theories of Adam Smith, Malthus, and Ricardo—theories echoed or caricatured in some of Mr. Bounderby's speeches in *Hard Times*. For this J. R. McCulloch (not to be confused with his fellow countryman, J. M. M'Culloch, the schoolteacher), Dickens seems to have had nothing but scorn. In 1853, to express his dissatisfaction with some articles submitted to *Household Words* that impressed him as dull and lacking in "fancy," Dickens told his assistant-editor that they sounded as if they had been written by McCulloch. Some months later, in his article on the strike at Preston, he wrote of the "forbearance and consideration" that ought to characterize the relations of employers and employed, "something," he added, "which is not to be found in Mr. McCulloch's dictionary" (an allusion to McCulloch's *Dictionary, Practical, Theoretical, and Historical of Commerce*, originally published in 1832). And in 1855 Dickens once more aired his dislike of these *laissez-faire* economic principles. Of McCulloch's activities on a committee, he wrote to his friend, John Forster:

> O what a fine aspect of political economy it is, that the noble professors of the science on the adulteration committee should have tried to make Adulteration a question of Supply and Demand! We shall never get to the Millennium, sir, by the rounds of that ladder; and I, for one won't hold by the skirts of that Great Mogul of impostors, Master McCulloch!

JOHN STUART MILL

[The Mind and Character of Jeremy Bentham]†

Bentham's contempt, then, of all other schools of thinkers; his determination to create a philosophy wholly out of the materials furnished by his own mind, and by minds like his own; was his first disqualification as a philosopher. His second, was the incompleteness of his own mind as a representative of universal human nature. In many of the most natural and strongest feelings of human nature he had no sympathy; from many of its graver experiences he was altogether cut off; and the faculty

† From *The Westminster Review* (1838).

by which one mind understands a mind different from itself, and throws itself into the feelings of that other mind, was denied him by his deficiency of Imagination.

With Imagination in the popular sense, command of imagery and metaphorical expression, Bentham was, to a certain degree, endowed. For want, indeed, of poetical culture, the images with which his fancy supplied him were seldom beautiful, but they were quaint and humorous, or bold, forcible, and intense: passages might be quoted from him both of playful irony, and of declamatory eloquence, seldom surpassed in the writings of philosophers. The Imagination which he had not, was that to which the name is generally appropriated by the best writers of the present day; that which enables us, by a voluntary effort, to conceive the absent as if it were present, the imaginary as if it were real, and to clothe it in the feelings which, if it were indeed real, it would bring along with it. This is the power by which one human being enters into the mind and circumstances of another. This power constitutes the poet, in so far as he does anything but melodiously utter his own actual feelings. It constitutes the dramatist entirely. It is one of the constituents of the historian; by it we understand other times; by it Guizot interprets to us the middle ages; Nisard, in his beautiful Studies on the later Latin poets, places us in the Rome of the Cæsars; Michelet disengages the distinctive characters of the different races and generations of mankind from the facts of their history. Without it nobody knows even his own nature, further than circumstances have actually tried it and called it out; nor the nature of his fellow-creatures, beyond such generalizations as he may have been enabled to make from his observation of their outward conduct.

By these limits, accordingly, Bentham's knowledge of human nature is bounded. It is wholly empirical; and the empiricism of one who has had little experience. He had neither internal experience nor external; the quiet, even tenor of his life, and his healthiness of mind, conspired to exclude him from both. He never knew prosperity and adversity, passion nor satiety: he never had even the experiences which sickness gives; he lived from childhood to the age of eighty-five in boyish health. He knew no dejection, no heaviness of heart. He never felt life a sore and a weary ,burthen. He was a boy to the last. Self-consciousness, that dæmon of the men of genius of our time, from Wordsworth to Byron, from Goethe to Chateaubriand, and to which this age owes so much both of its cheerful and its mournful wisdom, never was awakened in him. How much of human nature slumbered in him he knew not, neither can we know. He had never been made alive to the unseen influences which were acting on himself, nor consequently on his fellow-creatures. Other ages and other nations were a blank to him for purposes of instruction. He measured them but by one standard; their

knowledge of facts, and their capability to take correct views of utility, and merge all other objects in it. His own lot was cast in a generation of the leanest and barrenest men whom England had yet produced, and he was an old man when a better race came in with the present century. He saw accordingly in man little but what the vulgarest eye can see; recognised no diversities of character but such as he who runs may read. Knowing so little of human feelings, he knew still less of the influences by which those feelings are formed: all the more subtle workings both of the mind upon itself, and of external things upon the mind, escaped him; and no one, probably, who, in a highly instructed age, ever attempted to give a rule to all human conduct, set out with a more limited conception either of the agencies by which human conduct *is*, or of those by which it *should* be, influenced.

This, then, is our idea of Bentham. He was a man both of remarkable endowments for philosophy, and of remarkable deficiencies for it: fitted, beyond almost any man, for drawing from his premises, conclusions not only correct, but sufficiently precise and specific to be practical: but whose general conception of human nature and life, furnished him with an unusually slender stock of premises. It is obvious what would be likely to be achieved by such a man; what a thinker, thus gifted and thus disqualified, could do in philosophy. He could, with close and accurate logic, hunt half-truths to their consequences and practical applications, on a scale both of greatness and of minuteness not previously exemplified; and this is the character which posterity will probably assign to Bentham.

* * *

J. R. McCULLOCH

[On Adam Smith and Laissez-Faire]†

At length, in 1776, our illustrious countryman, Adam Smith,[1] published the "Wealth of Nations"—a work which has done for Political Economy what the Essay of Locke did for the philosophy of mind. In this work the science was, for the first time, treated in its fullest extent; and the fundamental principles on which the *production* of wealth depends, established beyond the reach of cavil and dispute. In opposition to the *Economists*, Dr. Smith has shewn that *labour* is the only source of wealth, and that the wish to augment our fortunes and to rise in the world—a

† From *The Principles of Political Economy* (1830).
1. See p. 20, n. 6.

wish that comes with us from the womb, and never leaves us till we go into the grave—is the cause of wealth being saved and accumulated: he has shewn that labour is productive of wealth when employed in manufactures and commerce, as well as when it is employed in the cultivation of the land; he has traced the various means by which labour may be rendered most effective; and has given a most admirable analysis and exposition of the prodigious addition made to its powers by its *division* among different individuals and countries, and by the employment of accumulated wealth, or *capital*, in industrious undertakings. He has also shewn, in opposition to the commonly received opinions of the merchants, politicians, and statesmen of his time, that wealth does not consist in the abundance of gold and silver, but in the abundance of the various necessaries, conveniences, and enjoyments of human life; that it is in every case sound policy to leave individuals to pursue their own interest in their own way; that, in prosecuting branches of industry advantageous to themselves, they necessarily prosecute such as are, at the same time, advantageous to the public; and that every regulation intended to force industry into particular channels, or to determine the species of commercial intercourse to be carried on between different parts of the same country, or between distant and independent countries, is impolitic and pernicious—injurious to the rights of individuals—and adverse to the progress of *real* opulence and lasting prosperity.

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[Malthus and Population]†

Mr. Malthus[1] was probably the first who conclusively showed that, speaking generally, the tendency of population is not merely to keep on a level with the means of subsistence, but to exceed them; and the object of his "Essay on the Principles of Population," is to illustrate this principle, by pointing out the pernicious consequences resulting from a redundant population, improvident unions, and the bringing of human beings into the world without being able to provide for their subsistence and education. And instead of this doctrine being, as has been often stated, unfavourable to human happiness, a material change for the better would undoubtedly be effected in the condition of society, were its justice generally acknowledged, and a vigorous effort made to give it a practical bearing and real influence. It is evident, on the least reflection, that poverty is the source of the greater portion of the ills which afflict human-

† From *A Treatise on the Rate of Wages and the Condition of the Labouring Classes* (1826, rev. ed. 1854).

1. See p. 20, n. 6.

ity; and there can be no manner of doubt, that a too great increase of population, by occasioning a redundant supply of labour, an excessive competition for employment, and low wages, is the most efficient cause of poverty. It is now too late to contend that a crowded population is a sure symptom of national prosperity. The population of the United States is not nearly so dense as that of Ireland; but will any one say that they are less flourishing and happy? The truth is, that the prosperity of a nation depends but little on the number of its inhabitants, but much on their industry, their intelligence, and their command over necessaries and conveniences. The earth affords room only, with the existing means of production, for a certain number of human beings to be trained to any degree of perfection. And "every real philanthropist would rather witness the existence of a thousand such beings, than that of a million of millions of creatures, pressing against the limits of subsistence, burdensome to themselves, and contemptible to each other." Wherever the labouring classes continue to increase more rapidly than the fund which has to support and employ them, their wages are gradually reduced till they reach the lowest possible limit. When placed under such unfortunate circumstances, they are cut off from all expectation of rising in the world, or of improving their condition. Their exertions are neither inspired by hope nor by ambition. Unable to save, or to acquire a stake in society, they have no inducement to make any unusual exertions. They consequently become indolent and dispirited; and, if not pressed by hunger would be always idle.

It is thus apparent that the ratio which the progress of capital bears to the progress of population, is the pivot on which the comfort and well-being of the great bulk of society must always turn. If capital, as compared with population, be increased, the population will be better provided for; if it continue the same, the condition of the population will undergo no change; and if it be diminished, that condition will be changed for the worse.

The principles thus briefly elucidated render it apparent, on a little reflection, that the condition of the bulk of every people must usually depend much more on their own conduct than on that of their rulers. Not that we mean to insinuate that the influence of governments over their subjects is not great and powerful, or that the latter should not be governed in the best possible manner. A people who have the misfortune to be subjected to arbitrary and intolerant rulers, though otherwise possessed of all the powers and capacities necessary for the production of wealth, will, from the want of security and freedom, be most probably sunk in poverty and wretchedness. But wherever property is secure, industry free, and the public burdens moderate, the happiness or misery of the labouring classes depends almost wholly on themselves. Government has there done for them all that it should, and all in truth that it

can do. It has given them security and freedom. But the use or abuse of these inestimable advantages is their own affair. They may be either provident or improvident, industrious or idle; and being free to choose, they are alone responsible for the consequences of their choice. * * *

What others can do for them is, in truth, but as the small dust of the balance compared with what they may do for themselves. The situation of most men not born to affluence, is always in great measure dependent on their own exertions. And this is most especially true of the labouring classes, the great majority of whom can owe nothing to patronage or favour. Industry, frugality, and forethought, are their only friends. But, happily, they are all-powerful. And how unpromising soever their situation, those who avail themselves of their willing assistance, are never disappointed, but secure in the end their own comfort and that of their families. Those, on the contrary, who neglect their aid, though otherwise placed under the most favourable circumstances, inevitably sink into a state of misery. The contrast between a well cultivated field and one that is neglected and overrun with thorns and brambles, is not greater than the contrast between the condition of the diligent and slothful, the careful and the wasteful labourers. The cottages of the former are clean, neat, and comfortable, their children well clothed and well instructed; whereas the cottages of the latter are slatternly and uncomfortable, being often little better than pig-styes, and their children in rags and ignorant. No increase of wages can be of any permanent advantage to the one class, while the smallest increase conduces to the well-being of the other.

[Useful Education for the Working Classes]†

Of all the means of providing for the permanent improvement of the poor hitherto suggested, few, if any, seem to promise to be so effectual as the establishment of a really useful system of public education. Much of the misery and crime which afflict and disgrace society have their sources in ignorance—in the ignorance of the poor with respect to the circumstances which really determine their condition. Those who have laboured to promote their education seem, generally speaking, to be satisfied, provided they succeed in making them able to read and write. But the education which stops at this point omits those parts that are really the most important. A knowledge of the arts of reading, writing, and arithmetic may, and indeed very often does, exist in company with an all but entire ignorance of those principles with respect to which it is most for the interest of the poor themselves, as well as the other portions of the community, that they should be well informed. To render education productive of all the utility that may be derived from it, the

† *Op. cit.*

poor should, in addition to the elementary instruction now communicated to them, be made acquainted with the duties enjoined by religion and morality; and with the circumstances which occasion that gradation of ranks and inequality of fortunes which are of the essence of society. And they should be impressed, from their earliest years, with a conviction of the important truth, which it has been the main object of this work to establish and illustrate, that they are in great measure the arbiters of their own fortune—that what others can do for them is but trifling compared with what they can do for themselves—and that the most liberal government, and the best institutions, cannot shield them from poverty and misery, without the exercise of a reasonable degree of forethought and good conduct on their part. It is a proverbial expression, that man is the creature of habit; and no education can be good for much in which the peculiar and powerful influence of different habits and modes of acting over the happiness and comfort of individuals is not traced and exhibited in the clearest light, and which does not show how those productive of advantage may be most easily acquired, and those having a contrary effect most easily guarded against. The grand object in educating the lower classes should be to teach them to regulate their conduct with a view to their well-being, whatever may be their employments. The acquisition of scientific information, or even of the arts of reading or writing, though of the greatest importance, is subordinate and inferior to an acquaintance with the great art of "living well;" that is, of living so as to secure the greatest amount of comfort and respectability to individuals, under whatever circumstances they may be placed. That the ultimate effect of an education of this sort would be most advantageous, there can be little doubt. Neither the errors nor the vices of the poor are incurable. They investigate the practical questions which affect their immediate interests with the greatest sagacity and penetration, and do not fail to trace their remote consequences. And if education were made to embrace objects of real utility—if it were made a means of instructing the poor with respect to the circumstances which elevate and depress the rate of wages, and which improve and deteriorate their individual condition, the presumption is, that numbers would endeavour to profit by it. The harvest of good education may be late, but in the end it can hardly fail to be luxuriant. And it will amply reward the efforts of those who are not discouraged, in their attempts to make it embrace such objects as we have specified, by the difficulties they may expect to encounter at the commencement, and during the progress of their labours.

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THOMAS CARLYLE

[The Condition of the Working Class]†

A feeling very generally exists that the condition and disposition of the Working Classes is a rather ominous matter at present; that something ought to be said, something ought to be done, in regard to it. And surely, at an epoch of history when the 'National Petition' carts itself in wagons along the streets, and is presented 'bound with iron hoops, four men bearing it,' to a Reformed House of Commons; and Chartism numbered by the million and half, taking nothing by its iron-hooped Petition, breaks out into brickbats, cheap pikes, and even into sputterings of conflagration, such very general feeling cannot be considered unnatural! To us individually this matter appears, and has for many years appeared, to be the most ominous of all practical matters whatever; a matter in regard to which if something be not done, something will *do* itself one day, and in a fashion that will please nobody. The time is verily come for acting in it; how much more for consultation about acting in it, for speech and articulate inquiry about it!

* * *

What are the rights, what are the mights of the discontented Working Classes in England at this epoch? He were an Œdipus, and deliverer from sad social pestilence, who could resolve us fully! For we may say beforehand, The struggle that divides the upper and lower in society over Europe, and more painfully and notably in England than elsewhere, this too is a struggle which will end and adjust itself as all other struggles do and have done, by making the right clear and the might clear; not otherwise than by that. Meantime, the questions, Why are the Working Classes discontented; what is their condition, economical, moral, in their houses and their hearts, as it is in reality and as they figure it to themselves to be; what do they complain of; what ought they, and ought they not to complain of?—these are measurable questions; on some of these any common mortal, did he but turn his eyes to them, might throw some light. Certain researches and considerations of ours on the matter, since no one else will undertake it, are now to be made public. The researches have yielded us little, almost nothing; but the considerations are of old date, and press to have utterance. We are not without hope that our general notion of the business, if we can get it uttered at all, will meet some assent from many candid men.

† From *Chartism* (1839), chapter 1.

[Selling Cheap]†

The Continental people, it would seem, are 'exporting our machinery, beginning to spin cotton and manufacture for themselves, to cut us out of this market and then out of that!' Sad news indeed; but irremediable; —by no means the saddest news. The saddest news is, that we should find our National Existence, as I sometimes hear it said, depend on selling manufactured cotton at a farthing an ell cheaper than any other People. A most narrow stand for a great Nation to base itself on! A stand which, with all the Corn-Law Abrogations conceivable, I do not think will be capable of enduring.

My friends, suppose we quitted that stand; suppose we came honestly down from it, and said: "This is our minimum of cotton-prices. We care not, for the present, to make cotton any cheaper. Do you, if it seem so blessed to you, make cotton cheaper. Fill your lungs with cotton-fuz, your hearts with copperas-fumes, with rage and mutiny; become ye the general gnomes of Europe, slaves of the lamp!"—I admire a Nation which fancies it will die if it do not undersell all other Nations, to the end of the world. Brothers, we will cease to *under*sell them; *we* will be content to *equal*-sell them; to be happy selling equally with them! I do not see the use of underselling them. Cotton-cloth is already two-pence a yard or lower; and yet bare backs were never more numerous among us. Let inventive men cease to spend their existence incessantly contriving how cotton can be made cheaper; and try to invent, a little, how cotton at its present cheapness could be somewhat justlier divided among us. Let inventive men consider, Whether the Secret of this Universe, and of Man's Life there, does, after all, as we rashly fancy it, consist in making money? There is One God, just, supreme, almighty: but is Mammon the name of him?—With a Hell which means 'Failing to make money,' I do not think there is any Heaven possible that would suit one well; nor so much as an Earth that can be habitable long! In brief, all this Mammon-Gospel, of Supply-and-demand, Competition, Laissez-faire, and Devil take the hindmost, begins to be one of the shabbiest Gospels ever preached; or altogether the shabbiest. Even with Dilettante partridge-nets, and at a horrible expenditure of pain, who shall regret to see the entirely transient, and at best somewhat despicable life strangled out of *it?* At the best, as we say, a somewhat despicable, unvenerable thing, this same 'Laissez-faire;' and now, at the *worst*, fast growing an altogether detestable one!

"But what is to be done with our manufacturing population, with our agricultural, with our ever increasing population?" cry many.—Aye, what? Many things can be done with them, a hundred things, and a thousand things,—had we once got a soul, and begun to try. This one

† From *Past and Present* (1843), Book III, chapter 9.

thing, of doing for them by 'underselling all people,' and filling our own bursten pockets and appetites by the road; and turning over all care for any 'population,' or human or divine consideration except cash only, to the winds, with "Laissez-faire" and the rest of it: this is evidently not the thing. Farthing cheaper per yard? No great Nation can stand on the apex of such a pyramid; screwing itself higher and higher; balancing itself on its great-toe! Can England not subsist without being *above* all people in working? England never deliberately purposed such a thing. If England work better than all people, it shall be well. England, like an honest worker, will work as well as she can; and hope the gods may allow her to live on that basis. Laissez-faire and much else being once well dead, how many 'impossibles' will become possible! They are impossible, as cotton-cloth at two-pence an ell was—till men set about making it. The inventive genius of great England will not forever sit patient with mere wheels and pinions, bobbins, straps and billy-rollers whirring in the head of it. The inventive genius of England is not a Beaver's, or a Spinner's or Spider's genius: it is a *Man's* genius, I hope, with a God over him!

E. P. WHIPPLE

[On the Economic Fallacies of *Hard Times*]†

Dickens established a weekly periodical, called Household Words, on the 30th of March, 1850. On the 1st of April, 1854, he began in it the publication of the tale of Hard Times, which was continued in weekly installments until its completion in the number for the 12th of August. The circulation of Household Words was doubled by the appearance in its pages of this story. When published in a separate form, it was appropriately dedicated to Thomas Carlyle, who was Dickens's master in all matters relating to the "dismal science" of political economy.

During the composition of Hard Times the author was evidently in an embittered state of mind in respect to social and political questions. He must have felt that he was in some degree warring against the demonstrated laws of the production and distribution of wealth; yet he also felt that he was putting into prominence some laws of the human heart which he supposed political economists had studiously overlooked or ignored. He wrote to Charles Knight that he had no design to damage the really useful truths of political economy, but that his story was directed against those "who see figures and averages, and nothing else; who would take the average of cold in the

† From *The Atlantic Monthly* (1877).

Crimea during twelve months as a reason for clothing a soldier in nankeen on a night when he would be frozen to death in fur; and who would comfort the labourer in traveling twelve miles a day to and from his work by telling him that the average distance of one inhabited place from another, on the whole area of England, is only four miles." This is, of course, a caricatured statement of what statisticians propose to prove by their "figures and averages." Dickens would have been the first to laugh at such an economist and statistician as Michael Thomas Sadler, who mixed up figures of arithmetic and figures of rhetoric, tables of population and gushing sentiments, in one odd jumble of doubtful calculations and bombastic declamations; yet Sadler is only an extreme case of an investigator who turns aside from his special work to introduce considerations which, however important in themselves, have nothing to do with the business he has in hand. Dickens's mind was so deficient in the power of generalization, so inapt to recognize the operation of inexorable law, that whatever offended his instinctive benevolent sentiments he was inclined to assail as untrue. Now there is no law the operation of which so frequently shocks our benevolent sentiments as the law of gravitation; yet no philanthropist, however accustomed he may be to subordinate scientific truth to amiable impulses, ever presumes to doubt the certain operation of that law. The great field for the contest between the head and the heart is the domain of political economy. The demonstrated laws of this science are often particularly offensive to many good men and good women, who wish well for their fellow-creatures, and who are pained by the obstacles which economic maxims present to their diffusive benevolence. The time will come when it will be as intellectually discreditable for an educated person to engage in a crusade against the established laws of political economy as in a crusade against the established laws of the physical universe; but the fact that men like Carlyle, Ruskin, and Dickens can write economic nonsense without losing intellectual caste shows that the science of political economy, before its beneficent truths come to be generally admitted, must go through a long struggle with benevolent sophisms and benevolent passions. * * *

It is curious to note the different opinions of two widely differing men regarding the story itself.

In judging the work, neither Ruskin nor Macaulay seems to have made any distinction between Dickens as a creator of character and Dickens as a humorous satirist of what he considers flagrant abuses. As a creator of character he is always tolerant and many-sided; as a satirist he is always intolerant and one-sided; and the only difference between his satire and that of other satirists consists in the fact that he has a wonderful power in individualizing abuses in persons. Juvenal, Dryden, and Pope, though keen satirists of character, are comparatively ineffective in the art of con-

cealing their didactic purpose under an apparently dramatic form. So strong is Dickens's individualizing faculty, and so weak his faculty of generalization, that as a satirist he simply personifies his personal opinions. These opinions are formed by quick-witted impressions intensified by philanthropic emotions; they spring neither from any deep insight of reason nor from any careful processes of reasoning; and they are therefore contemptuously discarded as fallacies by all thinkers on social problems who are devoted to the investigation of social phenomena and the establishment of economic laws; but they are so vividly impersonated, and the classes satirized are so felicitously hit in some of their external characteristics and weak points, that many readers fail to discover the essential difference between such realities of character as Tony Weller and Mrs. Gamp, and such semblances of character as Mr. Gradgrind and Mr. Bounderby. Whatever Dickens understands he humorously represents; whatever he does not understand he humorously misrepresents; but in either case, whether he conceives or misconceives, he conveys to the general reader an impression that he is as great in those characters in which he personifies his antipathies as in those in which he embodies his sympathies.

The operation of this satirical as contrasted with dramatic genius is apparent in almost every person who appears in Hard Times, except Sleary and his companions of the circus combination. Mr. Gradgrind and Mr. Bounderby are personified abstractions, after the method of Ben Jonson; but the charge that Macaulay brings against them, that they have little of Dickens's humor, must be received with qualifications. Mr. Bounderby, for example, as the satirical representative of a class, and not as a person who could have had any real existence—as a person who gathers into himself all the vices of a horde of English manufacturers, without a ray of light being shed into his internal constitution of heart and mind,—is one of the wittiest and most humorous of Dickens's embodied sarcasms. Bounderby becomes a seeming character by being looked at and individualized from the point of view of imaginative antipathy. So surveyed, he seems real to thousands who observe their employers from the outside, and judge of them, not as they are, but as they appear to their embittered minds and hearts. Still, the artistic objection holds good that when a man resembling Mr. Bounderby is brought into the domain of romance or the drama, the great masters of romance and the drama commonly insist that he shall be not only externally represented but internally known. There is no authorized, no accredited way of exhibiting character but this, that the dramatist or novelist shall enter into the soul of the personage represented, shall sympathize with him sufficiently to know him, and shall represent his passions, prejudices, and opinions as springing from some central will and individuality. This sympathy is consistent with the utmost hatred of the person described; but characterization becomes satire the moment that antipathy super-

sedes insight and the satirist berates the exterior manifestations of an individuality whose interior life he has not diligently explored and interpreted. Bounderby, therefore, is only a magnificent specimen of what satirical genius can do when divorced from the dramatist's idea of justice, and the dramatist's perception of those minute peculiarities of intellect, disposition, and feeling which distinguish one "bully of humility" from another.

It is ridiculous to assert, as Ruskin asserts, that Hard Times is Dickens's greatest work; for it is *the* one of all his works which should be distinguished from the others as specially wanting in that power of real characterization on which his reputation as a vivid delineator of human character and human life depends. The whole effect of the story, though it lacks neither amusing nor pathetic incidents, and though it contains passages of description which rank with his best efforts in combining truth of fact with truth of imagination, is ungenial and unpleasant. Indeed, in this book, he simply intensified popular discontent; he ignored or he was ignorant of those laws the violation of which is at the root of popular discontent; and proclaimed with his favorite ideal workman, Stephen Blackpool, that not only the relation between employers and employed, but the whole constitution of civilized society itself, was a hopeless "muddle," beyond the reach of human intelligence or humane feeling to explain and justify. It is to be observed here that all cheering views of the amelioration of the condition of the race come from those hard thinkers whose benevolent impulses push them to the investigation of natural and economic laws. Starting from the position of sentimental benevolence, and meeting unforeseen intellectual obstacles at every step in his progress, Dickens ends "in a muddle" by the necessity of his method. Had he been intellectually equipped with the knowledge possessed by many men to whom in respect to genius he was immensely superior, he would never have landed in a conclusion so ignominious, and one which the average intellect of well-informed persons of the present day contemptuously rejects. If Dickens had contented himself with using his great powers of observation, sympathy, humor, imagination, and characterization in their appropriate fields, his lack of scientific training in the austere domain of social, legal, and political science would have been hardly perceptible; but after his immense popularity was assured by the success of The Pickwick Papers, he was smitten with the ambition to direct the public opinion of Great Britain by embodying, in exquisitely satirical caricatures, rash and hasty judgments on the whole government of Great Britain in all its departments, legislative, executive, and judicial. He overlooked uses, in order to fasten on abuses. His power to excite, at his will, laughter, or tears, or indignation was so great, that the victims of his mirthful wrath were not at first disposed to resent his debatable fallacies while enjoying his delicious fun.

His invasion of the domain of political science with the palpable design of substituting benevolent instincts for established laws was carelessly condoned by the statesmen, legists, and economists whom he denounced and amused.

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