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**THE LANCASHIRE COTTON FAMINE**

**1861-1865**

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THE LANCASHIRE  
COTTON FAMINE  
1861-1865

BY

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**TO**  
**MY FATHER AND MOTHER**

## PREFACE.

This inquiry had its origin in studies which I undertook at the London School of Economics. I attempted to study the effect of the over-production of cotton yarn and cloth in 1859-61 and of the American Civil War on the cotton industries of the world. My work was done under the supervision of Mr. H. L. Beales and owes much to his inspiration. Not only in discussing the main outlines of the research but in suggesting new lines of inquiry and in criticising chapters as they were written Mr. Beales has been unfailingly helpful. His advice and encouragement were invaluable.

The present study has a more restricted field. It is confined to the cotton industry of Lancashire and adjoining counties. For a description of the Cotton Famine on the Continent reference may be made to an article which I contributed to the *Economic History Review* in April, 1933. The following articles, by kind permission of the editors of the publications concerned, are reproduced either completely or in part:—

*Economic History* :

The Public Works Act, 1863 (January, 1931).

*Empire Cotton Growing Review* :

Empire Cotton during the Lancashire Cotton Famine, 1861-65 (January, 1932).

The Cotton Supply Association, 1857-72 (April, 1932).

John Bright and Indian Cotton (July, 1933).



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of nineteenth century economic history. I thank authorities concerned for permission to use the Minutes of the Liverpool Cotton Brokers' Association (now in the possession of the Liverpool Cotton Association), the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, and the London Trades Council. Other obligations are acknowledged in the text.

The University of Liverpool have made a grant towards the expense of publishing this book, and I thank them for their generosity.

W. O. HENDERSON.

DOWNING COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,  
*3rd January, 1934.*

# CONTENTS.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE LANCASHIRE COTTON INDUSTRY IN 1860.

|  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| Extent of Cotton Industry . . . . .                                  | 1    |
| Factors Contributing to its Development . . . . .                    | 1    |
| Condition of Operatives . . . . .                                    | 3    |
| Dangers to the Industry—   |      |
| 1. Foreign Competition . . . . .                                     | 4    |
| 2. Periodic Depressions . . . . .                                    | 5    |
| 3. Dependence on One Source of Supply for its Raw Material . . . . . | 5    |

## CHAPTER II.

### COMMERCIAL ASPECT OF THE COTTON FAMINE.

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Statistical Difficulties . . . . .  | 7  |
| General Prosperity of 1860-66 owing to—   |    |
| 1. Reaction after Depression of 1857 . . . . .  | 8  |
| 2. Commercial Treaties . . . . .  | 9  |
| 3. Benefits Derived by Woollen and Linen Industries from<br>Dislocation of Cotton Trade . . . . .   | 9  |
| 4. Collapse of American Shipping, which enabled British<br>Mercantile Marine to Establish its Supremacy . . . . .   | 10 |
| Cotton Crisis due to—   |    |
| 1. Over-production of 1859-61 : Glut of Goods which un-<br>expectedly Increased in Value during the Cotton Famine<br>and brought in Big Profits to some Manufacturers . . . . . | 11 |
| 2. Cotton Famine : High Price of Cotton . . . . .   | 13 |
| Gains were made during the Cotton Famine by—  |    |
| 1. Manufacturers who sold Cotton Goods at High Prices and<br>Re-Exported Cotton to U.S.A. . . . .   | 14 |

CONTENTS

|   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| 2. Brokers, Agents and Warehousemen—whose Percentage Increased as Price of Cotton Increased . . . . . | 1    |
| 3. Speculators who—   |      |
| (a) Financed Blockade Running . . . . .   | 1    |
| (b) Gambled (Futures Developed) . . . . .   | 1    |
| Rationalisation of Cotton Industry owing to these Gains and to Confidence of Bankers . . . . .        | 17   |
| Losses of Manufacturers—  |      |
| 1. Loss of Trade, Decline of Income from Cottage Rents, Heavy Poor Rates . . . . .                    | 19   |
| 2. Financial Difficulties of 1864 and crisis of 1866—   |      |
| Causes . . . . .  | 20   |
| 1864 . . . . .  | 22   |
| 1866 . . . . .  | 23   |
| Losses Illustrated by Increase in Bankruptcies and Decrease in Income Tax Receipts . . . . .          | 25   |
| Disputes between Spinners, Merchants and Brokers . . . . .  | 27   |

CHAPTER III.

COTTON SUPPLY.

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Cotton Famine Due to Depending on Southern States for Three-Quarters of Supply . . . . . | 31 |
| Early Attempts to Increase Supplies from Other Countries . . . . .                       | 31 |
| Work of Cotton Supply Association, 1857-72 . . . . .                                     | 31 |
| Reasons for its Weakness—  |    |
| 1. Lack of Support from many Lancashire Manufacturers . . . . .                          | 31 |
| 2. Lack of Funds . . . . .   | 31 |
| 3. Lack of Active Government Support . . . . .   | 31 |
| 4. Mistakes of Cotton Supply Association . . . . .                                       | 31 |
| Discussion of Attempts to Increase Cotton Supply of—                                     |    |
| 1. British Empire . . . . .  | 35 |
| (a) India . . . . .  | 39 |
| (b) West Indies . . . . .  | 41 |
| (c) Australia . . . . .  | 42 |
| 2. Ottoman Empire, particularly Egypt . . . . .  | 43 |
| 3. Brazil . . . . .  | 47 |
| 4. Colonies of Continental Powers (e.g. Algeria) . . . . .                               | 47 |
| 5. Europe (e.g. Spain, Italy) . . . . .  | 49 |

## CONTENTS

# CONTENTS

xi

## CHAPTER IV.

### RELIEF OF DISTRESS IN LANCASHIRE.

|   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| Public Relief—  |      |
| 1. Policy of Poor Law Board in 1860 . . . . .   | 52   |
| 2. Strain on the Poor Laws, 1861-62 . . . . .   | 52   |
| 3. Mr. Farnall Appointed Special Commissioner . . . . .   | 53   |
| 4. Farnall's First Tour of the Distressed Districts . . . . .   | 55   |
| 5. Union Relief Aid Act, 1862 . . . . .   | 57   |
| 6. Public Works Act, 1863 . . . . .   | 59   |
| Private Charity—  |      |
| 1. Unorganised Private Charity . . . . .  | 68   |
| 2. Local Relief Committees . . . . .  | 74   |
| 3. Central Relief Committee (Manchester) and Relation to the<br>Local Relief Committees . . . . .                     | 75   |
| 4. Lancashire and Cheshire Operatives Relief Fund (Mansion<br>House Fund) . . . . .                                   | 78   |
| 5. Colonial and Foreign Subscriptions (including Subscriptions<br>in Money and Kind from the United States) . . . . . | 82   |
| Difficulties in Distributing Relief—  |      |
| 1. Lord Derby's Minute of January 12, 1863 . . . . .  | 85   |
| 2. Imposture on the Part of Applicants for Relief . . . . .   | 85   |
| 3. "Labour Test" and "Educational Test" . . . . .   | 87   |
| 4. Religious Dissensions . . . . .  | 90   |

## CHAPTER V.

### THE LANCASHIRE COTTON OPERATIVES DURING THE FAMINE.

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Eviction . . . . .   | 94  |
| Loss of Savings . . . . .                                      | 97  |
| Property Pawned . . . . .                                      | 98  |
| Hunger . . . . .   | 101 |
| Health . . . . .   | 102 |
| Effect of the Famine on Births, Marriages and Deaths . . . . . | 105 |
| Crime . . . . .  | 107 |
| Woollybridge Riots . . . . .                                   | 110 |
| Migration . . . . .  | 115 |

## CHAPTER VI.

### CONCLUSION.

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Summary . . . . .  | 119 |
| Cotton Famine in U.S.A., Scotland, Ireland and the Continent . . . . . | 119 |

## CHAPTER VII.

## APPENDICES.

- A. Liverpool Cotton Prices, 1861-67 . . . . .
- B. Limited Liability Cotton Companies, 1856-65 . . . . .
- C. Table Showing the Net Result of the Improvements of Machinery in the English Cotton Industry, 1858-68 . . . . .
- D. Trade Customs in Manchester, 1882 . . . . .
- E. List of Limited Liability Companies Formed to Grow (or to Promote the Growth of) Cotton in Countries other than the U.S.A. . . . .
- F. Particulars of "Effective" Cotton Growing Companies Formed in 1856-65 . . . . .

## BIBLIOGRAPHY.

## Development of the Cotton Manufacture to 1860 and Condition of the Lancashire Cotton Operatives before the Cotton Famine—

- 1. Bibliographies . . . . .
- 2. Parliamentary Papers . . . . .
- 3. Unofficial Papers . . . . .
- 4. Books and Pamphlets . . . . .
- 5. Articles . . . . .

## Relief of Distress and Effects of the Cotton Famine on the Operatives—

- 1. Parliamentary Papers : (a) Acts, (b) Reports, etc. . . . . 13
- 2. Unofficial Reports . . . . . 14
- 3. Books and Pamphlets . . . . . 14
- 4. Anonymous Pamphlets . . . . . 14
- 5. Articles and Papers . . . . . 14
- 6. Newspapers : (a) Cuttings in John Rylands Library, (b) London and Provincial, (c) American . . . . . 14

## Cotton Supply—

- 1. Bibliography . . . . . 14
- 2. General : (a) MSS., (b) Parliamentary Papers, (c) American Official Documents, (d) Books and Pamphlets, (e) Anonymous Pamphlets, (f) Articles and Papers . . . . . 14
- 3. Southern States : (a) Books, (b) Articles and Papers . . . . . 14
- 4. India : (a) Parliamentary Papers, (b) Unofficial Reports, etc., (c) Books and Pamphlets, (d) Articles, (e) Thesis . . . . . 15

# CONTENTS

xii

|   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| 4. Ottoman Empire: (a) MSS., (b) Parliamentary Paper,<br>(c) Books and Pamphlets, (d) Articles and Papers   | 154  |
| 5. Africa (except Egypt): (a) General, (b) West Africa,<br>(c) Algiers  | 155  |
| 6. Australia  | 156  |
| 7. Central and South America and West Indies: (a) Mexico,<br>(b) British Guiana, (c) Brazil, (d) Peru, (e) Argentine and<br>Paraguay, (f) West Indies | 156  |
| 8. Europe (except European Turkey): (a) Italy, (b) France,<br>(c) Spain   | 157  |
| 9. Central Asia   | 158  |
| 10. Substitutes for Cotton: (a) Books and Pamphlets, (b)<br>Articles and Papers   | 158  |
| <br><b>Commercial Aspects of the Cotton Famine—</b>   |      |
| 1. MSS.   | 158  |
| 2. Parliamentary Paper  | 158  |
| 3. Books and Pamphlets  | 158  |
| 4. Tables, Articles and Papers  | 159  |
| 5. Cotton Circulars   | 161  |
| <br><b>Lancashire Cotton Famine as a Factor in Anglo-American<br/>Relations during the American Civil War—</b>  |      |
| 1. MSS.   | 162  |
| 2. Parliamentary Papers   | 162  |
| 3. American Official Documents  | 162  |
| 4. Books and Pamphlets  | 163  |
| 5. Articles and Papers  | 165  |
| 6. Theses   | 166  |
| <br><b>Cotton Famine in Places other than Lancashire—</b>   |      |
| 1. Scotland: (a) Parliamentary Paper, (b) Unofficial Reports,<br>(c) Book, (d) Paper, (e) Newspaper   | 166  |
| 2. Ireland: (a) Books and Pamphlets, (b) Newspapers   | 167  |
| 3. Northern States of U.S.A.: (a) Unofficial Reports, (b) Books   | 167  |
| 4. France: (a) Official Reports, (b) Unofficial Reports, (c)<br>Books, (d) Articles, (e) Pamphlet   | 168  |
| 5. Germany: (a) Official Reports, (b) Unofficial Reports, (c)<br>Books, (d) Articles, (e) Thesis  | 169  |
| 6. Switzerland  | 170  |
| 7. Russia: (a) Parliamentary Papers, (b) Books  | 170  |
| 8. Index  | 171  |

## ABBREVIATIONS.

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Am. Ch. Comm.               | MS. Minutes of the American Chamber of Commerce of the Port of Liverpool.                             |
| C.S.R.                      | <i>Cotton Supply Reporter.</i>  |
| <i>Hunt's M.M.</i>          | <i>Hunt's Merchants' Magazine.</i>  |
| Lpl. C.B. Assn.             | MS. Minutes of the Liverpool Cotton Brokers Association.  |
| M. Ch. Comm.                | MS. Proceedings of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce.  |
| <i>M. Daily E. &amp; T.</i> | <i>Manchester Daily Examiner and Times.</i>   |
| Mc. Stat. Soc.              | Proceedings of the Manchester Statistical Society   |
| M.O. of P.C.                | Medical Officer of the Privy Council.   |
| P.P.                        | Parliamentary Papers.   |
| P.L.B.                      | Poor Law Board.   |
| R. Stat. Soc.               | { Journal of the Statistical Society of London,<br>later<br>Journal of the Royal Statistical Society. |



## CHAPTER I.

### THE LANCASHIRE COTTON INDUSTRY IN 1860.

In 1860 there were in the cotton industry of Lancashire and adjoining counties about two thousand cotton factories running over 300,000 power looms and 21½ million spindles and employing half a million operatives: 10 million lbs. of raw cotton were imported of which 5 million were kept for home consumption.<sup>1</sup>

The wealth of the industry and the progress it had made were sources of pride and wonder to contemporaries.

J. A. Mann, a historian of the industry, wrote in 1860:

“Conjecturing the pigmy character of the trade a century since, realising the present colossal fabric, it strikes the imagination with awe for its magnitude is unequalled, whether we consider it as the result of immense individual and national wealth, the amount of capital which it gives employment, the large proportion it forms of our entire production, the stimulus it has given to other departments, the millions of people directly or indirectly engaged in it, the comfort to which it has led, the effect the intercourse necessitated by it has exerted upon the nation, and its particular effect on places and people either socially, politically or morally.”<sup>2</sup>

Several factors had contributed to the development of the Lancashire cotton industry. In the seventeenth century the most important were the coming of skilled foreign weavers, the suitability of the climate—“though the importance of humidity was not fundamental until the manufacture of fine cottons was undertaken”<sup>3</sup>—the fact that Manchester was not a corporate burgh

<sup>1</sup> R. A. Arnold, *History of the Cotton Famine* (1st ed., 1864), pp. 18-19; J. Watts, *Facts of the Cotton Famine* (1866), pp. 51-3.

<sup>2</sup> J. A. Mann, *Cotton Trade of Great Britain* (1860), p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> H. L. Beales, *Industrial Revolution* (1928), p. 28.

## 2 THE LANCASHIRE COTTON FAMINE

(and unhampered by guild restrictions), the absence of those minute regulations which governed the manufacture of old-established textiles, the cheapness of the raw material and the finished article, the facility for obtaining linen yarn (for the warp) from Ireland and the decline of the German cotton industry since the Thirty Years' War. In the eighteenth century the industry benefited from laws passed to protect the trade: these severely restricted—by means of prohibitions and high duties—the importation of Indian and Irish textile goods into this country.

With the changes that took place in the period of the Industrial Revolution the importance of another factor favourable to the development of the industry was noticed—geographical specialisation. This had two aspects. First, the use of metal machinery driven by steam and the growth of the factory system led to a concentration of the industry in Lancashire and adjoining counties to an extent which had not been possible before. Secondly, within this area a geographical separation of spinning and weaving—hardly completed by 1800—was taking place, “the weaving firms being grouped in the north and north-east, and the spinning firms in the south in a semi-circle around Manchester.”<sup>1</sup> Thus each town tended to concentrate on one particular kind of product—Oldham on “the medium counts of yarn,” Bolton, Chorley and Preston on “fine counts,” Burnley on “ordinary printings,” Blackburn on “dhooties and T-cloths.”<sup>2</sup>

Manchester, on the other hand, was ceasing to manufacture cotton goods, and was becoming the centre of that commercial and credit organisation which was an important factor not only in the development of the Lancashire cotton trade, but in making England the clearing house of the Continental cotton trade.<sup>3</sup> It

<sup>1</sup> J. Jewkes in *Economic History*, II., p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> G. von Schulze-Gavernitz, *Cotton Trade in England and on the Continent* (1895), pp. 73-4.

<sup>3</sup> H. Baker, “On the Growth of the Commercial Centre of Manchester,” *Mc. Stat. Soc.*, 1871-72, pp. 87-106.

It is also to notice that Lancashire had the benefit of the experience of two generations of manufacturing in goods under modern factory conditions. Thus operatives had acquired great skill in the various processes of manufacture while their masters were organising production and marketing in a manner hardly known elsewhere.

The result was that in 1860 "the Lancashire workers were at the head of the English working class. They had the highest wages and were, of all workers, the most intelligent and best organised. They had already secured the fixing of working conditions, wages, hours, etc., by means of agreements with the employers. Many of them had deposits in the savings bank; a considerable number owned their cottages. There was much less poverty in Lancashire than in the rest of the kingdom."<sup>1</sup>

Generalisations are difficult to make when dealing with some 500,000 operatives who were engaged on tasks requiring different degrees of skill and rewarded by different rates of wages. There was as much difference between the type of man who became a foreman or who earned high piecework wages by his skill and the unskilled underpaid Irish as there was between a bishop and a peasant. A gloomy picture of the state of the cotton operatives would be obtained if the gruesome description by observers like J. P. Kay (Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth) and F. Engels—of Manchester's "Little Ireland" were regarded as typical of all Lancashire.<sup>2</sup> But it was not typical. In smaller towns housing conditions, though miserable, were rather better than Manchester's cellar dwellings, and some employers—such as Thomas Ashton, Hyde and Thomas Bazley of Halliwell—interested themselves in their workers' cottages. Further, many

<sup>1</sup> M. Tougan-Baranowsky, *Les Crises industrielles en Angleterre* (1913), pp. 198-9.

<sup>2</sup> J. P. Kay, *Condition of the Working Classes in the Cotton Manufactory in Manchester* (1832), pp. 21-3; F. Engels, *Condition of the Working Classes in England in 1844* (1920), pp. 43 and 60.

#### 4 THE LANCASHIRE COTTON FAMINE

of the new cotton towns were no more than overgrown villages, and here old traditions of village life were still strong and the drunkenness and immorality which shocked the rural servers in Manchester were less common.

Conditions had improved in the thirty years preceding the Cotton Famine. Wages in the cotton mills were said to "have advanced between the years 1844 and 1860 from 10 to 20 per cent., whilst the hours of labour had been materially shortened." In 1860 some hand weavers were still dragging out a miserable existence on a mere pittance, but a spinner could get 29s. for a week of 60 hours, a card stripper 18s. to 20s., an adult pick 13s.<sup>1</sup>

As factory conditions improved "the spirit of hostility by which the workmen had been so long animated against the heads of manufacturing establishments vanished, and gave place to the confidence and mutual respect which became apparent in the great crisis of 1862."<sup>2</sup> The great Preston strike of 1854, for example, produced little violence.

The operatives were prepared to make great sacrifices to improve their own condition by investing their money in savings banks, by joining co-operative stores and by continuing their education at mechanics' institutes or similar places. In 1844 the Rochdale pioneers had begun a co-operative store with a capital of £28. In 1861 they had a capital of £125,729, and many similar stores had been founded. Mechanics' institutes, too, flourished.

Although the Lancashire cotton industry had many elements of strength and appeared to be very firmly established, its predominant position and its prosperity were threatened in three ways—it was faced with increasing foreign competition, it suffered from periodic depression and it was dependent to too great an extent upon the

<sup>1</sup> J. Watts, p. 41; cf. D. Chadwick, *On the Rate of Wages in Manchester and Salford* (1860).

<sup>2</sup> Comte de Paris, *The Trades Unions of England* (3rd ed., 1860) p. 188.

source of supply for its raw material. Cotton industries were developing in the Northern States of the U.S.A., on the Continent and in India. Usually these industries were less efficient than that of Lancashire, but they often had the advantage of cheap labour and protected home markets.

The cotton industry suffered from the fluctuations in the general movement of trade—that curiously regular (in the early nineteenth century practically denial) swing from boom to slump and from slump to boom known as the trade cycle, which is one of the most puzzling phenomena of the industrial capitalistic age. There were depressions in the cotton industry in the early years of the war with France, in the period of the Continental System, in 1824-26, in 1836-41, in 1847 and in 1854-57.

The third danger which threatened the Lancashire cotton industry was a failure in the supply of the raw material. In 1860 over three-quarters of Lancashire's cotton came from the Southern States. Some observers viewed the situation with apprehension, but the majority of manufacturers either failed to grasp the possibility of any deficiency of imports of American cotton, or they assumed that their need for cotton and their ability to pay for it were bound to produce cotton from somewhere.

In the Southern States, upon which Lancashire manufacturers depended so confidently for their cotton, somewhat peculiar social and economic organisation had developed. There was a small class of white planters carrying out production by means of the labour of some four million black slaves. Since the institution of slavery seemed nothing less than the indispensable economic instrument of Southern society,"<sup>1</sup> the South, which had one time disapproved of slavery, was now determined not merely to preserve this "peculiar institution" but to extend it. When the South pushed this determination to the point of war it made two serious miscalculations.

<sup>1</sup> Woodrow Wilson, *Division and Reunion* (1909), p. 125.

## 6 THE LANCASHIRE COTTON FAMINE

First, although it "had unusual manufacturing facilities" it had neglected manufacturing for cotton growing to such an extent that it was not strong enough (from the economic point of view) to wage a long war or to found a new state.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, the South regarded European intervention as certain in the event of a Cotton Famine due to Civil War in America. It was to be bitterly disappointed.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. A. B. Scherer, *Cotton as a World Power* (1916), p. 169; cf. *Lynchburg Virginian*. "Dependent upon Europe and the North for almost every yard of cloth, and every coat and boot and hat we wear; for axes, scythes, tubs and buckets—in short, for everything except bread and meat" (quoted by F. L. Olmsted, *Our Slave States*, I. (1855), p. 166).

<sup>2</sup> For the Lancashire industry after 1815 cf. A. Redford, "Some Problems of the Manchester Merchant after the Napoleonic War" (*Mc. Stat. Soc.*, 1930-31, pp. 53-87).

## CHAPTER II.

### COMMERCIAL ASPECT OF THE COTTON FAMINE.

AUTION has to be exercised in dealing with trade statistics when considering the commercial aspect of the Cotton Famine. English official statistics of total foreign trade are figures of value. Between 1789 and 1870 export figures were based on the declarations of merchants. "From 1679 to 1854 the statistics of import are only the 'official value'; from 1854 to 1870 the real value,' calculated on special lists drawn up by agents employed for the purpose, and checked by ordinary trade price-lists."<sup>1</sup>

Clearly there was room for much inaccuracy in this method even if honest and careful returns were made. It is difficult to trace the place of origin of imports or the destination of exports since usually only the port from which goods came or to which they were going was given. Many exports to the Zollverein, for example, would appear under Dutch ports. It is not surprising, therefore, that when in 1881 comparisons were made between English and French returns of Anglo-French trade "the differences, especially in the case of French exports into England, were so great that it was impossible to explain them by technical differences in the technique of statistics."<sup>2</sup> Further, figures of value "give no true

<sup>1</sup> C. J. Fuchs, *The Trade Policy of Great Britain and her Colonies 1860* (1905), p. 110. Cf. S. Bourne, *Trade, Population and Food* (1880), I.

<sup>2</sup> C. J. Fuchs, p. 112 (n.). Diezmann, however, found "a complete . . . almost ideal correspondence" between the trade statistics of England and the U.S.A. (*ibid.*, p. 112). Cf. J. A. Messenger in *R. Stat.*, XXIV., 1861, pp. 229-34.

## 8 THE LANCASHIRE COTTON FAMINE

representation of the volume of the import and export trades, if, in the interval, any considerable change of price has taken place." Prices were falling in England in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. If the figure 100 represents English import prices in 1857, the 77 represents those of 1886: export prices (including re-export prices) fell from 100 to 65.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the steady increase of public expenditure, the poor harvests of 1860-62, the Cotton Famine and the financial crises of 1864 and 1866, the period 1860-66 was one of prosperity.<sup>2</sup> The value of exports and imports of the United Kingdom rose from £375,000,000 to £534,000,000. Between 1862 and 1866 Gladstone was able to reduce expenditure by £4,000,000, to lower the Income Tax 1 fourpence, to make reductions in the sugar and tea duties and to lower the tax on fire insurance.<sup>3</sup>

The annual reports of the Bank of Liverpool show that even a bank closely connected with the cotton trade could partake of this prosperity.<sup>4</sup> It is true that profit dropped from £113,209 in 1861 to £96,960 in 1863, but interest (8 per cent. to 9 per cent.) and bonus (17s. 6d. to 20s.) on shares were satisfactory. In 1866 the annual report stated "that notwithstanding the extensive and serious commercial disasters which have occurred during the past six months, the business of the bank has been sound and profitable": 12 per cent. interest was paid for the year, there was a 10s. bonus on each share and £6000 was added to the reserve fund. Equally satisfactory were the results published by the Manchester and Salford Bank. The net profit—before putting anything to the published reserves—rose from £41,500 in 1860 to £66,809 in 1864 (when the capital of the bank

<sup>1</sup> C. J. Fuchs, pp. 112-13.

<sup>2</sup> John Noble, *Fiscal Legislation, 1842-65* (1867), ch. 9.

<sup>3</sup> *Cambridge Modern History*, XI., p. 338. *First Report of the Royal Commission on Depression of Trade and Industry, 1886*, p. 130.

<sup>4</sup> Information kindly supplied by Mr. A. F. Shawyer, General Manager of Martin's Bank.



increased by bonus issue from £320,000 to £355,000) was £62,384 in 1866.<sup>1</sup>

There were several reasons for this prosperity. First, there was the optimism and energy of manufacturers and the natural reaction after the depression of 1857.<sup>2</sup>

Secondly, there were important commercial treaties with France, the Zollverein, Belgium, Austria and Italy, which increased Britain's trade with these countries. Between 1860 and 1863 the value of British goods sent to France alone rose from four and three-quarter million pounds to nearly nine and a quarter million, an increase which the cotton trade shared.<sup>3</sup>

Thirdly, the woollen and worsted industries of the West Riding and the linen industry of Northern Ireland benefited from the dislocation of the cotton trade. The woollen industry, which appeared to be on the verge of a slack period in 1861 when the imports of the raw material decreased by a million pounds, flourished during the next few years. Between 1861 and 1864 the imports of foreign wool increased from 147 million lbs. to 166 million lbs., the export of woollen yarns increased from 27½ to nearly 40 million lbs., and that of woollen worsted manufactures increased from 164 to 241 million yards. J. Watts estimated the total gain of the woollen and worsted trades of Yorkshire at nearly

<sup>1</sup> Details:—

|         |      |         |      |         |      |         |
|---------|------|---------|------|---------|------|---------|
| £41,557 | 1863 | £41,070 | 1866 | £62,384 | 1869 | £49,894 |
| 49,061  | 1864 | 66,809  | 1867 | 50,229  | 1870 | 44,739  |
| 39,889  | 1865 | 48,802  | 1868 | 50,600  |      |         |

I am indebted to Mr. A. H. Allman of Williams Deacon's Bank for information.

<sup>2</sup> J. Mills, "On Credit Cycles and the Origin of Commercial Crises" *Stat. Soc.*, 1867-68, pp. 24-34.

<sup>3</sup> *Economist*, 14/6/62 (The Marvellous Effect of the French Treaty): see showing the Course of Trade between the U.K. and France 1858 to 1867 (Manchester Ch. of Commerce, 1868); S. Buxton, *Trade and Politics* (1888), I., ch. 11; J. Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, I., ch. 4, § 4, and Appendix; Tougan-Baranowsky, p. 126.

## 10 THE LANCASHIRE COTTON FAMINE

£17,000,000.<sup>1</sup> Some farmers benefited from the increased demand for wool, and some cotton operatives, who migrated from Lancashire, found employment in Yorkshire woollen mills.

The extent to which the Irish linen industry profited by Lancashire's misfortunes may be gathered from the fact that while in 1859 there were in Ireland 82 spinning mills running 560,642 spindles, in 1868 there were 90 mills running 841,867 spindles. The production of the linen manufacture of the U.K. showed an increase of 60 per cent. if the periods 1855-61 and 1862-68 are compared. In Scotland the number of looms weaving flax, hemp and jute doubled during the Cotton Famine.

Fourthly, although the American Civil War damaged the Lancashire cotton industry and kept English goods out by a high tariff—English exports to the U.S. declined from £23,000,000 (1861) to £11,000,000 (1865)—it benefited England in other ways.<sup>3</sup> The American mercantile marine, for example, lost 5000 ships in 1862 owing to the captures made by Southern privateers, the transfer of American ships to foreign flags to avoid capture, and the failure of American capital to support new native steamship lines.<sup>4</sup> In these circumstances the British mercantile marine was able to establish supremacy.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sir S. Morton Peto, *Resources and Prospects of America* (1861), p. 227; J. Slagg (Jnr.), *The Cotton Trade of Lancashire and the French Commercial Treaty of 1860* (1870); H. Ashworth's evidence, p. 76-8. J. Watts, ch. 21; E. Helm in *Mc. Stat. Soc.*, 1868-69, pp. 76-8.

<sup>2</sup> *M. Daily E. & T.*, 10, 14/5/64; *Northern Whig*, 20/12/63 (cf. Linen Trade Circular issued weekly by a committee on linen trade and printed in this paper); *Times*, 6, 13/10/62; *Economist*, No. 1069, Feb. 1864, p. 32, No. 1124, 11/3/65, p. 27, 10/3/66, p. 2 (supplements); J. Watts, ch. 20; E. Helm in *Mc. Stat. Soc.*, 1868-69, pp. 76-8 and p. 82.

<sup>3</sup> Tougan-Baranowsky, p. 124; E. von Halle, *Baumwollprodukt*, II., pp. 264-5.

<sup>4</sup> *P.P.*, 1863, LXXIII., 23, and 1864, LV., 25.

<sup>5</sup> F. M. Edge, *The Destruction of the American Carrying Trade* (1863), *Hunt's M.M.*, XLIX. (6), Dec., 1863, pp. 435-9.

The depression in the cotton industry and the financial crises of 1864 and 1866 were thus exceptional events in a period of prosperity. The cotton crisis was due entirely to a shortage of the raw material.<sup>1</sup> In 1859-60 the Southern States produced more cotton than the world needed. Lancashire cotton manufacturers, taking advantage of the large supply of cheap cotton and of a big temporary demand for cotton goods from the Far East (now that the Indian Mutiny and the war in China were over), worked their mills at high pressure and enjoyed "two years of almost unexampled prosperity."<sup>2</sup> By May, 1860, the recent heavy demands had been met and there accumulated about 300 million lbs. of cotton goods which could not have been sold at a profit if the existing rate of production had been maintained.<sup>3</sup>

The Manchester Chamber of Commerce stated in 1860 that before the American Civil War the cotton industry "had been unduly extended and facilities of credit stretched to improper limits. Thus the cotton trade

At the time many believed that the American War was the sole cause of the crisis and cotton manufacturers naturally did nothing to prevent this impression; e.g. E. Potter in *Trans. of the Nat. Assn. for the Advancement of Social Science*, 1864, p. 649, and H. Ashworth before the 39th Commercial Enquiry of 1870 (J. Slagg, Jr., p. 20). Contemporary economists (Karl Marx), historians (J. Watts, R. A. Arnold), publicists (W. G. Adams) and well-informed persons generally, recognised the truth. E. D. Adams, II., pp. 16-17, who criticised Rhodes for leaving the impression that all England thought that the Cotton Famine was due to the Civil War alone.

M. Williams, 1862, p. 19; *Times*, 31/7/62, 3 and 11/9/62; *M. & E. & T.*, 1/1/61; *Economist*, No. 958, 4/1/62; Marriott & Co., 1862; Hollinshead, Tetley & Co., 31/12/60; Adams to Seward, 4/12/62, *Papers Relating to Foreign Affairs . . .*, 1863 (Washington, 1864), p. 10; H. Ashworth's speech after the passing of the 39th Annual Report of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce (1859); Karl Marx, *Capital* (New York, 1867), I., p. 489; G. M'Henry, *Cotton Supply of the U.S.A.* (London, 1865), pp. 62-3; J. Watts, p. 112 and p. 356; M. Touganowsky, p. 126; J. A. B. Scherer, p. 265.

<sup>1</sup>R. A. Arnold, p. 81. *The Economist* (1/11/62, 31/1/63) admitted there had been over-production but protested against the exaggeration of this factor of the dislocation of the industry.

## 12 THE LANCASHIRE COTTON FAMINE

was in no condition to withstand so severe a trial and the shock found the mill-owners weakened by over-extension and the consequent want of working capital.”<sup>1</sup> There can be little doubt that even if there had been no American Civil War there would still have been a period of depression in the cotton industry during which mills would have run on short time while big stocks would have been sold off cheaply. The export of cotton goods declined from 2563 million lbs. in 1861 to 1681 million lbs. in 1862; the export of yarn decreased from 177 million lbs. to 93 million lbs. The situation was aggravated by over-production of Continental cotton mills, and it was not until early in 1863 that M. Williams could express the confident hope that “the period of exhausted cotton stocks in all foreign markets . . . must now soon arrive.

In one respect, therefore, the Cotton Famine benefited many Lancashire manufacturers. It enabled them, not, it is true, at once, but certainly in the autumn 1862 and spring of 1863—to sell off stocks of cotton goods at much higher prices than they expected after the recent period of over-production.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Letter from the Manchester Chamber of Commerce to Messrs Dollfus, Mieg & Co. on the Condition of the Cotton Trade of Lancashire and the Operation of the Anglo-French Treaty of 1860 (Manchester 20/4/70), reprinted by J. Slagg (Jnr.), Appendix V., pp. 24-26, as quoted by A. L. Dunham, *The Anglo-French Treaty of Commerce of 1860* . . . (1911), p. 202. A further quotation from the letter is given below.

<sup>2</sup> M. Williams' introduction to reissue of his 1861-62 circulars, MacCullagh Torrens, *Lancashire's Lesson*, p. 11; *Economist*, 20 (supplement, pp. 2-3); *M. Daily E. & T.*, 6/1/62, 9/9/62; *Manchester Post*, 16/5/64; J. Watts, pp. 35-6; R. A. Arnold, p. 80; E. D. Arnold, II., pp. 9-10.

<sup>3</sup> Tougan-Baranowsky, p. 126; C. F. Adams (Jnr.) in *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, XLVII., 1913-14, p. 337; E. D. Arnold, p. 81 (“In place of the hard times which had been anticipated and perhaps deserved, there came a shower of riches”). E. D. Arnold, *Great Britain and American Civil War* (1925), quotes the passage from Arnold from which this sentence is taken and comments: “An unfortunate generalisation has been taken to prove that the immediate effect of the American Civil War was to save the cotton industry from great disaster and that immediately resulted large profits to the manufacturer from the incr

English exports of cotton goods declined in quantity : increased exports to France did not compensate for of trade with America and India where duties on ported cotton goods were increased and the native on industry developed. But the value of English orts of cotton goods increased. Thus, though the nntity of piece goods exported in 1860 (2,776,218,000 ls) was not equalled until 1867 (2,832,023,000 yards), ir value—after dropping from £40,346,000 in 1860 £28,562,000 in 1862—increased steadily throughout famine period to £57,903,000 in 1866. The quantity arn exported in 1860 was not equalled until 1872, —though the total value declined from £9,871,000 1860 to £6,202,000 in 1862—the average price per l increased from 12d. in 1860 to 28½d. in 1864.<sup>1</sup>

The shortage of cotton was first felt by those manu- rers who were anxious to keep their mills working time for the sake of the operatives. Later, when world had absorbed the surplus production of 1859-61 the demand for cotton goods increased, all manu- rers were affected. The average weekly consumption otton in Great Britain declined from 51,711 bales oo lbs.) in 1860 to 22,519 in 1863 and then slowly sed until the 1860 figure was exceeded in 1871. s naturally increased. Average prices of Middling is (Uplands) at Liverpool increased from 6½d. per 1860 to 8½d. in 1861, 17½d. in 1862, 23½d. in 1863, 7½d. in 1864. Then prices declined to 19d. in 1865, in 1866, 10½d. in 1867, and 10½d. in 1868.<sup>2</sup> Despite high prices and the work of the Cotton Supply ation and others, the efforts made at this time to

f stocks on hand. In fact his description of the situation in or, 1861, as his own later pages show, was not applicable, so far afacturers' profits are concerned, until the later months of 1862 : first of 1863. For though prices might be put up, as they were, vere not sold in any large quantities before the fall of 1862" . 10-11).

. Ellison, Appendix, Table No. 2. His figures for this period are n Holt's circulars.

*bid.*, p. 93, and Appendix, Table No. 2. See Appendix A below.

## 14 THE LANCASHIRE COTTON FAMINE

increase Lancashire's cotton supply from sources other than the Southern States were only partially successful.

Substantial profits were made during the Cotton Famine by three classes of men. First, there were manufacturers who were able to sell at unexpected high prices<sup>1</sup> not only large stocks of cotton goods accumulated during the period of over-production<sup>2</sup> but also stocks of cotton which were re-exported to New York (where the price of the raw material was even higher than in Liverpool) in preference to working them up at home.

Palmerston in August, and Gladstone in October 1862, criticised the conduct of those who took this course in preference to keeping their mills running.<sup>4</sup>

Secondly, brokers, agents and warehousemen were frequently able to make considerable profits. As J. Watts observed, "half trade at treble prices, has, in the market, paid agents and warehousemen better than full employment at normal prices."<sup>5</sup> Some Liverpool men made big profits—"people hereafter will often regret the time when 350 bales of cotton figured in the market for £16,000 and the broker got an average of nine shillings per bale for the mere trouble of passing it from one hand to another."<sup>6</sup> "Those were great times, times of prosperity, when cotton brokers came down to town in their carriages or on horseback."<sup>7</sup>

Thirdly, speculators often made considerable profits in two ways. The financing of blockade-running was

<sup>1</sup> J. Slagg (Jnr.), p. 11, for details.

<sup>2</sup> R. A. Arnold, p. 83; J. Watts, p. 376; Torrens, p. 11; Tougasovsky, p. 398; *Economist*, 20/2/64, pp. 2-3 (supplement). The distinction between speculators (generally Liverpool agents) and manufacturers bearing in mind, though, as Arnold observed, "spinners have of become speculators and speculators have been frequent exporters

<sup>3</sup> T. Ellison, p. 93; M. B. Hammond, p. 261; E. von Halle, II. J. Donnell, *History of Cotton* (1872), p. 512; *M. Daily E. & T.*,

<sup>4</sup> *Economist*, 9/8/62; *Times*, 2/8/62; *Observations on Mr. Gladstone's Denunciation of Certain Millowners in Lancashire . . .*, by a Merchant

<sup>5</sup> J. Watts, p. 376.

<sup>6</sup> *M. Daily E. & T.*, 10/9/63 (leader), 9/9/62; cf. G. Holt & Co., 25/

<sup>7</sup> P. E. J. Hemelryk, *Forty Years Reminiscences of the Cotton Trade* (1916 reprint of Lecture given in 1899); cf. E. D. Evans, pp. 120

was risky, but—if successful—extremely lucrative. “It was calculated that one successful run out of three would make a fair return, whilst 500 per cent. profit was commonly spoken of as the result of a single venture.”<sup>1</sup> T. E. Taylor stated that the “Banshee” (No. 1), though eventually lost by capture, paid her shareholders 700 per cent on their investment as the result of eight “round trips.”<sup>2</sup>

Further, there was much gambling on the violent fluctuation in cotton prices that took place during the period of the American Civil War. E. D. Evans wrote in the spring of 1864: “The speculation in cotton, at present, has been a speculation in which most of the operators have taken profits; for floating with rising prices, they have either gone the whole length of their tether, or have retired when they were satisfied with the margin of gain presented.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. Watts, p. 358; *vide* E. von Halle, II., ch. 4, § iii.

<sup>2</sup> T. E. Taylor, *Running the Blockade* (1896), p. 85.

<sup>3</sup> E. D. Evans, *Speculative Notes . . .* (1864), pp. 120-2. The following table is taken from A. Crump, *A New Departure in the Domain of Political Economy* (1878), p. 28:—

| Year. | Total Sales.<br>(ooo omitted.) | Sales on Speculation.<br>(ooo omitted.) | Per cent.<br>of Total. | Fluctuation in Price of Middling Orleans. |         |             |
|-------|--------------------------------|---|------------------------|---|---------|-------------|
|       |                                |   |                        | Highest.                                  | Lowest. | Difference. |
|       | 3,662                          | 555                                     | 15·15                  | 67½                                       | 5¾      | 1½          |
|       | 4,050                          | 1,331                                   | 32·86                  | 11½                                       | 6¾      | 5¼          |
|       | 2,756                          | 1,272                                   | 46·15                  | 28½                                       | 12      | 16½         |
|       | 2,618                          | 840                                     | 32·08                  | 29½                                       | 20½     | 9           |
|       | 2,782                          | 720                                     | 25·88                  | 31  | 21¾     | 9¼          |
|       | 3,693                          | 1,057                                   | 28·62                  | 24½                                       | 13      | 11½         |
|       | 6,716                          | 454                                     | 12·21                  | 21  | 11¾     | 9¼          |
|       |                                |   | (panic)                |   |         |             |
|       | 3,474                          | 481                                     | 13·84                  | 15  | 7½      | 7¾          |
|       | 4,226                          | 805                                     | 19·04                  | 12¾                                       | 7¾      | 5¼          |

Iolt & Co., 25/10/61; 4/7/62 (“ . . . speculative buying has maintained throughout the week on a very large scale, the same lots itly, and even in the course of the same day, changing hands at a it and heavy advance”), and the *Porcupine*, 29/11/62 (“The f speculation has produced a plethora of riches”).

There were two new developments in marketing cotton at this time. First, "bear" sales (speculating on a fall in price) gained in popularity after the first few months of the crisis had passed. It was said that in 1863 "certain parties in Manchester" had been "bearing the market to an extent never before known."<sup>1</sup> Secondly, dealings in futures not only increased but changed in character. Some years before the American Civil War cotton had been sold "in advance" when the steamer brought samples a few days ahead of the sailing ship carrying the cotton or when the telegraph to India (which was being completed in these years)<sup>2</sup> brought news of the extent and nature of Indian cotton cargoes on the high seas. Undue speculation in this type of business in 1857 virtually put an end to it in the Liverpool market, but during the Cotton Famine it was revived in an objectionable form. It was stated at the end of 1863 that "transactions in cotton to arrive no longer imply any real foundation. Sales are made on a large scale for shipment months hence that are purely fictitious—and already we hear of some of these operations being settled by the payment of differences as on the Stock Exchange."<sup>3</sup>

At the same time a Liverpool cotton broke *The Times* a copy of a form of contract adopted by the Liverpool Cotton Brokers Association:—<sup>4</sup>

"By this contract (he wrote) an absolute sale is made by for payment is totally deferred until the arrival of the cotton that may be in one week or six weeks hence. The buyer

<sup>1</sup> D. E. Buchanan & Co., 1/1/64. Speculating on a rise (sales) was naturally common in the early months of the Cotton Famine (J. Watts, p. 358; M. Williams, 1863), but later "the high price fluctuations of the war period suggested 'bear' sales" (A. Cruickshank).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Sir Charles Tilston Bright, "The Telegraph to India" (*Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers*, XXV., 1865, read on 14/11/65).

<sup>3</sup> Stead Brothers, 31/12/63; cf. Smith, Edwards & Co., M. Williams, 1863. Cotton futures, of course, did not originate in the American Civil War (see S. Dumbell in *Economic History*, I., p. 100).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Lpl. C.B. Assn.*, 12/6/63.



neither cash nor deposit for warehouse rent, nor other charges, loses no interest, and has time to choose when to sell—in fact, everything is in his favour if the market should, during the period the cotton is at sea, take a favourable turn. The original seller's position is different. He may have bought the cotton abroad either by acceptance or in actual cash and should the vessel arrive after his bills have matured he, at least, has the payment to make in full. His security for repayment of his advances or outlay is his lien on the cotton itself, and in the buyer's ability to meet any difference in value on arrival. Now for a sanguine speculator what better terms could be invented? Whether he be worth £50 or £50,000, if he can only make a purchase 'to arrive' he may without one sixpence outlay realise a handsome profit on a quantity of cotton for which he could not have provided had he purchased it on the spot. . . . I deduce from this—first, that the present system is a direct incentive to over-trading; secondly, that as a rule there is a larger sprinkling of unsound buyers for arrival cotton than for cotton on the spot; thirdly, that the risks to the seller are enormously increased, because he is induced on the strength of having sold to arrive to enter into other distant transactions, and in case of a collapse might find that by defaulting buyers and accumulated stock returned on his hands his apparent profits would be reduced to positive losses.”<sup>1</sup>

The gains made by many manufacturers help to explain the “unbounded confidence” shown in the cotton industry by bankers even when cotton was 24d. a lb.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, they throw some light on the forbearance of creditors, the consequent “insignificance of the failures that have occurred among mill-owners” and “the fact that the offering of a mill for sale is an event scarcely heard of.”<sup>3</sup> They help, too, to explain how optimistic manufacturers were able to revive the policy of building new mills and improving old ones that had characterised the 1859-61 boom but had not been pursued to any great extent at the beginning of the crisis. By 1863 not only had the construction of mills previously

<sup>1</sup> *Times*, 12/11/63; cf. 17/12/63 and T. Ellison, pp. 274-5. The introduction of a system of margins or periodic settlements for dealings in futures was discussed at this time and was clearly needed, but nothing practical was done until the formation of a Periodic Settlement Association by some sixty firms of brokers and merchants in Dec., 1882 (T. Ellison, pp. 291-6).

<sup>2</sup> M. Williams, 1867, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 1/1/63; *Times*, 10/1/63.

contracted for been resumed but new orders for mills had been given and efforts were being made to modernise existing establishments.<sup>1</sup>

In the autumn of 1862 Waugh stated that there were about forty new mills "ready, or nearly ready, for starting, in and about Blackburn when trade revives,"<sup>2</sup> and at the end of the following year "the stoppage of Bank Top Mill for the erection of newer machinery" had temporarily increased unemployment.<sup>3</sup> Robert Baker, Inspector of Factories, wrote in April, 1863: "In Bolton, seven or eight of the largest mills are rising up or are filling with machinery. In the Colne district there are preparations making for 20,000 added spindles and 5325 looms; in the Padiham district for 1450 looms, in the Burnley district for 150,000 spindles and 3600 looms; and at Leigh, Stockport and Hyde, two or three mills are built or being extended." A correspondent informed Baker that in the Wigan district five new mills had been (or were being) built, that additions were being made to three other mills and that "most of the mill-owners have taken the opportunity of whitewashing and replacing their old machinery with new."<sup>4</sup> At the same time Redgrave reported that some Manchester firms were "decreasing expenditure by improving machinery and methods of work."<sup>5</sup> No new mills were built in Oldham between 1860 and 1867, but the number of spindles in the town increased.<sup>6</sup> Altogether 98 limited liability cotton companies were formed in 1860-61 and 24 in 1862-65.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Stolterfoht's Report for 1861 (31/12/61); *M. Daily E. & T.*, 7/1/62.

<sup>2</sup> E. Waugh, *Home Life of the Lancashire Factory Folk during the Cotton Famine* (1867), p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> *Times*, 4/12/63.

<sup>4</sup> Letter from Mr. Baker . . . on . . . the Cotton Districts (*P.P.*, 1863, XXIV., 43); cf. *Times*, 2/6/63, and Annual Report of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, 1864.

<sup>5</sup> Reports of Inspectors of Factories for Half-Year ending 31/10/63, pp. 107-9.

<sup>6</sup> S. Andrews, *Fifty Years' Cotton Trade* (1887), p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix B.

While some manufacturers and agents made considerable profits, others made none of the exceptional gains that have been described but suffered severely throughout the Cotton Famine and the subsequent financial crises. Others, again, profited at one time—particularly in the early months of the shortage of cotton—but were hard hit later.<sup>1</sup> And there were speculators who learned to their cost that blockade running and gambling on futures were by no means always profitable ventures.<sup>2</sup>

The resources of manufacturers were severely strained. There was a heavy decrease in the cotton trade resulting in a nett loss which Thomas Bazley estimated at £66,225,000.<sup>3</sup> The burden of the poor rates increased considerably, and Arnold thought that it “was never so oppressive over an equal extent of the kingdom as in the cotton districts during the months which included the crisis of the Famine.”<sup>4</sup> Income from cottage rents decreased. Unused machinery deteriorated. Not infrequently a loss was incurred by keeping a mill working for the sake of the operatives.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. Watts, relying on McHaffie’s calculations, considered that “the gains on the stock of 1861 have been nearly balanced by the losses of three months in 1865” (p. 375). And even in 1861 “enormous losses” in Liverpool were reported by the Prussian Consul (*Preussisches Handelsarchiv*, 21/3/61).

<sup>2</sup> T. E. Taylor, p. 164; M. Williams (1865), p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> J. Watts, p. 375. Cf. T. Ellison, p. 96; E. von Halle, II., pp. 262-3; *Economist*, 10/3/66, p. 3 and p. 24 (supplement). The comment of *The Times*—in a leading article—on trade losses due to the American Civil War is worth quoting: “With civilised man the secondary evils of war far exceed the primary. A few soldiers may indeed be pierced by shot and bayonet or shattered by cannon, but what are their sufferings compared with the miseries of thousands of capitalists who view with straining eyes the gradual disappearance of their stock? What are bullets flying about you compared with the heavy fall of securities which have utterly lost their buoyancy?” (1/3/62).

<sup>4</sup> R. A. Arnold, p. 323 and pp. 275-90.

<sup>5</sup> J. Watts, pp. 254-8; R. A. Arnold, p. 217; Reports of Factory Inspectors for Half-Year ending 31/10/62, p. 19; *M. Daily E. & T.*, 7/1/63.

Cotton manufacturers, merchants and speculators also suffered from the financial crises of 1864 and 1866. These were due partly to the decline of the English gold reserve. Hitherto such a decline had generally been due to one of two causes—either to a long period of prosperity or to a bad harvest. The first, “a steady augmentation of good business, tends to raise the value of capital on loan : if it augments faster than the savings of the country, it will raise the value of money—the rate of interest will be higher. The second, a bad harvest, has two effects. It obliges us to pay at once for large foreign imports of food, and it diminishes the loanable capital in Lombard Street. The agricultural districts, which ordinarily send up much money, after a bad harvest are sure to send up little money. Bankers and bill brokers suffer under a diminution of means : they have smaller deposits with which to discount, and therefore they have to charge more.”<sup>1</sup>

Both these factors were at work during the period of the Cotton Famine. It was, as has been seen, a time of prosperity (the position of the cotton districts being quite exceptional), and hence there was a steady demand for capital to develop old and to finance new undertakings. A sudden increase in trade—such as that which occurred in 1865—led to an unexpected demand for the medium of exchange and had analogous effects to a loss of bullion.<sup>2</sup> There was also a “corn drain”—considerable payments to the U.S.A., Russia, Northern Germany, France and Egypt, for corn to meet the deficiency brought about by the poor harvests of 1860-62. The effects of this “corn drain” were probably over by 1863.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to these factors a new and very important cause must be considered—a “cotton drain.” Instead of buying cotton mainly from the U.S.A. and paying

<sup>1</sup> *Economist*, 27/2/64, p. 253.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 21/1/65; 4/11/65.

<sup>3</sup> *Royal Agricultural Society Journal*, 2nd Series, V., pp. 196-7, and L. B. Schmidt, “Wheat and Cotton during the Civil War” (*Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, July, 1918, p. 430), give tables of quantities of wheat and flour imported into the U.K.

for it in manufactured articles, England was buying cotton chiefly from India, Egypt and Brazil, and—as is usual when a new trade is opened with backward peoples—was paying for it in specie (silver to India, gold to Egypt and Brazil). This was an important factor in 1862-63 and again towards the end both of 1864 and 1865. The “cotton drain” like any other drain raised rates of interest. But, unlike a “corn drain” it did not leave the working population short of money (a worker is not so dependent on a shirt as on a loaf) and did not hit the agricultural interest (as a bad harvest would). Moreover, “no part of the industry which generally supplies Lombard Street with money is distressed: the ‘deposits’ in Lombard Street are as large as ever. Warwickshire, the trade of which is depressed, is a borrower in London, not a lender to London.”<sup>1</sup>

There were still further causes for the decline of the gold reserve. Abroad, gold was withdrawn by the United States in 1860 for investment in public works, by the United States in 1860-62 to help to pay for the Civil War and by German and Italian States in 1859-66 to wars then being waged on the Continent. At the same time a disturbing factor was the necessity of financing the relief of the distressed districts.<sup>2</sup>

The importance of the rapid development of all forms of limited liability companies after the passing of the Joint Stock Companies Act of 1856<sup>3</sup> must also

<sup>1</sup> *Economist*, 27/2/63, p. 253. Vide *Economist*, 28/11/63, 13/8/64, 3/12/64, 21/1/65, 11/3/65 (supplement), 7/10/65, 10/3/66 (supplement); E. D. Evans, p. 158. J. Stirling (*Practical Considerations and Bank Management*, 1865) protested against giving too much value to the “cotton drain” (p. 34).

<sup>2</sup> *Economist*, No. 1184, 5/5/66; E. D. Adams, II., p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> H. A. Shannon points out that “a text-book myth would give the place of honour to the Companies Act of 1862. . . . The Act was passed as a consolidating and extending Act which brought in no new principles, and although an outburst of company promoting took place in the cheap money market that happened to follow it, its effect was more legal than economic” (*Economic History*, p. 399).

be considered. These companies were strongly supported by the prosperous investing public.

Investors helped to finance American and German railways and companies whose object was to raise cotton in places other than the Southern States: they also speculated in cotton futures. Limited liability companies increased rapidly in 1862-65, and Williams attributed the financial crisis of 1866 mainly "to the extraordinary and rapid growth of financial companies for several years past and the facilities which their competition afforded to the general public for carrying out all kinds of speculative works."<sup>1</sup>

In the spring of 1864 Lancashire at last seemed to have recovered from the long depression in her staple industry. There was a boom, which, however, degenerated into a "speculation mania" in cotton. This was checked by the Bank of England which raised its rate to 9 per cent. on May 5. Subsequently it dropped again, but in the autumn large arrivals and rumours of peace in America caused "the most and most rapid decline in the value of cotton to take place in the previous history of the trade in three consecutive weeks declining 6d. to 7d. ]

"Mills were closed, hands thrown out of work

<sup>1</sup> M. Williams, 1866, p. 3; *Economist*, 20/2/64, 3/3/65, (supplements); E. D. Evans, pp. 165-9 and 229-30; Viscount "Seven per Cent." (in *Essays and Addresses on Economic Questions*); J. Mills, "On the Post-Panic Period, 1866-70" (*Mc. Stat. Soc.*, pp. 92-3); *Times*, City article, 31/12/63 and 31/12/64; J. Stirling. Mr. Shannon gives the following table of limited liability companies in England registered as formed after 14/7/56 (*Economic History*, II

|      |     |      |         |      |  |
|------|-----|------|---------|------|--|
| 1856 | 211 | 1860 | 365     | 1863 |  |
| 1857 | 348 | 1861 | 429     | 1864 |  |
| 1858 | 277 | 1862 | (a) 380 | 1865 |  |
| 1859 | 288 |      | (b) 79  |      |  |

(a) Registrations to Nov., 1862, under Act of 1856, and for companies only, under the Act of 1844.

(b) Registrations from Nov., 1862, under the Act of 1862.

<sup>2</sup> M. Williams (1864), p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> R. A. Arnold, postscript to 2nd ed., 1865.

September, October and November, some 120 cotton firms stopped payment. The bank rate rose to 9 per cent. on September 8 and there was a panic during which the Leeds Banking Company and the Unity Joint Stock Mutual Banking Company suspended payment. There was another panic in Lancashire in the early months of 1865 when it was seen that the South was collapsing. Two Liverpool banks failed.<sup>1</sup>

It was in the spring of 1866 that the severest crisis of the period took place—a crash which Juglar regards as the postponed liquidation of the crisis of 1864. Overend, Gurney & Co. Ltd., which had become a limited liability company in July, 1865 (“then liable for unsecured deposits of some £7,000,000 to £8,000,000 and also then ‘insolvent by at least four millions sterling’”) <sup>2</sup> stopped payment on May 9, 1866, with liabilities amounting to nearly nineteen million pounds, and there were many other failures.<sup>3</sup> On May 1 the Governor and Deputy-Governor of the Bank of England wrote to Russell and Gladstone that at the beginning of the day they had had £5,727,000 in the reserve department but doubted whether they would have £3,000,000 in the evening. “We have not refused any legitimate application for assistance, and unless the money taken from the Bank is entirely withdrawn from circulation, there is no reason

<sup>1</sup> *Economist*, 24/9/64, 1/10/64, 11/3/65 (supplement, p. 4); Williams (1865), p. 1; J. A. Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool* (1875), p. 530; C. Juglar (*Des Crises Commerciales*, 2nd ed., 1889, pp. 374-83) and É. de Laveleye (*Le Marché monétaire et les Crises depuis cinquante Ans.*, 1865, ch. 5, pp. 69-98) regard the 1864 crisis as a commercial crisis; Tougan-Baranowski (p. 126) contends with some justice that it was a financial crisis since the commercial statistics for 1863-66 show that this period was one of steady commercial progress.

<sup>2</sup> H. A. Shannon in *Economic History*, II., p. 416; *Economist*, 16/6/66.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Joint Stock Discount Co. (March), Barned's Bank, Liverpool (formerly Barned, Mozely & Co.) (April 18, liabilities were £3½ millions), Consolidated Bank of London (May, later revived), Bank of Birmingham, Preston Banking Co. (July). The London, Chatham and Dover Railway was in difficulties and—like the Great Eastern in 1865—was found to have deceived the public as to the real condition of its affairs.

to suppose that this reserve is insufficient." Despite this assurance, Russell and Gladstone on the same day authorised the Bank to transfer notes from the reserve to the banking department if necessary: parliamentary sanction for this temporary suspension of the Bank Act of 1844 would, of course, be sought.<sup>1</sup> The Bank did not need to avail itself of this permission. It raised its rate to 10 per cent. and kept it at that level until August 16, 1866.

The Foreign Secretary circularised European Governments that there was "no general want of soundness in the ordinary trade of the country." The panic was over by May 12, but was followed by a long period of depression. By August, 1866, over 150 companies were in process of compulsory liquidation and another 50 in other forms. By March, 1867, when over 260 companies were in Chancery, Newmarch could say, "the constitution of the country consisted of four parts, the Queen, Lords, Commons and the Liquidators of public companies."<sup>2</sup> The year 1867 was described as "to all intents and purposes . . . one long financial, commercial, industrial and railway crisis."<sup>3</sup>

The crisis of 1866 has sometimes been regarded as mainly a financial or—to adopt the term used by the *Economist*—a "credit crisis." "The principal centres of credit—the banks and discount firms—had done so much apparent bad business that the trust in many of them was weakened and a fatal pressure on a few of them created."<sup>4</sup> The panic "affected bankers, finance companies, who live by their credit, not merchants and manufacturers."<sup>5</sup> But, on the one hand, the iron shipbuilders of London were severely hit and there was much distress in the East End and, on the other hand, cotton manufacturers were affected. No sooner had

<sup>1</sup> P.P., 1866, XXXIX. (Bank of England).

<sup>2</sup> H. A. Shannon in *Economic History*, II., p. 417.

<sup>3</sup> Viscount Goschen, *Essays and Addresses on Economic Questions* (1905), p. 60.

<sup>4</sup> *Economist*, 14/7/66.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 20/10/66.



cotton goods become saleable again than manufacturers—anxious to make up for lost profits and to use to the full newly installed efficient machinery—once more produced more goods than their customers could consume. Hence “during the last six months of 1866 textiles were almost unsaleable. Thereupon began the consignment of goods to China and India, which naturally made the glut worse.”<sup>1</sup>

The losses of the period of the Cotton Famine were thus followed by those of the years 1865-69. It was said in Liverpool that “1865 ruined the speculators, 1866 the merchants, 1867 the producers.”<sup>2</sup> The Manchester Chamber of Commerce stated “that in the year 1869 the extreme badness of trade resulted in an extent of disaster which, both in the amount of property involved, and in respect to the hardships and ruin entailed on the manufacturers, is almost without parallel in the history of our commerce. In that year alone upwards of 80 spinners and manufacturers in this district failed, independently of those who compounded with their creditors unknown to the general public. . . . The destitution among the operatives in some localities caused an enormous advance in the poor rates, and in order to avoid liability to taxation on unworked factories the machinery of many was cleared out and even sold for old metal.”<sup>3</sup>

Manchester bankruptcies had totalled 1193 in 1861-64. The income tax collected from the cotton spinners and manufacturers decreased although “the increase in all

<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital* (Everyman's Library), I., p. 465, II., pp. 748-52. For the crises of 1864 and 1866 see Rept. of S.C. on the Limited Liability Acts (*P.P.*, 1867, X.); *Times* and *Economist*, May to December, 1866, *Bankers' Magazine*, 1866 (“The Panic of 1866”); W. Fowler, *The Crisis of 1866* (1866); C. Juglar, pp. 374-90; M. Tougan-Baranowsky, pp. 123-37; É. de Laveleye, *Le Marché monétaire et les Crises* (1865), p. 80; Circulars for 1864-67 of M. Williams, Stolterfoht, and Leech, Harrison & Forwood (Manchester).

<sup>2</sup> Goschen, p. 93.

<sup>3</sup> Cited by J. Slagg (Jnr.), p. 25, and by A. L. Dunham, p. 202. Vide *Manchester Courier*, 1/1/70, for failures of 1869.

other branches has been so considerable, as to prevent any great loss of revenue.”<sup>1</sup>

The Lancashire cotton industry eventually gained in efficiency through reorganisation forced upon it by the Cotton Famine and the subsequent financial crises. Small incompetent factories with inadequate capital behind them disappeared: most of them “were no more than weaving sheds, built during the boom of 1858 and subsequent years. They had been established mainly by speculators, one of whom supplied the yarn, another the machinery, a third the buildings; and they were worked by men who had been over-lookers, or by other persons of small means.”<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, financially strong manufacturers built new and better factories, improved machinery and reorganised methods of work to eliminate waste and to increase production. “Between 1861 and 1868 no less than 338 cotton mills disappeared. . . . The number of power looms declined by 20,663; but their product simultaneously increased, so that an improved power loom was now giving a better yield than did the old one. . . . The number of spindles increased by 1,612,541, whereas the number of workers employed diminished by 50,505.”<sup>3</sup>

The need for suppressing bad work was fully recognised. When complaints were made in 1865 of “the excessive damage and loss arising from mildew in cloth, especially that sent to India,” the Manchester Chamber of Commerce set up a special committee to investigate the problem and its conclusions were printed and circulated.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. Watts, p. 376.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital* (Everyman's Library), I., p. 490. He adds: “Most of these little factories came to grief. The same fate would have overtaken them in the commercial crisis which was only staved off by the cotton famine. Although they formed one-third of the total number of factories, the amount of capital invested in them was very small as compared with the total amount of capital invested in the cotton industry.”

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 465 (n.). Cf. M. Tougan-Baranowsky, p. 322; E. Helm in *Mc. Stat. Soc.*, 1868-69, p. 92, and Appendix C.

<sup>4</sup> *M. Ch. Comm.*, 1858-67, 16/8/65, p. 623; 18/10/65, p. 635; 26/10/65, p. 642; 3/1/66, pp. 666-9. Cf. A. D. Shaw, *Extracts from a Special Report on the Cotton Goods Trade of Lancashire* (1883), pp. 21-6.

Spinners—the buyers of cotton—learned the need for a measure of co-operation and formed the Cotton Spinners' Association<sup>1</sup> in order to present a reasonably united front to the organisations of the merchants—the sellers of cotton<sup>2</sup>—and of the brokers, who acted as intermediaries between these two groups.<sup>3</sup> Owing to the exceptional conditions brought about by the Cotton Famine there came to a head at this time a number of disputes on trade practices—namely, the allowance to be made on each bale for tare (that is to say, for the canvas and ropes used for packing), the procedure to be adopted in returning falsely packed or adulterated cotton, the terms of payment for cotton and the method by which brokers' remuneration should be calculated.

Inconveniences had arisen long before the sixties from badly packed and adulterated cotton not merely from India, to which reference has already been made, but from the U.S.A. Thus in 1835 the Liverpool Cotton Brokers' Association<sup>4</sup> stated in a memorandum signed by 59 brokers :—

“ This species of fraud has long been the source of much inconvenience and vexation to all concerned in the cotton business ; but whether from the infrequency of the occasions, when distributed among so many, or from the smallness of the loss in the scale of mercantile transactions, no measures have hitherto been taken to arrest its progress. For the same reasons, to which may be added the difficulty of obtaining redress, the claims arising from this cause are frequently demanded rather as a matter of form, and often are altogether abandoned, and if allowed on this side of the water, are seldom prosecuted against the parties on the other. This impunity, as might have been expected, has operated as a direct encouragement to such dishonest practices, which, commencing with the lesser fraud of introducing seed, waste, stones and sand into the interior of the bale, have at length extended to a wholesale and systematic plan of deception and plunder by means of ‘ false packing.’ The ordinary mode of effecting this is by a plating or thin layer of good

<sup>1</sup> A report of the first annual meeting, 19/7/64, appeared in the *C.S.R.*, 1/8/64 ; cf. advt. in *M. Daily E. & T.*, 21/1/65.

<sup>2</sup> American Chamber of Commerce, Liverpool.

<sup>3</sup> Liverpool Cotton Brokers' Association.

<sup>4</sup> Formally inaugurated in April, 1841, but informally already in existence (cf. T. Ellison, p. 181, and *Porcupine*, 10/1/85).

cotton on the two sides of the bale usually sampled, the inside being wholly composed of a very inferior quality. In some cases, however, the outer layer consists of a quality differing only a few degrees from that on the inside, which is again packed in layers of various qualities but all of them worse than the outside; the obvious intention of which being to render the fraud more secure by adding to the difficulty of detection. The experience of the present year furnishes abundant proof of the increase of this practice. It is not now as formerly confined to an occasional bale or two, but it is extended to whole parcels of one or two hundred bales in the lot; and when it is considered that the difference between the real and apparent value of the cotton may be three or four pounds sterling a bale some idea may be formed of the magnitude and dangerous consequences of the fraud.”<sup>1</sup>

In December, 1841, a memorial signed by 55 cotton dealers and spinners drew the attention of the Directors of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce “to the great increase which has occurred of late years in the false packing of cotton wool imported from the United States of America. This is an evil of such a nature as to render the utmost minuteness of investigation necessary in using the cotton, and it is feared that in many cases the fraud passes undetected, to the great deterioration of the yarn and manufactured goods produced from such falsely packed cotton.” In forwarding this communication to the American Chamber of Commerce at Liverpool in January, 1842, the Vice-President of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce wrote:—

“This disgraceful practice has increased to such an extent, as almost to deserve the name of a system; it calls for the reprobation of every honest community.”<sup>2</sup>

The Liverpool Cotton Brokers stated at the same time:—

“That the practice of false packing has been on the increase more especially during the last two or three years—that it is more skilfully and systematically done than formerly, that large quantities of sand, which cannot be detected in the samples, are frequently mixed throughout

<sup>1</sup> *Am. Cb. Comm.*, 27/11/35, when a General Meeting was held “for the purpose of taking into consideration and adopting the most effectual measures for the prevention of frauds in the packing of cotton in the United States.”

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 24/1/42 (Annual Meeting).

whole bales on which the buyer can obtain no allowance, that bales appearing clean and fair on the outside are gradually more and more dirty and seedy as the centre is approached, but yet not of so strongly marked and distinct a character that the consumer, after opening, likes to return them preferring to put up with the loss rather than encounter the difficulty and doubt of obtaining an allowance from the importer. And when it is considered that the cotton of Brazil is almost invariably fair and honest throughout as to the uniformity of quality in the same package proving on opening exactly what it purports to be, the consumers of the cotton of the United States take it the more hardly that the article of which they use most, should stand the most unfavourable comparison in this respect. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

The evils continued, however. In 1856 the American Chamber of Commerce and the Liverpool Cotton Brokers’ Association memorialised “the Chamber of Commerce of New Orleans and Mobile on the evils arising from the practice of irregular packing,”<sup>2</sup> and shortly before the Cotton Famine (September, 1859) the Liverpool Cotton Brokers’ Association “resolved that the intermixture of sand and dust with American cotton has become an intolerable nuisance and grievance . . . (and) that in the two million bales of cotton received this year by Great Britain from the U.S. it is probable that the sand and dust form a portion equivalent to the weight of one hundred thousand bales.”<sup>3</sup>

To some extent the bad state in which cotton arrived was due to carelessness and even to dishonesty on the part of shippers. It was not until 1870 that a complaint from Messrs. Neill, Brothers & Co. (New Orleans), caused the matter to be discussed by the Liverpool Cotton

<sup>1</sup> *Am. Cb. Comm.*, 9/2/42 (Letter from Chairman and Deputy-Chairman of Liverpool Cotton Brokers’ Association to the American Chamber of Commerce).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 3/9/56.

<sup>3</sup> *Lpl. C.B. Assn.*, 30/9/59; also quoted in *Am. Cb. Comm.*, 5/10/59. The President of the American Chamber of Commerce wrote on 5/10/59 that “the admixture of sand with American cotton . . . is of comparatively recent origin, but it has increased from year to year, until it has assumed a magnitude which seriously imperils the interest of all who are engaged in the cotton trade.” The evil can hardly be described as “of comparatively recent origin” since complaints go back to the thirties.

Brokers' Association, the American Chamber of Commerce (Liverpool) and the Cotton Shippers' Association of New Orleans, and the following notice was issued to captains :

"The New Orleans Cotton Shippers' Association and the American Chamber of Commerce at Liverpool have arranged to take steps to hold ships liable for the bad state in which cotton is frequently delivered at the latter port, and captains are therefore recommended to be careful as to the order and condition of the cotton which they receive, and the proper storage, carriage and delivery of it, if they wish to avoid trouble at Liverpool."<sup>1</sup>

In reckoning the weight of cotton to be paid for by the purchaser the broker subtracted from the gross weight of each bale the estimated weight of the tare. It was customary to reckon this on the basis of 4 lbs. per cwt. except for East Indian cotton. During the Cotton Famine some importers appear to have been in the habit of removing the thin canvas of the bales on arrival and of replacing it with a much thicker canvas. Spinners complained that when this was done the customary tare allowance was insufficient. For example, an Oldham spinner bought 7 bales of cotton which weighed 20 cwt. 1 qr. 4 lbs. (gross) and a tare allowance of 2 qrs. 25 lbs. (i.e. 4 lbs. per cwt.) was made. The tare, however, actually weighed 121 lbs., and the spinner brought an action in the Birkenhead County Court in December, 1864, to recover from the broker the cost of 40 lbs. of cotton—the difference between 81 lbs. and 121 lbs.—at 2s. 4½d. per lb. He was represented by the solicitor

<sup>1</sup> *Am. Cb. Comm.*, June to August, 1870: the circular to captains is given on August 17. Pilfering of cotton also increased in the sixties. It was said to be "a common thing for the crews of cotton laden ships to fill their beds from the cargo. In many cases their beds would contain as much as 40 lbs. of cotton for which 1s. per lb. could be obtained. . . . Cellars and all manner of places were opened for buying small quantities of cotton, and to my personal knowledge more than twenty such places began operations in the neighbourhood. The great proportion of them came to grief, some found themselves in prison, others had to give up business, finding themselves poorer when they left off than at the beginning" (*Porcupine*, 12/9/85). Other "dealers" worked on a bigger scale, buying from these "traders" and pilferers (*ibid.*).

of the Cotton Spinners' Association and he won his case.<sup>1</sup> The Liverpool Cotton Brokers' Association considered that the customary tare allowance was satisfactory in normal times: it held, however, that the deliberate increasing of the weight of bagging was a dishonest practice that "should be and, it is believed, already is abolished."<sup>2</sup>

Since 1843 the practice had been that unsatisfactory cotton bales might be returned at any time within twelve months of purchase, compensation being paid at the price of cotton on the day when it had been bought, and apparently the buyer was not charged for the carriage of the cotton even if it were sent back to the country of origin.<sup>3</sup> The Liverpool Cotton Brokers' Association and the American Chamber of Commerce desired to alter this arrangement, and in November, 1851, deputations from these bodies and from the Brazilian Association and the East India and China Association agreed that compensation for badly packed cotton should be reckoned at the price of the day of return (instead of the day of purchase) and that no transit expenses beyond the limits of Great Britain should be allowed. But the time within which the cotton might be returned was not reduced from twelve months to three or six as the American Chamber of Commerce and the Liverpool Cotton Brokers' Association desired.<sup>4</sup> It was not easy to enforce the new practice. In May, 1853, the Liverpool Cotton Brokers' Association referred to the "extreme difficulty and want of unanimity in carrying out the new rules" and in the following month permitted members to sell either on the old terms or the new.<sup>5</sup>

The proportion of badly packed cotton increased

<sup>1</sup> *M. Daily E. & T.*, 21/1/65 (adv.): *Lpl. C.B. Assn.*, 27/1/65.

<sup>2</sup> E. Musgrave to Hugh Mason, 17/3/65; *Lpl. C.B. Assn.*, 27/3/65.

<sup>3</sup> *Am. Ch. Comm.*, 5 and 12/4/43, 4/5/43. The twelve months' time limit dates back to 1812 (*ibid.*, 28/1/12).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 20/11/51.

<sup>5</sup> *Lpl. C.B. Assn.*, 13/5/53; 10/6/53; cf. *Am. Ch. Comm.*, Sept., 1852, to May, 1853.

during the Cotton Famine so that the question became one of considerable importance. The Liverpool Cotton Brokers' Association on December 19, 1862, once more resolved "that the time for returns be limited to . . . ten days and three months"<sup>1</sup> and in the following month the Board of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce "expressed a strong opinion that this resolution was an inroad upon the usages of the trade which ought not to be submitted to."<sup>2</sup> In 1864 the Cotton Spinners' Association took the matter up from the buyers' point of view; it desired compensation at the price of the day of purchase and permission to return cotton within six (instead of only three) months. The Liverpool Cotton Brokers' Association submitted the whole matter to various merchants' associations.<sup>3</sup> By November, 1866, however, it had reaffirmed its resolution to enforce the new practice which it had been favouring for the past fifteen years or so.<sup>4</sup>

Terms of payment for cotton was also a matter of dispute between buyers and sellers. Existing practice favoured buyers, for they could pay either in cash or in bankers' bills bearing interest at the fixed rate of 5 per cent. whatever the Bank of England rate might be. Consequently "the buyers pay in cash when interest is below 5 per cent. and in three months bills when it is above that rate,"<sup>5</sup> with the result that when—as in the financial crisis of 1866—the rate of discount was high Liverpool bankers were overloaded with cotton bills.<sup>6</sup>

During the crisis attempts were made to modify the usual practice, and the Manchester Chamber of Commerce complained in October, 1866, that "during the late panic when the rate of interest increased, parties selling

<sup>1</sup> *Lpl. C.B. Assn.*, 19/12/62.

<sup>2</sup> *M. Cb. Comm.* (1858-67), Jan. 1863, p. 428.

<sup>3</sup> *Lpl. C.B. Assn.*, 27/3/65.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 16/11/66.

<sup>5</sup> *Am. Cb. Comm.*, 20/6/61 (Report of Sub-Committee), 22/10/66 (meeting of representatives of certain Chambers of Commerce and Mercantile Associations in Manchester).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 24/10/61.



cotton refused to receive these bills except at the increased price.”<sup>1</sup> Sellers desired payment to be in cash or in approved bills at the Bank of England rate of discount at the time of tender. A meeting of representatives of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, the Cotton Spinners’ Association, the American Chamber of Commerce (Liverpool) and the East India and China Association of Liverpool, agreed on October 18, 1866, on new terms of sale to come into operation on January 1, 1867. Subsequent negotiations with the Liverpool Cotton Brokers’ Association led to a modification of the terms and to a postponement of their operation to March 1, 1867. The final terms were “cash within ten days less  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. discount” or approved bills at the Bank of England rate. In its General Report for 1867 the American Chamber of Commerce (Liverpool) stated that the new terms had proved “satisfactory to all parties.”<sup>2</sup>

The manner in which cotton brokers’ remuneration should be reckoned was also a problem that assumed exceptional importance during the Cotton Famine. Brokers were paid on a percentage basis ( $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.), and, as has been seen, often made big profits on a small turnover of dear cotton. “The purchases of the trade during last year (complained the Cotton Spinners’ Association in January, 1865) were 1,632,850 bales, which at an average price, say of £35 per bale would amount to £57,149,750; the commission paid for brokerage on that amount would be £285,748, and this at a time when the profits of spinning taken as a whole are absolutely *nil*. To this enormous amount of commission paid by spinners to their brokers must be added the value of the samples taken from each bale of cotton by the broker for his own purposes. A moderate estimate places these samples at four ounces weight from each bale . . . which at 1s. 9d. per lb. would amount to £30,615, making a grand total paid by the spinners to their brokers

<sup>1</sup> *Liverpool Daily Post*, 25/10/66 (Manchester Chamber of Commerce quarterly meeting).

<sup>2</sup> *Am. Ch. Comm.*, 12/7/66, 22/10/66, 14 and 27/2/67, 14/2/68.

## 34 THE LANCASHIRE COTTON FAMINE

of £316,363."<sup>1</sup> Merchants were making payments on a similar scale to *their* brokers.

In fact, new trading conditions—such as the development of futures and the constructing of the Atlantic cable—were already bringing the broker into competition with the merchant whom he had formerly served. The Cotton Spinners' Association observed: "There can be no doubt that very many of the associated brokers act for the advantage of both sellers as well as purchasers of cotton, and at the same time are speculators on their own account, thereby fostering high prices of cotton . . . and encouraging gambling and speculative operations, which for the last two years has kept cotton at a price totally inconsistent with that which would have ruled had the Liverpool market been governed simply by supply and demand."<sup>2</sup>

It is perhaps not unreasonable to see in the tension between spinners, merchants and brokers in these years the origin of the quarrels that went on through the seventies and led to the forming of the Liverpool Cotton Exchange as a rival to the old Cotton Brokers' Association. Eventually the two bodies were amalgamated in the Liverpool Cotton Association.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *M. Daily E. & T.*, 21/1/65 (advt.).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* In 1870 thirty-six firms of merchants and four banks joined in complaining that speculation in futures was *depressing* prices (letter of 27/7/70 in *Am. Cb. Comm.*, Liverpool).

<sup>3</sup> T. Ellison, Part II., ch. 4. For organisation of the Liverpool cotton trade some years after the Cotton Famine, see e.g. International Cotton Convention, 1877 (*Report of the Proceedings* held in Liverpool, 12 and 13/7/77), (1877).

## CHAPTER III.

### COTTON SUPPLY.

THE great reduction in the supplies of the raw material was one of the chief causes—though not the sole cause—of the crisis that overtook the Lancashire cotton industry in 1861-64. British imports of cotton, which were 1,261,400,000 lbs. in 1861 dropped to 533,100,000 lbs. in the following year and did not reach the 1861 figure until 1865. This shortage was due to the dependence of the industry upon a single source of supply. In 1860 England obtained 2,580,700 bales—or about 80 per cent. of her total cotton supplies—from the Southern States. As early as April 25, 1861, it was reported that “the present available supply of cotton on this side is quite trifling.”<sup>1</sup> During the Civil War the amount of cotton that the South exported (either directly from New Orleans or indirectly through Matamoros, the West Indies or the Northern States) was very small, and not until 1871 did England obtain as much cotton from this source as she had done in 1860.<sup>2</sup>

The peril of relying mainly upon America for our raw cotton was realised by far-seeing persons at an earlier date than is sometimes supposed. A Liverpool correspondent of the President of the Board of Trade wrote in June, 1828, of “the precarious situation of the cotton trade of this country from our too great dependence upon the United States for the supply of the raw material.”<sup>3</sup> It was not a war between North and South

<sup>1</sup> *M. Daily E. & T.*, 6/5/61.

<sup>2</sup> T. Ellison, Appendix, Table 1.

<sup>3</sup> British Museum, Add. MS. 38756 (255).

that was feared so much as a negro rising, a partial or total failure of the crop, interferences with transport through storms, or the use in the Northern mills of an ever-increasing proportion of the Southern crop. Men like John Bright and Thomas Bazley, who appreciated the danger, urged both the Government and Lancashire business men to encourage the growth of good cheap cotton in India, the West Indies, Brazil, Egypt, and elsewhere.

John Bright had secured the appointment of a Select Committee on the Growth of Cotton in India, which had published its report in July, 1848.<sup>1</sup> Later, in conjunction with Bazley and T. Ashton, he raised a subscription to enable Alexander Mackay to be sent to India to make enquiries into the possibility of increasing cotton supplies from that country. Mackay died on the way home, but his reports were published in 1853.<sup>2</sup>

A further step was taken in 1857 when the Cotton Supply Association was formed in Manchester. Its methods were summarised in a leading article in the *Cotton Supply Reporter* of November 1, 1858. The Association hoped to increase our sources of cotton supply "by bringing the necessary influence to bear upon our own and other Governments for the removal of restrictive duties or legislative obstructions to cotton growth or exportations in the British dominions or elsewhere; by obtaining and diffusing all available information as to countries capable of growing cotton, with a view to stimulating and directing private enterprise in its production; by circulating printed instructions as to the best methods of cotton farming and the preparation of cotton for the market; by grants of cotton seed, cotton gins, and machinery of the most approved kinds or construction, as inducements to private persons or associations to enter upon cotton culture; by sending out competent teachers or agents

<sup>1</sup> P.P., 1847-48, IX. Cf. W. O. Henderson, "John Bright and Indian Cotton" (*Empire Cotton Growing Review*, X., 3, July, 1933, pp. 189-94).

<sup>2</sup> *Western India: Reports . . . by . . . the late Alexander Mackay*, ed. by J. Robertson (1853).

to countries where they would be likely to promote or improve cotton cultivation ; by awarding honorary and other prizes to successful cultivators. . . .”

This plan of action was followed. Prizes and medals were offered to cultivators. Over a thousand tons of seed were distributed in 1857-68, and gins and presses (with instructions how to use them) were sent to suitable applicants. Deputations assiduously discussed with Ministers various topics connected with the growth of cotton. In conjunction with the Manchester Cotton Company the Association sent Mr. Haywood to India to inquire into cotton prospects there. A cotton museum was started in Manchester. The Association arranged for a collection of cloth made from Indian cotton to be displayed at the International Exhibition of London in 1861, and sent samples and implements to the Turin Cotton Exhibition in 1864. Assistance was obtained from the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, which not merely passed on all relevant communications to the Association, but lent it such furniture as it could “conveniently spare.” The P. & O. Company co-operated by sending cotton seed to India at half the usual rates.

The most effective work of the Association was done during the period of the Cotton Famine. It lingered on for a few years afterwards but came to an end in 1872. It had to face considerable difficulties. The prevailing economic doctrine of the day was expressed by the gentleman who declined to join the “Cotton Supply Association, because he did not believe that it proceeded upon a scientific basis. If they left the matter to the natural arbitrament of supply and demand, they would have no occasion to fear a dearth of cotton.” Even at the height of the distress, in September, 1862, when a meeting adopted the Fifth Annual Report of the Association, “one of the largest manufacturers declined, for want of time, to act upon the committee.” And a year later the Secretary, in a letter to the Liverpool Press, stated that the Association had spent £5000 a year, and of this less than £70 a year came from Liverpool. It is clear

that with a budget of only £5000 a year the activities of the Association were strictly limited.

Nor was the Government particularly helpful. It is true that it allowed Dr. Forbes, manager of the Government cotton-growing factory at Dharwar, to accompany Mr. Haywood on his mission to India, and that H.M. Consuls were instructed to send to the Foreign Office information that might be of use to cotton manufacturers, but Lord John Russell distinctly stated that consuls should not "be allowed to incur any expenditure of public money on this account." Any direct financial assistance from the Government was out of the question.

To the lack of interest on the part of many Lancashire manufacturers and of the Government must be added the mistakes of the Cotton Supply Association itself. First, the Association extended its activities over too wide a field. Any insignificant island in the tropics in which cotton had been known to grow was liable to have a stack of leaflets presented to it. Any traveller who thought he had seen cotton growing wild a thousand miles from a proper road was listened to with rapt attention. Secondly, the Cotton Supply Association approached the problem of increasing cotton supplies in a somewhat amateurish spirit. It seemed to assume that anyone could grow cotton by following the instructions printed in leaflets. To ask enthusiastic missionaries and less enthusiastic Colonial Governors and Consuls to distribute seed, gins and leaflets and then hope for the best was a somewhat rough and ready procedure which could be excused only on the plea that the funds at the disposal of the Association did not permit it to do anything further.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The work of the Cotton Supply Association is best studied in its own publications—the annual reports, the *Cotton Supply Reporter*, pamphlets and special reports. I. Watts, who was secretary of the Association from 1863 onwards, wrote an account of its work—*The Cotton Supply Association: its Origin and Progress* (1871). Cf. W. O. Henderson, "Cotton Supply Association" (*Empire Cotton Growing Review*, Vol. IX., p. 132).

It was to India that Lancashire turned with the greatest confidence when cotton supplies from the Southern States ran short. Cotton had been grown in India from the earliest times, though to what extent is not known. The chief Indian cotton districts were the Punjab and Sind in the North-West, Oude and the Doab in the North-East, Guzerat on the West Coast, the Deccan, Sholapur and Dharwar in Central India, and Coimbatore and Tinneveli in the South.<sup>1</sup> Cotton was transported to Bombay by carts, by river boats, and by coasting vessels, and was then sent to England or China.

Cotton was not grown in India by the same methods as in Southern States. In America it was a staple product grown on large estates by slave labour, but in India it was raised on small holdings, and was a small subordinate crop sown only every third or fourth year. The ryot's main occupation was to raise enough food for the coming year. He would "not neglect the raising of food for the sake of cotton, however high its price might be, for in so doing he runs the risk of starvation."<sup>2</sup> Neither the yield nor the quality of Indian cotton equalled that of the Southern States. English and American planters, both private individuals and civil servants, had conducted experiments to improve methods of cultivating cotton and to increase the yield per acre, but their methods had met with only partial success. Indian cotton was, to a considerable extent, used locally. It was cleaned by rollers and, after being spun, was woven on a primitive loom by the village weaver. It was used not only for clothes but for pillow stuffings, quilts, ropes, sails, carpets, towels, and tablecloths.

The inability of India, despite her apparently great potentialities in cotton growing, to supply England

<sup>1</sup> Rivett Carnac estimated in 1868 that "the total of the cotton cultivation (area) throughout . . . India does not exceed 8½ million acres," and that the number of bales exported annually to England was about 1,700,000 (*P.P.*, 1868-69, XLVI., 22).

<sup>2</sup> S. Smith, *Cotton Trade of India* (1863), p. 13.

regularly with a large quantity of good cotton, was due to various causes. The climate was not so suitable as in the Southern States. Cultivation was hampered by the persistence of old-fashioned and traditional methods, due largely to "the very low and abject condition of the cultivators of the soil, the absence of capital, and the extent of the Government demand for rent or revenue," which was brought to the notice of Bright's Committee.<sup>1</sup>

Further, trade was hampered by lack of a law of contract and of a Bankruptcy Act, and also by the fact that no energetic steps were taken to stop the adulteration of cotton. Above all, Government failed to provide proper roads and bridges. Mackay stated that in Guzerat there were no roads "in the civilised and ordinary sense of the term,"<sup>2</sup> and it was reported from Indore that it took longer "to convey the cotton to port than to rear the plant."<sup>3</sup> An economic factor of importance was "the irregularity of the demand for Indian cotton."<sup>4</sup> The Lancashire merchant took Indian cotton only when he could not obtain American, and in China political unrest restricted trade.

At the time of the Cotton Famine several companies were formed to obtain supplies from India. The most important was the Manchester Cotton Company, which undertook cotton growing in the Dharwar district near the new port of Sedashegur, where, however, there were difficulties with the construction of a pier, and of a road from the port to the cotton district, and in the spring of 1862 neither road nor pier had been built. These difficulties, coupled with the lack of native labour and the unhealthiness of Sedashegur, caused the Manchester Cotton Company to go into liquidation in 1864.

A problem which faced those who endeavoured to extend cotton culture in India was the difficulty of buying waste lands. Lord Canning's simple plan for their disposal was replaced by the far more complicated scheme

<sup>1</sup> P.P., 1847-48, IX., Report, p. v.

<sup>3</sup> P.P., 1857, XXXI., Pt. I., 13.

<sup>2</sup> A. Mackay, p. 211.

<sup>4</sup> S. Smith, p. 12.



of Sir Charles Wood, with the result that much of the land remained uncultivated. The attitude of the Government on these questions met with much criticism in some quarters. Imports of cotton from India, however, increased from 563,000 bales in 1860 to 1,390,000 in 1863 and 1,866,610 in 1866. The quality was poor. It was said that "the sudden rise in price in the middle of the year 1862 has . . . caused all the sweepings and refuse of the bazaars to be sent to the ports for shipment."<sup>1</sup> The results of the Cotton Famine on India were a temporary increase—not nearly so considerable as was anticipated—in the exports of cotton, a very slow improvement in the quality of the cotton, an improvement in the condition of the ryot and an impetus to the development of Indian cotton mills.

India was regarded by Lancashire not merely as a place from which raw cotton could be obtained but also as a market for yarns and goods. On the eve of the Cotton Famine Indian import duties on cotton goods were increased from 5 per cent. to 10 per cent. Lancashire's protests secured a reduction later, but it was not until the next occasion when the cotton trade was depressed—in 1878-86—that the abolition of all Indian duties on cotton goods was secured.<sup>2</sup>

After India the most important sources of cotton grown within the Empire were the British West Indies and British Guiana. In 1786-89 the British West Indies had sent England 45,000 bales a year or 70 per cent. of England's total cotton imports. In 1805, when it was taken over from the Dutch, British Guiana was "a cotton rather than a sugar producing country."<sup>3</sup> In the nineteenth century, however, supplies declined from both colonies owing to the scarcity of labour and to the fact that the price of cotton declined more rapidly than

<sup>1</sup> W. F. Ferguson, *Letter . . . on the Dearth of Cotton and the Capability of India to Supply the Quantity Required* (1863), p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> C. J. Fuchs, pp. 272-5. The whole question was, however, reopened later.

<sup>3</sup> *P.P.*, 1850, XLII., 492.

that of sugar. Thus in 1826-30 the British West Indies sent only 12,940 bales a year, or 2 per cent. of England's cotton imports, and in British Guiana the culture of cotton almost ceased. During the Cotton Famine it was hoped to revive cotton culture in these colonies. In the British West Indies attention was turned chiefly to Jamaica. Companies such as the Jamaica Cotton Company were formed, and some progress was made. Cotton was also grown in the Bahamas, Trinidad, and the Barbados.<sup>1</sup> In British Guiana the growing of cotton was strongly urged by Sir W. H. Holmes, but few supplies seem to have been obtained from this source.<sup>2</sup>

In other parts of the British Empire cotton growing was only in the experimental stage. In Natal cotton grew wild, but the natives failed to use it. An early attempt in 1847-49 by a Natal Cotton Growing Company to grow cotton on a large scale had failed. The Cotton Plantation Company of Natal was formed in 1862 and at about the same time the Government tried to get over the labour difficulty by introducing Indian coolies. In the Cape of Good Hope the Albany Agricultural Society did its best to encourage the cultivation of cotton.

In Australia cotton had been grown experimentally as early as 1807 in New South Wales, and later in Victoria. The first export of cotton took place from Sydney in 1832. But it was Queensland which interested England most as a possible source of supply. J. D. Lang had written a book in 1847 to advocate emigration to this "future cotton field of Great Britain," and successful experiments had been made in 1857-58. The chief difficulties were the distance from England, the fact that most of the capital of the colony was already invested in wool, and the lack of cheap labour. Some hoped to solve the labour problem by introducing Chinese and

<sup>1</sup> See N. D. Davis, *Cotton in the Old Days* (1904); "Cotton Planting in the British West Indies" (1904), in *Tracts on the Colonies*, British Museum, 1884, a 6 (23).

<sup>2</sup> Sir W. H. Holmes, *Free Cotton: How and Where to Grow It* (1862); R. Duff, *British Guiana* (1866), pp. 168-98.

Indian coolies, and the Governor of Queensland stated that "no impediment will be thrown in the way of individuals or companies desirous of procuring Asiatic labour at their own cost."<sup>1</sup> The Queensland Government gave prospective cotton growers land on easy terms, and offered bonuses for cotton raised by them. Companies were formed at home and in the colony to trade in Queensland cotton, one of the most important being the Queensland Cotton Company with a capital of £50,000. Over 3000 persons went to Queensland in 1861, and it was said that many of them contemplated cotton growing. Despite all encouragement, cotton culture was not successfully established at this time in Queensland—partly because of exceptionally bad weather and floods—and some companies and private individuals suffered heavy losses.<sup>2</sup>

The most important cotton growing countries outside the Empire were the Ottoman Empire and Brazil. The Ottoman Empire<sup>3</sup> had sent England 109,500 bales in 1860. The best cotton fields were in Egypt which "combined several of the advantages of the Southern States; these were water and railway communication with England, a Government whose leader was wisely administering the country with a view to promote its agricultural facilities, not less than the growth of cotton."<sup>4</sup> But there were unusual difficulties. The sandy soil had to be worked eight or ten times to the depth of a foot with a primitive implement; two-thirds of the cotton crop of Lower Egypt depended upon irrigation for its water; and the crop was liable to severe damage from the wind unless immediately gathered. There was

<sup>1</sup> C.S.R., 1/8/64.

<sup>2</sup> J. D. Lang, *Cookland in N.E. Australia: the Future Cotton Field of Great Britain* (1847); *Queensland: a Highly Eligible Field for Emigration and the Future Cotton Field of Great Britain* (1861); R. Harding, *Cotton in Australia* (1925), ch. 3.

<sup>3</sup> P.P., 1865, LVII., p. 741; Max Eyth, *Lebendige Kräfte* (4th ed., 1924), ch. 6; F. Fowler, *Report on the Cultivation of Cotton in Egypt* (1860); H. Sandford, *Cotton Supply from the Ottoman Empire* (1862).

<sup>4</sup> *M. Daily E. & T.*, 24/6/63.

no middle class from which commercial enterprise and capital could be expected, and the administration was faced with greater responsibilities than it was able to discharge.

The shortage of cotton in Europe in the early sixties greatly stimulated Egyptian cotton production. Said Pasha, the Viceroy, advised large proprietors to increase the amount of land under cotton and reduced the export duty from 10 per cent. to 1 per cent. He received Haywood, the Secretary of the Cotton Supply Association, who visited Egypt on his way to India in August, 1861, and discussed with him the means by which cotton production could be improved. In the spring of the following year the Viceroy raised loans totalling a hundred million francs through the Mitteldeutsche Bank of Meinigen and Messrs. Frühling & Goschen of London, and devoted the money to developing Egypt's commercial and industrial resources and to paying the expenses of a trip to Europe. When in England Said Pasha visited Manchester and discussed Egyptian cotton problems with those interested in the trade. It was generally agreed that Egypt had many advantages as a cotton producing country, but that if production were to be increased it would be necessary to introduce more modern agricultural implements and to improve methods of cultivating and ginning cotton.

Ismael Pasha succeeded his uncle, Said Pasha, as Viceroy in 1863. One of his ambitions was to take advantage of Egypt's geographical position—the junction, as it were, of three Continents—and natural resources to turn Egypt into a great industrial and commercial power. He had vast plans for building new public works and for improving agriculture. The railway from Cairo to Suez was completed and the Suez Canal begun. Cotton culture was encouraged by introducing steam ploughs, steam pumps, and steam gins. But the peasants often failed to make proper use of the new implements and machines. Foreign traders complained of Customs delays, of the Viceroy's monopoly of transport facilities and

of the shortage of labour owing to the extensive use of forced labour on public works. Most of the cattle of Upper Egypt died of disease in 1863-64, and it was reported that "in some districts for want of animals, the fellahs are to be seen harnessed by fives and sixes to the plough."<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the cotton harvest increased from 820,000 cantars<sup>2</sup> in 1862 to 3,000,000 cantars in 1864-65, and in this record year the quality was exceptionally good. Cotton prices were high and large profits were realised. The British Consul at Alexandria wrote that "the value of land was quadrupled; wages rose in equal ratio; labourers earned so easily sufficient for their wants that they became indolent; an excessive luxury sprang up, and that not of a nature to benefit the commercial world, being displayed in a demand for white slave girls, costly pipes and such appliances, which do not benefit the industrious world without. Meanwhile the land, from the constant crops of cotton in succession, has become impoverished."<sup>3</sup> The conclusion of the American Civil War caused cotton prices to fall rapidly and there were losses owing to heavy floods. The cotton harvest of 1865-66 was only about half that of 1864-65. The peasants suffered severely and the Government issued "village bonds" to help those who were unable to pay their debts. Recovery was slow.

The Cotton Famine had important effects upon Anglo-Egyptian relations. The value of Egypt to England as a source of a vital raw material had been shown and English commercial interests in Egypt were considerably extended. English ships bore coal to Alexandria to run the new railways and steam appliances; they frequently returned laden with cotton. In 1860 just over 400 British ships cleared at Alexandria; five years later 932 cleared.<sup>4</sup> English houses sent repre-

<sup>1</sup> *Times*, 28/9/63.

<sup>2</sup> The cantar of cotton was fixed at a hundred rottoli (99·045 lbs.) in 1836.

<sup>3</sup> *P.P.*, 1867, LXVII., 299-300.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 291, cited by E. M. Earle, "Egyptian Cotton and the American Civil War" (*Political Science Quarterly*, XLI., Dec., 1926).

sentatives to Cairo and Alexandria, English engineers endeavoured to teach Egyptians how to use engines and machines of various kinds. Said Pasha, as has been observed, visited England in 1862; Ismael Pasha was in London in 1867. The political importance of Egypt as a means of communication with India was recognised at this time.<sup>1</sup> Advantage of the exceptional opportunities for extending European influence in Egypt in the sixties was, of course, taken by Frenchmen, Germans and others, as well as by Englishmen.

Other parts of the Ottoman Empire—Syria, Anatolia, and Macedonia—had, until about 1780, supplied England with most of the cotton she needed, but by 1860 supplies from these districts had greatly declined. To encourage cotton growing the Turkish Government established an Imperial Cotton Commission at Smyrna. It was decided that waste lands used for cotton were to be exempt from taxation for five years: that cotton so grown, whatever its quality, was to pay at the rate of the most inferior cotton; machinery might be imported free from all import dues. Some machines and seed were distributed gratis. In England the Ottoman Cotton Company was formed. The result of these efforts was that “from all parts of the Turkish dominions accounts are received of the revival or commencement of cotton cultivation.”<sup>2</sup> The increase of Turkey’s cotton exports proved, however, to be only a temporary one. In 1868 the Cotton Supply Association “observed with much regret that the Ottoman Empire has not made such progress as a cotton growing country as there seemed reason to anticipate.” It was doubtful whether this was due to “the apathy of the people, the inefficiency of local officials, and the want of perseverance and energy” rather than to lack of Government aid.<sup>3</sup> The Government had not carried out to any very great extent its promise to give waste lands rent free for the raising of

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Haywood in *C.S.R.*, 15/8/61.

<sup>2</sup> *M. Daily E. & T.*, 19/2/63.

<sup>3</sup> *11th Annual Report of the Cotton Supply Assn.* (1868), pp. 10-11.

cotton and to suspend for a time tithes on cotton lands. It refused to allow Europeans to own land, and difficulties were placed in the way of persons who desired to erect cotton ginning factories.

Brazil had sent England 55,060 bales of cotton a year between 1856 and 1860,<sup>1</sup> and Helm considered that its "vast extent, its fertility, its fitness of climate constitute the first essentials of a great cotton producing country."<sup>2</sup> But roads were bad, slave labour unsatisfactory and—in some districts—scarce since the abolition of the external slave trade in 1850. The Portuguese were apathetic, there were export duties amounting to 20 per cent., and there was need of foreign capital. Brazil's exports of cotton to England, however, steadily increased between 1860 and 1868. In several other South American States, particularly in Venezuela (which had for a short time in the early forties exported some 10,000 bales a year), successful attempts were made on a small scale to increase cotton production.

Continental states, whose cotton industries were suffering from lack of the raw material, attempted to grow cotton in their colonies and in Europe itself.<sup>3</sup> France concentrated upon Algeria. A decree of April 25, 1860, and a ministerial order of June 30, placed a bounty of three francs per kilogramme on Algerian cotton exported and of 2.10 francs if not exported. Thus encouraged, French colonists continued their earlier attempts to grow cotton in Algeria, and J. Dolfus founded a joint stock company to lend them money.<sup>4</sup> English merchants were also interested in Algeria. Following upon favourable reports from a southern planter and from J. Caird, M.P., the Algerian Cotton, Land and Irrigation Company was founded with a capital of £1,000,000. It

<sup>1</sup> T. Ellison, p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> E. Helm, *A Review of the Cotton Trade of the U.K. . . . 1862-68* (*Mc. Stat. Soc.*, 1868-69), p. 71.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. W. O. Henderson, "The Cotton Famine on the Continent," 1861-65 (*Economic History Review*, April, 1933, p. 204).

<sup>4</sup> *M. Daily E. & T.*, 24/4/63.

bought 62,500 acres on the coast forty miles East of Oran where communications and labour supply were said to be satisfactory. The production of cotton in Algeria increased throughout the period of the Cotton Famine, and was over a million kilogrammes in 1866. Most of the crop was exported to France. But labour was dear, and the stimulus to the industry was too artificial; a decree of 1865 admitted that the system of bounties had failed. Production declined after 1866 and ceased after 1878.<sup>1</sup>

In French Guiana and in Guadeloupe the Government tried to revive cotton growing by sending seed and machinery and by conducting experiments. Cotton cultivation was also encouraged in Senegal, Cochin China and Tahiti, where no objection was raised to the introduction of 327 Chinese coolies by an English company.

In the Dutch colonies also the importance of increasing cotton exports was recognised. The Governor of Java observed "that even if the growth of superior sorts should necessitate greater cost in cultivation, still cotton might be had in Java at a price to compete with that of the British Indies." A joint stock company was formed in Rotterdam to promote the planting of cotton in the Dutch East Indies, and cotton seed was eagerly sought for in Batavia when sent for distribution.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Welweitsch, a German scientist in the service of the Portuguese Government, E. Gabriel, British Consul at the port of Loanda, and Livingstone agreed that the Portuguese colony of Angola offered possibilities for growing cotton. Cotton exports from Loanda alone had increased from 10,267 lbs. in 1857 to 20,960 lbs. in 1859. Two decrees of the King of Portugal of December 4, 1861, endeavoured to promote cotton culture in Angola (and Mozambique) by exempting cotton from export duties

<sup>1</sup> J. Deprieck, *Le Coton en Algérie* (1910); C. Brunel, *Le Coton en Algérie* (Algiers, 1910); J. Guerin, *Les Colonies Cotonières* (1907); *C.S.R.*, No. 49, 1/9/60.

<sup>2</sup> *C.S.R.*, 15/5/61, 1/1/62; *M. Daily E. & T.*, 20/12/61, 17/9/63; *P.P.*, 1863, XLIV., 518 (10/5/62).



for ten years, and by distributing seeds and machines on easy terms and by granting land at a nominal rent. An Angola Cotton Company with a capital of £300,000 was formed. No appreciable result, however, seems to have come from these activities.<sup>1</sup>

In Europe itself the climate was unsuitable for the growing of cotton save in the Mediterranean countries. Reference has already been made to Turkish cotton. In Italy and Spain, too, it had in the past been found possible to grow cotton. Motril in Spain and Castellamare in Italy had given their names to varieties of cotton. Spain produced 1,854,000 lbs. in 1866-67, but most of it was spun at Malaga for home consumption, and only a little was sent to French and English ports.

The possibility of reviving Italy's cotton exports was stressed by G. Devincenzi, G. Bruzzesi, Signor Dasi, and others. Land and labour were cheap and railways were being built. The Government favoured cotton growing. A royal decree of March, 1863, appointed a Commission (under the presidency of Devincenzi) to promote cotton cultivation, and under the auspices of this body a successful cotton exhibition was held in Turin in 1864. Many English gins were shown. Nor was private enterprise lacking. Ricasoli, a former Prime Minister, grew some cotton on his estate. An Anglo-Italian bank was established and a company was formed to irrigate the plains of Catania so that cotton might be grown. The result of these activities was that in 1864 about 220,000 acres of land in Italy were producing 63 million lbs. of unginned cotton. The increase was not permanent, however; in 1886 only 13 million lbs. of unginned cotton was produced.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> C.S.R., 1/10/58, 15/7/59, 15/11/59, 15/8/60, 15/2/62, 1/8/62, 1/7/64; *M. Daily E. & T.*, 14/8/62; *5th Annual Report of Cotton Supply Assn.* (1862), p. 17; *Cotton Culture in New and Partially Developed Sources of Supply* (1862), p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> *La Coltivazione del Cotone in Italia* (Pubblicazione della Commissione Reale per la Coltivazione del Cotone, Torino), especially Numbers 2, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16 and 17; G. Bruzzesi, *Some Remarks on the Present*

Parts of Greece were suitable for cotton growing, and the Government exempted cotton crops from tithes and land taxes. The amount of cotton produced, however, was small. Elsewhere in Europe, in districts as far apart as Hungary and the Crimea, experiments in cotton culture were made.

What was the result of this striving for cotton? In 1861 Great Britain imported 1,261 million lbs. of cotton. In the following year less than half this amount was obtained—533 million lbs. Then imports rose slowly—nearly 690 million lbs. in 1863, 896 in 1864, 966 in 1865 and nearly 1,354 in 1866.<sup>1</sup> The quality of the cotton obtained during the famine was lower than that obtained in normal times; the cost was higher. "In 1860 Europe had paid for her imports of raw cotton rather more than eleven cents a lb. . . . a total of 205 million dollars. In 1865 the average price was about 44 cents a lb. and the total cost 412 million dollars. In other words, half the quantity was purchased at double the cost, the price having increased four-fold."<sup>2</sup>

It had been found possible to replace the long stapled Sea Island variety by Egyptian and Brazilian cotton and the short stapled variety by Indian and Syrian cotton. "Each of these classes of raw material are adapted for special uses—the long stapled for muslins, fine and medium yarns, and the *warp* of cloth; the short stapled for low yarns and for the *weft* of cloth." But no satisfactory substitute had been discovered for the moderate stapled cotton (Middling Uplands) which could be used for almost any purpose and which had hitherto formed the bulk of Lancashire's imports from the Southern States.<sup>3</sup>

*State and Future Prospects of Cotton Cultivation in Italy* (1863); G. Devincenzi, *On the Cultivation of Cotton in Italy* (1862) (being a report to the Minister of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce of the Kingdom of Italy); A. Todaro, *Relazione sulla Cultura dei Cotoni in Italia* (Roma, Palermo, 1877-78); U. Tombesi, *L'Industria Coloniera Italiana* (Pesaro, 1901).

<sup>1</sup> T. Ellison, Appendix, Table 1.

<sup>2</sup> E. von Halle, *Baumwollproduktion* . . . , II. (1906), p. 252.

<sup>3</sup> *Economist*, 7/5/64, p. 574.

Thus, though it is an exaggeration to say that "the temporary efforts of other countries to increase production and exportation of cotton proved futile,"<sup>1</sup> the view of Southerners that without Southern cotton England would be unable to get her normal cotton supplies at the usual price was, to a certain extent, justified. On the other hand, if the American Civil War and the subsequent dislocation of the South had been prolonged, it is possible that England and the Continent would have obtained most of the cotton they needed elsewhere, though at a higher cost than before.<sup>2</sup>

The difficulty of opening up and developing new sources of supply led some of those interested in the trade to investigate the possibilities of finding substitutes for cotton. *Zostera Marina* (or common sea wrack), rhea, flax, flax-waste, jute, willow fibre, Italian grass, hairy tree, vegetable silk and a species of lichen, were all suggested either as substitutes or as materials capable of being mixed with cotton. Materials thus produced were generally of a coarse, inferior quality and none of them became commercial successes.

<sup>1</sup> M. B. Hammond, *Cotton Industry* (1897), p. 277.

<sup>2</sup> *North American Review*, IIC., p. 40; E. von Halle, I., p. 253; M. Williams (1863), p. 38.

## CHAPTER IV.

### RELIEF OF DISTRESS IN LANCASHIRE.

THE Cotton Famine was probably "the most serious crisis with which the English Poor Law had been called upon to grapple."<sup>1</sup> On the eve of the famine the Poor Law Board thus summarised its policy regarding the relief of the able-bodied :

"The administration of relief to able-bodied men is regulated in rural districts by the General Order of the Board (of 21/12/44) which prohibits, unless in exceptional cases, out-relief to able-bodied men ; and also in a large number of the same unions by a supplemental order, which provides that when out-relief is granted to able-bodied men, they shall be set to work in return for the relief. In the metropolis and in the manufacturing districts the former order is not in force ; but the Out-door Relief Regulation Order, which was issued in 1852, requires that all able-bodied men, shall, if allowed relief, be set to work by the Guardians, and that the relief afforded to them shall be given half in kind. All these orders contain a provision that, if the Guardians find it necessary to depart from the regulations of the order, the relief, if reported to the Board, and approved by them, shall not be deemed unlawful. . . ."<sup>2</sup>

As soon as mills began to work short time and to close down—49 mills had stopped and 119 were on short time at the beginning of November, 1861<sup>3</sup>—Villiers (President of the Poor Law Board) wrote to all Boards of Guardians in the affected area<sup>4</sup> that the Board, having viewed "with

<sup>1</sup> T. Mackay, *A History of the English Poor Law* (Vol. III. of Sir George Nicholl's *History of the English Poor Law*, 1899), p. 388.

<sup>2</sup> *13th Annual Report of the P.L.B.* (1860-61), pp. 16-17.

<sup>3</sup> R. A. Arnold, p. 86.

<sup>4</sup> The following twenty-seven unions were affected by the cotton crisis: Ashton-under-Lyne, Barton-upon-Irwell, Blackburn, Bolton, Burnley, Bury, Chorley, Chorlton, Clitheroe, the Fylde, Garstang, Glossop, Haslington, Lancaster, Leigh, Macclesfield, Manchester, Oldham, Preston, Rochdale, Saddleworth, Salford, Skipton, Stockport, Todmorden, Warrington, Wigan.

some apprehension the effects which may ensue from the stagnation of the cotton trade" was "considering the manner in which any unusual amount of distress might be effectively provided for" (11/11/61).<sup>1</sup> Applications to the guardians increased and in January, 1862, "the recipients of relief were . . . 70 per cent. above the usual number for the same period of the year." In February, a month in which pauperism normally declined, 9000 more persons were relieved, in June another 6000 and in July another 13,000. Although relief committees were now getting to work the pressure on the guardians continued to increase. Thirty thousand new applicants for relief came forward in August, 1862, 24,000 more in September, 44,000 more in November. Boards of Guardians were relieving over a quarter of a million persons in November, 1862. On December 7, it was reported that out-door relief for the last eight weeks cost £13,734 2s. 4d. a week.<sup>2</sup>

Meantime, the Government, anxious to receive accurate information as to the distress and to give local Boards of Guardians the benefit of expert advice, appointed on May 12, 1862, Mr. H. B. Farnall, "who for five or six years had been previously engaged in the district,"<sup>3</sup> as a Special Commissioner of the Government. He was directed "to make inquiry into the operation of the Poor Laws, and the orders of the Poor Law Board at the present time, on the condition and habits of those workpeople who, from a great diminution in the demand for labour in the cotton districts of the counties of Lancashire, Yorkshire and Cheshire, have suddenly and unavoidably fallen into temporary distress."<sup>4</sup> Farnall's task was no easy one: he had not been popular when regularly employed in the district,<sup>5</sup> and he had to face

<sup>1</sup> R. A. Arnold, p. 87.      <sup>2</sup> J. Watts, p. 113, and table on p. 121.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Granville in the Lords (R. A. Arnold, p. 129).

<sup>4</sup> R. A. Arnold, p. 129.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. ten years before, during a great strike in Preston, "the great increase in the number of applicants for relief had attracted the attention of the Poor Law Commissioners, who sent down Mr. Farnall, the

the dislike with which Lancashire viewed anything like Government interference. Consequently there was friction between him and the various bodies with which he had to deal. He was asked by the Central Executive Committee to supply them with certain statistics on relief in the distressed areas, but when he did so the committee decided to make use of the tables provided by their own Hon. Secretary: he failed to induce the rival committees in Ashton and Hurst to co-operate: he was unable to settle a dispute between the guardians of the Chorlton Union and Messrs. Birley & Co. (who were prepared to continue relieving their hands only if the guardians would not, on that account, lessen their allowance):<sup>1</sup> he disagreed with Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth on the question of making concessions to the Stalybridge rioters: he failed to induce a number of wealthy mill-owners in a certain district to subscribe to relief funds. Further, Farnall made mistakes that a man in his position should not have made. He blundered badly in suggesting that migration and emigration had reduced the operative population of Macclesfield from 15,623 to 3372 between May, 1863, and May, 1864: the true explanation was that the majority of the Macclesfield unemployed were silk workers who were first included in the returns of the local relief committee and then excluded.<sup>2</sup> He greatly over-estimated the number of men who could be employed on relief works.<sup>3</sup> J. Watts, while admitting that the facts of Farnall's reports "are incontrovertible," objected that they con-

Inspector for the district, to lecture the Board of Guardians, upon the necessity of providing a test for the able-bodied. The test suggested was digging; but the Boards, more experienced in the habits of factory life than Mr. Farnall, refused to expose men who had been accustomed to work in heated rooms to cold labour in the open fields, and in some places neither Mr. Farnall nor his advice was received very respectfully" (*Trades' Societies and Strikes: Report of the Committee on Trades' Societies appointed by the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science* . . ., 1860, pp. 221-2.)

<sup>1</sup> *Times*, 6/1/63, for the beginning of the dispute.

<sup>2</sup> J. Watts, p. 215.

<sup>3</sup> See *infra*, p. 55.

tained much "less matter than those of the honorary secretary (of the Central Executive Committee) and go sadly astray when they deal with politico-economic problems or attempt to foretell future events."<sup>1</sup>

Farnall's estimates of the total numbers employed in the distressed districts were less accurate than that given in the "Summary of the Number of Paupers in the Distressed Districts" (November, 1861-December, 1863), for he sometimes included Liverpool and sometimes omitted it, while the "Summary" always included Liverpool.<sup>2</sup> In addition to appointing Farnall as Special Commissioner, the Government sent two Civil Servants experienced in Poor Law work, Mr. Adamson and Mr. Jones, to assist the Central Executive Committee in its work.<sup>3</sup>

Farnall's reports on his first tour in the distressed districts in May and June, 1862, show how the exceptional unemployment placed an unusual strain upon the finances of the unions. Preston Union, which Farnall visited in May, had 11,665 persons out of a population of 110,488 dependent on parochial relief: he estimated that there was a destitute population of 22,000. Normally a 2s. 2d. rate, producing £20,221, was sufficient in Preston, but Farnall thought that a 3s. rate would be necessary to carry the union through to December. At Blackburn Farnall reported on May 29 that the union had a population which had increased in 1851-61 at the rate of 32 per cent., and which had a normal rate of pauperism of only 2.3 per cent. In the township of Blackburn "the increase of pauperism over May, 1861, is 500 per cent., made up mainly of mill hands out of work." The normal poor rate was about 1s.; an additional rate of 3s. was needed to meet the exceptional calls of 1862. Wigan had 13,000 persons dependent on

<sup>1</sup> J. Watts, p. 297.

<sup>2</sup> E. D. Adams, II., p. 12 (n.): W. T. MacCullagh Torrens, *Lancashire's Lesson* (1864), p. 52.

<sup>3</sup> Maclure's Report, 19/1/63; *Times*, 26/5/63 (for Adamson's resignation).

relief, and no special rate would be needed until September. Ashton-under-Lyne Union contained thirteen townships and had a population of 134,761 and a rateable value of £285,357 (1856); it was relieving 32,881 persons. "The present percentage of pauperism on the population in this union is 24.4; in the corresponding week last year it was 1.5." The township of Ashton had a population of 26,806 and had a rateable value of £156,054: "there are now sixteen thousand seven hundred and sixty persons receiving parochial relief in this township and . . . the percentage of pauperism on its population is 25.1." Two rates of 1s. 6d. had been levied in the township since the previous Lady Day and another 4s. 6d. rate was needed to cover expenditure until the next Lady Day. Stockport was visited by Farnall on June 20, 1862. The rateable value of the township was £61,833. The rate of pauperism which was normally 1.5 per cent. (in the Union) had risen to 6 per cent. (in the township). A special rate of 2s. 3d. would be necessary to carry the guardians on until the end of the year. In Oldham Union the rate of pauperism had risen from the normal 1.5 per cent. to 2.8 per cent. in June, 1862. Between 1851 and 1861 the population of the township had risen at the rate of 37 per cent., and the rateable value had risen by 54 per cent. An extra rate of 9½d. was needed.<sup>1</sup> It was at this time—July 7, 1862—that the *Economist* could hold out hopes of only two days' work a week for the rest of the year in the cotton districts.

There was much controversy at the time as to whether the increase in the poor rates and, still more, the new rates that Mr. Farnall foreshadowed, were more than Lancashire could reasonably be expected to bear. *The Times* in articles on "The Distress and the Resources of Lancashire" and in leading articles, drew unfavourable comparisons between the rates levied in Lancashire and in the agricultural districts in the south-west of

<sup>1</sup> Report by Mr. Farnall . . . (*P.P.*, 1862, XLIX., Part I.); J. Watts, ch. 9, R. A. Arnold, ch. 5; *Times*, 22 and 30/5/62, 10 and 23/6/62, 16/7/62, and leading article 2/6/62.



## RELIEF OF DISTRESS IN LANCASHIRE 57

England.<sup>1</sup> Charles Kingsley wrote to *The Times*: "The thanks of all Wessex men are due to you for your article of Friday, contrasting the poor rates of Wessex with those of Lancashire." He asserted that "in Wessex the rate is 3s. 4d. in the £, in Lancashire it is less than half that amount." "Whatever our Dorsetshire squires did they never asked Queen Victoria to open her private purse in order to take their cottagers' blankets out of the pawnshop." Lord Malmesbury asked why Lancashire parishes should complain of a 2s. rate when other parishes were paying 10s. To this it was replied, first, that Lancashire was actually relieving her poor on the basis of a 4s. or 5s. rate which would have to be met later. Secondly, Lancashire wages had been much higher than those of "Wessex," and her assessments for payments of poor rates approximated much more closely to the annual value of her property than did those of "Wessex"; she could not pay abnormally high poor rates at the very time when her machinery was silent.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Temple (Headmaster of Rugby), for example, wrote, after visiting Lancashire: "I do not think the rates can be strained further without ruining the small rate-payers."<sup>3</sup>

The Government, while declining to make a large grant from the national exchequer to meet the distress,<sup>4</sup> at last saw that something must be done to assist Lancashire. In July, 1862, Mr. J. T. Hibbert, M.P. for Oldham, asked the Government to introduce a measure enabling guardians to raise loans repayable over seven

<sup>1</sup> E.g. *Times*, 13, 14 and 20/11/62.

<sup>2</sup> *Times*, 18/11/62; *Economist*, 22/11/62, 29/11/62; C. Kingsley, *Letters and Memories* (2 vols., 1877), pp. 144-50; R. A. Arnold, pp. 275-90; cf. Bazley's criticism of Kingsley (*Times*, 20/11/62), and Kingsley's second letter (*Times*, 22/11/62).

<sup>3</sup> *Times*, 27/11/62.

<sup>4</sup> Possibly the Government agreed with *The Times* which declared in a leading article on 25/1/62: "Once yield to the weak suggestion of large national loans or gifts for the relief of local distress, and the mills will be rapidly closed in order to throw upon the nation all that the nation chooses to undertake."

years :<sup>1</sup> he was told that the Government intended to revive the old plan of a rate in aid.

The Union Relief Aid Act of August, 1862, contained three main provisions. First, if a Lancashire, Cheshire, or Derbyshire Union should find that any of its parishes was incurring expenses—for the quarter ending at the following Michaelmas or Christmas—above those covered by a 3s. rate “the excess shall be charged to the other parishes in the Union in proportion to the amount of the annual rateable value of the property comprised in such parishes.” This principle of assisting a distressed parish by rates in aid from other parishes of the union was extended over the whole country and made permanent by the Union Chargeability Act of 1865.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, should a union, as a whole, be spending more than could be obtained from a 3s. rate it might apply to the Poor Law Board for permission to borrow the excess: the loan and interest on it should be repaid within seven years. Thirdly, the Poor Law Board, upon the application of a union that had exceeded a 5s. rate, might “make a general order upon the several unions and parishes under a separate Board of Guardians or Select Vestry in the county wherein such union should be situated to contribute a sum of money to meet the excess, in proportion to the annual rateable value of the property comprised within such unions and parishes respectively.”

In March, 1863, the provisions of this Act were extended to the quarters ending at Lady Day and Midsummer Day, 1863. Loans might be repaid in fourteen instead of in seven years. If a union that was situated in more than one county required a rate in aid it should be assisted from both counties according to the rateable value of the part of the union within each of the counties called upon. In July, 1863, the Act was again continued, this time to the end of the year, and the minimum

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the suggestion of “A Lancashire Manufacturer” in *The Times*, 23/1/62.

<sup>2</sup> T. Mackay, pp. 356, 395 and 479.

rate that had to be levied before a rate-in-aid could be obtained was raised to 6s. 6d. The Public Works Loan Commissioners might lend up to £200,000 to borrowing unions.<sup>1</sup>

J. Watts criticised the Act because "the borrowing power given was confined to the excess of expenditure between 3s. and 5s. in the pound, and obliged either the excessive rate which it professed to remedy to have been already levied and expended, or forced the overseers to break the law by getting into debt, before they could avail themselves of its provisions." Further, the union that kept its poor rate down either by economy or owing to the efforts of the local relief committee was penalised to help a less careful and generous neighbour. Thus "Wigan, where the distress and the local subscription were not very much less than at Preston, had, as a punishment for its efforts to keep people off the rates, to pay a rate in aid to Preston." When Mr. Farnall spoke of the "valuable provisions of this Act" as having enabled the Blackburn Union to borrow £3517, Mr. Hugh Mason took exception to the word "valuable" and made various criticisms against the Act. However, the borrowing clauses of the Act—though inserted against the wishes of the Government—received the support of twenty-one out of twenty-seven Lancashire Members of Parliament.<sup>2</sup>

In 1863 when the distress was still very great and the resources of guardians and relief committees were severely strained, the Central Executive Committee observed that it had "not entertained any doubt that many of the principal municipal corporations and also townships, acting under the clauses of the Local Government Act, 1858, would be disposed to undertake extensive public works, provided they were enabled to obtain loans of money sufficient to defray the cost of such works,

<sup>1</sup> R. A. Arnold reprints the Union Relief Aid Act, 1862, and the continuing Acts in an Appendix, pp. 529-33.

<sup>2</sup> J. Watts, pp. 288-92; T. Mackay, pp. 395-8.

## 60 THE LANCASHIRE COTTON FAMINE

for long terms of years at low rates of interest.”<sup>1</sup> Mr. Villiers sent Mr. (later Sir Robert) Rawlinson,<sup>2</sup> an engineer, to investigate the possibility of carrying out public relief works in the distressed areas.<sup>3</sup>

Rawlinson reported on May 8, 1863 :—

“ 1st. There is plenty of useful work to be done at the several towns and places.<sup>4</sup> 2nd. The local governing bodies, so far as I have consulted with them, will commence such works if they can obtain legal power, and the necessary money at a low rate of interest. 3rd. A large portion of the able-bodied distressed operatives can and will do this work, if paid fair but reasonable wages. 4th. There is sufficient local knowledge to design and superintend any work commenced. 5th. Any advance of money by Government should be as a loan, on security of the entire rateable property of each district at a remunerative rate of interest and repayable at stated intervals. 6th. For each loan a petition, with plans and estimates, to be forwarded to some Government officer on the spot if preferred; and a report or recommendation, or otherwise, to be sent in before such loan is granted. 7th. Advances to be made not in a lump sum for the whole amount of the loan contracted for, but upon certificates monthly as the work is done. 8th. The local authorities to be enabled to stop short at any point in the progress of the works, should trade revive so as to call the hands to regular work. 9th. The money borrowed should not be appropriated for any other works than those scheduled in the report leading to the sanction.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. Watts, pp. 311-12; cf. F. Harrison and G. Lushington in *Times*, 23 and 27/4/63.

<sup>2</sup> For Rawlinson (1810-95) see *D.N.B.*, 1st Suppl. III., p. 292, and *Times*, 2 and 6/6/98.

<sup>3</sup> Early in 1863, before Rawlinson had reported, the *Economist* (2/5/63) pointed out some of the difficulties of attempting to relieve distress by constructing public works. The works must not be mere labour tests—like the Irish roads of 1847 that went nowhere in particular. “On the other hand, they must not be undertakings of a normal and paying character, for in that case to employ factory operatives upon them will be to take the bread out of the mouths of ordinary labourers, builders, hedgers, ditchers, and navvies, and will simply transfer the distress from one section of the population to another.” Again, too low wages must not be paid: value for labour must be given. (Also quoted by *M. Daily E. & T.*, 4/5/63.)

<sup>4</sup> For Lancashire housing conditions see ch. 4; cf. T. Baines' report to Villiers (extract in J. L. Hammond, “A Lesson from History,” *New Statesmen and Nation*, 28/2/31); *Times*, 20/12/62, 27/4/63; (F. Harrison and G. Lushington wrote that Lancashire towns were “dismal and unclean beyond anything in civilised Europe”), *Westminster Review*, Vol. LXXX., July, 1863, p. 207.

<sup>5</sup> *P.P.*, 1863, XXIV., p. 51; reprinted by J. Watts, p. 315, and by R. A. Arnold, pp. 480-2; cf. *Times* leader of 21/5/63.

## RELIEF OF DISTRESS IN LANCASHIRE 61

There was some opposition to the scheme. Rawlinson reported: "There is in districts, a strong prejudice, founded on ignorance of the law; there is also indifference, based on want of knowledge and appreciation of the results of main sewers, house drains, and other similar works. The cost of such works is by some parties alone taken into account and not the added comforts and improvements in health which proper works will secure." He considered that £1,500,000 "may be expended in permanent improvement of a beneficial character," and Farnall suggested that this sum "would employ about 27,000 men for one year who are now out of work in the cotton districts, and further, that this employment would remove about 82,000 persons from the poor rates and from the charitable funds."<sup>1</sup>

The Public Works (Manufacturing Districts) Bill was drawn up on the lines indicated by Rawlinson. When introduced into the Commons by Villiers it gave general satisfaction. The *Manchester Guardian*, for example, wrote: "As soon as it has become law no locality which possesses the power of levying rates will be able to allege its want of means as an excuse for not finding employment for its distressed population."<sup>2</sup> The Bill was passed in July, 1863. Local Boards acting under the Local Government Act of 1858 or under any local Act, authorities having power to levy rates and "any guardians of the poor authorised to borrow as hereinafter provided" might—on the security of the rates—apply for loans, repayable at 3½ per cent. within thirty years, from the Public Works Loan Commissioners who received £1,200,000 from the Consolidated Fund to make such loans. Before sanctioning a loan—which might in no circumstances exceed the annual rateable value of the district concerned—the Poor Law Board had to be "satisfied that the circumstances of the district

<sup>1</sup> Rawlinson to Villiers, June 12 and 30/5/63; Farnall to Villiers, 3/6/63. Farnall made a similar statement to the (Manchester) Central Committee on 15/6/63 (J. Watts, p. 319).

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by R. A. Arnold, p. 483.

for which the loan is required in reference to the charge for the relief of the poor are such as to render the loan expedient." With the money borrowed, any local authority (except guardians) might carry out "any permanent works which the local Board obtaining the loan is authorised to execute under the powers of 'the Local Government Act, 1858'" or of any local Act. Where no local authority with borrowing powers existed, Boards of Guardians might borrow money to undertake certain public works, such as drainage works. Loans were to be paid in instalments as the work proceeded.<sup>1</sup>

In 1863-65 ninety local authorities secured loans totalling £1,846,082 from the Public Works Loan Commissioners, and various important public works were constructed.<sup>2</sup> They were not works undertaken—either by the Government (as in Ireland in 1847) or by local authorities—to enable recipients of relief to perform a "labour test". They "took the form of the execution by the municipalities and other local authorities of necessary works of public improvement, which, far from being artificially created in order to give employment, would in any event have had to be executed, and were in fact long overdue."<sup>3</sup> Rawlinson reported in 1866 that "no work has been executed . . . which was not desirable as a work of permanent utility and sanitary improvement, altogether independent of the circumstances which, during the existence of the Cotton Famine, gave rise to the special Acts of Parliament. . . . During the rapid growth of these towns, works necessary to health, comfort and trade, such as main sewerage . . . had not been executed as rapidly as they were required."<sup>4</sup> Distressed cotton operatives were asked to volunteer to

<sup>1</sup> R. A. Arnold reprints in an Appendix (pp. 534-45) the Public Works (Manufacturing Districts) Act (26 & 27 Vict., cap. 70), 1863. An Act of 1864 (27 & 28 Vict., cap. 101) authorised a further loan of £350,000.

<sup>2</sup> Table on pp. 49-53 of *17th Annual Report of the P.L.B.*, 1864-65, and on pp. 468-72 of J. Watts (Appendix II.) gives full details.

<sup>3</sup> S. and B. Webb, *English Poor Law Policy* (1910), p. 93.

<sup>4</sup> Rawlinson to Villiers on 12/1/66 (*18th Annual Report to the P.L.B.*, 1865-66, pp. 44-6).

do the unskilled manual work at labourers' rates of pay. The men soon settled down to the new type of work, and Rawlinson reported "that their general conduct has been exceedingly good."<sup>1</sup> It was stated that "experience has shown that one month's training at out-door work strengthens their frames, and so improves their skill, that they can earn at piecework, without undue exertion, 12s. per week."<sup>2</sup>

Rawlinson's forecast that "a large portion of the able-bodied distressed operatives" would be found work on the public works proved to be quite unjustified, and Farnall's estimate that 27,000 operatives would be employed for a year was also excessive. On April 7, 1864, Rawlinson reported that "during the last week in March there were 4838 men directly engaged upon works, of whom 3435 had been factory operatives." In the hope, perhaps, of meeting the criticism that "a more lamentable confession of shortcoming under the circumstances cannot be conceived than these few but striking figures furnish,"<sup>3</sup> Rawlinson continued: "To these 4838 men must be added the large number who are directly employed under the Public Works Act in obtaining and conveying materials furnished by contractors, which both experience and inquiry lead me now to estimate at not less than three thousand additional. This makes a total of 7938 men employed directly or indirectly, and receiving payment from the funds provided from the Public Works (Manufacturing Districts) Act." He estimated that these men with their dependents totalled 38,014 persons.<sup>4</sup> At the end of October, 1864, the numbers employed on the public works had increased to 6424, including 4992 operatives.

The difficulties which occurred in working the Act may be illustrated from the experience of the Manchester

<sup>1</sup> *17th Annual Report of the P.L.B.*, 1864-65, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> *Manual for the Guidance of Local Relief Committees in the Cotton Districts* (in R. A. Arnold, p. 554).

<sup>3</sup> W. T. MacCullagh Torrens, p. 154.

<sup>4</sup> Rawlinson to Villiers, April, 1864.

Town Council. When, in December, 1863, this body (which was constructing a reservoir at Prestwich and had applied for a loan of £130,000 under the Act) offered to take on any able-bodied paupers as labourers, the Manchester Board of Guardians passed a resolution stating "that the payment by Boards of Guardians of wages in return for labour to poor persons chargeable or seeking to become chargeable upon the rates, or the holding themselves responsible for the providing of such labour for wages—thus impairing the self-reliance of the poor—is opposed to the whole spirit and intent of the Poor Law, and it is inexpedient both upon social and economic grounds." The Town Council gave the work to a contractor who—while retaining the full right of dismissal over his employees—agreed to engage only such unemployed operatives as were recommended by the guardians or by any other body named by the Council.<sup>1</sup> By October, 1864, Manchester had received a loan of £85,000 but was employing only thirty-five operatives! Further evidence of discontent with the working of the Act may be seen in the fact that a Stockport alderman resigned rather than be associated with what he considered a misappropriation of the loan and in the allegation that at Blackburn public works were being carried out by men receiving relief allowances instead of by men receiving proper wages. It may be observed that operatives who worked on relief works seldom returned to the factory.<sup>2</sup>

In dealing with the slowness with which the Act was brought into force, Rawlinson stated that the liberal system of relief "has spread a feeling of contentment throughout the superior classes, who by this means have

<sup>1</sup> S. and B. Webb, p. 92. Mr. and Mrs. Webb add: "We do not find evidence that the guardians named anyone." According to J. Watts, however, the Town Clerk of Manchester, when discussing the fact that only thirty-five operatives were being employed on public works, explained in October, 1864, "that the corporation had employed all the men who had been sent by the guardians of Manchester" (J. Watt, p. 320).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 329.



been, to a certain extent, disburdened of their responsibility—a feeling which operated prejudicially against the employment of the distressed cotton ‘hand’ upon the public works.” He claimed, however, “that this delay has never been attributed to the mode of procedure, either at the office of the Poor Law Board, or at this office. A want of sufficient skilled professional assistance on the part of the local authorities has retarded many applications.”<sup>1</sup> J. Watts, on the other hand, complained that “the official mind required a considerable time for reflection before sanctioning plans to preserve the independence of the operatives, which was the special object proposed by Mr. Villiers to be accomplished by the Bill.”<sup>2</sup>

Was the Public Works Act a success? Rawlinson—who received a C.B. for his services in supervising the works—had no doubts on the matter. He regretted the delays but held them to be unavoidable. He recognised that no large proportion of the cotton operatives had been employed on the works, but considered that there was “reason for satisfaction in the reflection that the improvement of the district rather than the employment of the operatives will have been the useful and enduring result of the Public Works Act.”<sup>3</sup> He stressed this again and again, and it was on this note that he concluded his final report: “The public works in Lancashire have benefited trade, by giving four hundred miles of good roads for tracts of mud; they have further added to local means of health and pleasure, by providing public parks and recreation grounds, which otherwise might not have been formed; and they have also increased the rental value of house property by sewerage, draining and so removing nuisances from the vicinity of dwelling-houses, which nuisances, if allowed to remain, would have been liable to have injured human health.”<sup>4</sup> Further, though

<sup>1</sup> *16th Annual Report of the P.L.B. (1863-64)*, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> J. Watt gives a table of dates of applications for loans and of approved orders under the Public Works Act (p. 328).

<sup>3</sup> Rawlinson to Villiers, 20/1/64.

<sup>4</sup> Rawlinson to Goschen, 16/1/69.

not originally intended for that purpose the Act did have the advantage of operating as a "labour test". Rawlinson stated: "I am assured by constant communication with every portion of the district, that these works have been the means of preventing pauperism to an extent equalling nearly treble the numbers actually engaged upon them, simply because employment upon those works has been offered to all able-bodied applicants for relief."<sup>1</sup> Again, "these works relieved the district of direct imposture to an extent which cannot be calculated. When useful work could be tendered in place of relief, all men who would not attempt work were struck off the relief lists, and were disposed of, so far as any requirement for charity was concerned."<sup>2</sup> Others were satisfied with the working of the Act. Sir John McNeill, for example, had worked hard but with little success on schemes to provide work with wages to the unemployed in the North of Scotland, and had been so dubious of the success of Rawlinson's efforts that he had written to him: "I find that the Government have given you what I know will be a very arduous task, and I have a favour to ask from you, that is, that when you break down you will let me know the details." But on March 15, 1865, he wrote: "Your operations are, I think, a great practical advance on any previous attempt to carry out the relief of a destitute population, and I hope we shall all profit by the lesson."<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, Sir Charles Trevelyan considered that "when . . . labour and charity are mixed up together, great abuse and demoralisation are always engendered. . . . It was so in the Irish Famine. It was so in the Cotton Famine."<sup>4</sup> MacCullagh Torrens believed the

<sup>1</sup> Rawlinson to Villiers, 5/7/64. This was surely an over-estimate.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 12/1/66.

<sup>3</sup> Rawlinson, *Public Works in Lancashire* (1898), pp. 54-5.

<sup>4</sup> *Times*, 25/12/78; in 1848 after describing the relief measures adopted during the Irish Famine he had written: "Improvement is always a good thing and relief is occasionally a necessary thing, but the mixture of the two is almost always bad" (*The Irish Crisis*, 1848, pp. 185-6).

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Public Works Act to have been a success on the whole but criticised its shortcomings.<sup>1</sup> J. Watts admitted that "the Act has effected, and will effect, a very good purpose throughout the district," but pointed out that "it has not found employment for any considerable number of cotton operatives, and is in that respect a disappointment."<sup>2</sup> Professor Smart observed: "Mr. Rawlinson's original calculation was that 'little more than one-fourth the whole sum appropriated by Parliament could be directly paid to the distressed men.' The other three-fourths would be spent in providing the economic conditions of employing them. At the height of the distress the number of cotton operatives employed on one day was 4000, and, as the works were not finished till years after the operatives had gone back to their spinning and weaving, it is not likely that anything like one-quarter of the £1,850,000 was spent on the persons for whom the scheme was devised."<sup>3</sup>

Regarded as a contribution to the solution of the unemployment problem, the Act failed to fulfil the sanguine anticipations of its promoters, though it did enable over 4000 operatives to earn wages, amounting to about 12s. a week, at useful employment, instead of performing a labour or educational "test" for the mere pittance they were allowed as relief.<sup>4</sup> Regarded as a contribution to the problem of the sanitation of Lancashire the Act was a success, for the works performed did much to improve the sanitary condition of the cotton districts.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For Torrens see *D.N.B.*, LVII., p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> J. Watts, p. 323.

<sup>3</sup> *P.P.* (1910), LI., p. 313.

<sup>4</sup> "The Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission, 1909" (*P.P.*, 1909, XXXVII.), came to the conclusion that "the precedent of the Lancashire Cotton Famine suggests that Public Works, carried on under the specialised organisation for a limited period, with the object of employing particular classes of persons deprived of definite situations by some accidental or temporary cessation of their regular employment, and practically certain to resume their ordinary occupations, may prove the easiest method of relieving their transient destitution" (p. 1129).

<sup>5</sup> For further references see W. O. Henderson, "The Public Works Act, 1863" (*Economic History*, II., No. 6, Jan. 1931).

The Poor Law was unable to stand the exceptional strain put upon it by the Cotton Famine. The Government, having tried to make the most of the existing system by appointing Mr. Farnall to advise the guardians in the distressed areas, widened the scope of the law by the Union Relief Acts, 1862-63, and made an approach to rendering national assistance by passing the Public Works Acts, 1863-64. Public opinion of the time did not approve of Government assistance going any further than this. The help which the operatives so urgently needed, had, therefore, to come from private charity.

The operatives received considerable assistance of a kind that was not easy to record or tabulate and hence tended to be overshadowed by the more systematic charity of the relief committees. The cotton manufacturers were often criticised during the crisis, and certainly their conduct varied considerably. But some, at least, kept their mills open as long as possible, and when they had to close down made allowances or loans to their hands, ran soup kitchens, and remitted or did not press for cottage rents. Thus in Blackburn, Mr. Hornby, M.P., remitted rents, redeemed pawned clothes and gave his men a daily dinner. A Farrington firm remitted rents and distributed £2100 worth of food and fuel. In Oakenshaw a firm "paid during many weeks half wages, amounting . . . to about £700, and did not allow any of their hands to go to the relief committee; another firm distributed about £500. . . ." <sup>1</sup> About a dozen Stockport firms helped to relieve their unemployed hands. In Manchester Messrs. Clarke opened a school for their unemployed men, and in Salford Sir Elkanah Armitage & Sons relieved 1200 operatives to guard the public funds "against misrepresentations from any parties saying that they are suffering through our suspension of work." <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. Watts, p. 256; for details of rent remitted see R. A. Arnold, pp. 210 and 217, and J. Watts, pp. 254-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Times*, 27/11/62; vide *Economist*, 29/11/62; *M. Daily E. & T.*, 4/10/62; R. A. Arnold, p. 201; J. Watts, p. 148.

## RELIEF OF DISTRESS IN LANCASHIRE 69

Mr. Redgrave gave some fifty examples of assistance rendered by manufacturers. An Ashton manufacturer, for example, not only spent £180 a week in feeding and educating 1061 persons thrown out of work by the stopping of his mill, but remitted £60 a month in cottage rents and gave £50 a week to the local relief committee.<sup>1</sup> In its first report the Central Executive Committee acknowledged "the unostentatious benevolence of those millowners, who, in one instance, give one-half the weekly wage to their operatives, and in others pay one or two days' wages to them each week, or provide them with a meal on certain days."<sup>2</sup> Lord Derby, at the Lancashire County Meeting held in December, 1862, gave several examples of good work done by employers and estimated at £200,000 the amount distributed by private charity.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Temple considered that "the millowners are doing as much, or nearly as much as they can; and many of them are making noble sacrifices."<sup>4</sup>

The landed gentry helped too. The whole Parish of Poynton (near Stockport) with a population of 2050, was relieved by the owner, Lord Vernon.<sup>5</sup> At Stockport, Lord Egerton of Tatton employed on his land able-bodied men (who were receiving relief from the guardians) in making roads and in carrying out similar works: "from the unsuccessful attempts by the Central Executive to get this kind of employment extended from private sources originated the first idea of the Public Works Act."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Reports of the Inspectors of Factories* (half-year ending 31/10/62), (P.P., 1863, XVIII.); R. A. Arnold, pp. 227-8; *Times*, 27/11/62.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Central Executive Committee*, 30/9/62.

<sup>3</sup> J. Watts, pp. 191-2 and p. 254.

<sup>4</sup> *M. Daily E. & T.*, 28/11/62. Mrs. Bayly expressed a similar view in her pamphlet. But the Rev. J. Baillie stated that he could have named "instances of an opposite kind accompanied by very exact details" but did not do so "as the task is somewhat ungracious, and as it is better to leave such examples to another tribunal, where any palliatory circumstances will be duly weighed, and where there will be pronounced, both on masters and men, an infallibly righteous judgment" (*What I Saw in Lancashire*, p. 13).

<sup>5</sup> *M. Daily E. & T.*, 2/12/62.

<sup>6</sup> J. Watts, p. 151.

At Glossop Lord Edward Howard not only subscribed to the relief funds but helped to fit up the Market House as a school for unemployed operatives and promoted out-door works."<sup>1</sup> Lord Radstock started a kitchen for the destitute sick at Blackburn.<sup>2</sup>

Ministers of all denominations did their best to relieve distress. The private charity of a Church of England clergyman was thus described by the Rev. C. B. Jeaffreson of Stockport in the *Stockport Advertiser*: "Your weekly statement, with reference to the Relief Committees, gives but a very imperfect idea of the amount of relief rendered at this trying season to our suffering neighbours. From private sources, I believe, almost as much again is being distributed. . . . The following clothing has been made in my school and distributed among my Sunday scholars and their parents, using 2800 yards of material, at a cost of above £70 (150 articles are still in making): 325 chemises, 232 linsey and flannel petticoats, 24 frocks, 68 working pinafores and aprons, 195 shirts, 62 night-gowns and shirts. A total of 906. I have further distributed, without reference to religious creed, 3800 articles of clothing (very many of them quite new) among 210 families, consisting probably of above 1600 individuals. In addition to 140 blankets and sheets, £10 has been paid for mending boots and shoes, and £36 in releasing clothes (chiefly bedding) from pawn. I have distributed 25 tons of coal, and am supporting (in most instances entirely) 83 families, containing 297 individuals; and have money promised me, sufficient for this purpose to last till the end of March if the need continue. My weekly expenditure is about £35." Ellen Barlee, who quoted this passage, observed that "some faint idea of the labours of a clergyman's family in the district of the distress may be gleaned when I assert that about 1600 persons received clothing from my friend's (Mr. Jeaffreson's) house alone."<sup>3</sup> Nonconformist ministers helped

<sup>1</sup> R. A. Arnold, p. 221.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen Barlee in her section on Blackburn.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen Barlee, pp. 61-5 and p. 23.

others, although themselves in distress. One said: "We all suffer alike here. Not long since my salary was £150 a year, now it is reduced to £100. . . . I have to depend upon the rent of sittings in the chapel, and now very few, if any, are able to pay."<sup>1</sup> Quakers opened a soup kitchen in Manchester in April, 1862, and carried it on "by means of the balance arising from the sale of the plant of a former kitchen instituted by the Friends in 1847."<sup>2</sup>

Doctors and teachers did good work too. A Preston doctor is described as visiting those of his old patients who were ill but too poor to ask him to call. He "never seemed to say a harsh word to them, unless it was 'Tut! tut! drat the fees'." Once he examined the head of the house and then told his son to call for medicine in the evening: the medicine proved to be a chump chop and a bottle of stout.<sup>3</sup> Redgrave reported several instances of school fees being waived during the crisis. "The master of the High Crompton National Schools wrote to me: 'I taught 75 children free for five months.' The master of the British School at Rochdale says: 'I have for the last ten weeks educated and found books for from 60 to 70 boys, as I would not incur the responsibility of turning the children into the streets. . . .' The master of the Middleton National Schools . . . says: . . . 'Premising that my own salary depends upon the fees of the scholars, I feel great satisfaction in being able to say that no poor children have ever been, or ever will be turned away from these doors on account of inability to raise the school wage.'" In Hurst British School (near Ashton-under-Lyne), 317 children received free education in 1862 and 280 in 1863.<sup>4</sup> A school inspector reported that "when the parents of the children are too poor to pay the weekly fees, they are generally remitted

<sup>1</sup> *The Distress in Lancashire: a Visit to the Cotton Districts* (1862), pp. 20-1.

<sup>2</sup> *Illustrated London News*, 22/11/62, p. 558.

<sup>3</sup> *The Distress in Lancashire* . . . , pp. 39-40.

<sup>4</sup> *Factory Report for the Half-Year ending 31/10/63*, p. 65.

by the managers.”<sup>1</sup> But other children were less fortunate and received little schooling during the period of distress.<sup>2</sup>

With such examples before them the general public did not fail to assist the distressed operatives. A Bacup lady distributed £600 in charity. A gentleman named Henry Blundell Hollingshed Blundell gave 5000 tons of coal. At Wigan three out of four soup kitchens were run by private persons at their own expense. At Blackburn Mrs. Gerald Potter of Little Mytton Hall (near Whalley) started a small class for orphan girls and an industrial class where some 300 operatives learned tailoring, bootmaking and similar crafts. The orphanage class was connected with the Society for placing unemployed factory women in temporary domestic service, which placed 260 in service. It was at Blackburn, too, that the pupils of a girls' school gave up prizes for the benefit of the operatives, and ran a bazaar by which £70 was secured on the first day.<sup>3</sup>

In Manchester a ladies' committee raised a special fund to release from pawn the clothes of distressed workers.<sup>4</sup> In the same city Mr. W. Birch, a young clerk, “made for himself a reputation as one of the most successful philanthropists in the present crisis” by starting a sewing school for unemployed factory girls at the Hulme Working Men's Institute. He had only £5 to use for this purpose when he began, but he appealed successfully for help through the columns of *The Times* and by the second week he had collected £104, and nearly 400 girls were attending the school: in the third week 200 of the women were drafted to the Zion School, Stretford Road. In the winter of 1862-63 some 3000 factory women attended Birch's sewing schools, the cost being

<sup>1</sup> J. D. Morrell in *Report of the Committee of Council on Education* (1862), p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> *Times*, 30/8/62.

<sup>3</sup> J. Watts, p. 256; *Times*, 16/9/62, 30/8/62, 22/11/62, 7 and 19/8/63; E. Barlee, p. 119.

<sup>4</sup> J. Watts, pp. 179-80.



£16,000. Eventually the scheme was extended by local committees and by the Central Executive Committee.<sup>1</sup>

The cotton operatives and other workers helped their unemployed comrades. In Blackburn "the hands yet fully employed have subscribed very liberally to the Relief Fund." Sometimes "a man in full time would yield up his looms for a couple of days or so to a less fortunate friend. . . . Even the poorest . . . will give the shelter of their roof to those who cannot afford to pay for lodgings."<sup>2</sup> Relief committees were set up by working men in Wigan, Blackburn and Burnley.<sup>3</sup> At a meeting of the Liverpool United Trades Protective Association on December 5, 1862, it was decided that the executive of this body

"should resolve itself into a Committee to be called the Liverpool Central Committee, for the purpose of collecting subscriptions for the relief of the distressed operatives."<sup>4</sup>

In Padiham an East Lancashire Central Operatives Relief Committee was formed mainly by the energy of the Rev. E. A. Verity, whose popularity in the district was due perhaps to the support he had given to the Padiham weavers when they had been on strike in 1859.<sup>5</sup> In London a Working Men's Central Committee was formed on November 25, 1862, at a meeting of the London Trades Delegation: £322 12s. 0½d. was raised, of which £211 16s. was sent to the Padiham Committee. But when it was found that Mr. Verity had received considerable sums for expenses from the funds of the Padiham Committee nothing further was sent to him.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> W. Birch in *Times*, 30/7/62, 9/8/62, 23/9/62, 19/11/62, 2/1/63, 18/11/63; articles in *Manchester Guardian* (quoted by E. Barlee, pp. 73-87), and A. Munro, "Our Unemployed Females . . ." (in *Mc. Stat. Soc.*, 1862-63, p. 29).

<sup>2</sup> R. A. Arnold, p. 208 (quoting *Times*); cf. E. Waugh, pp. 15-16.

<sup>3</sup> *Times*, 12/12/62; *Bee Hive*, 24/11/63.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 20/12/62.

<sup>5</sup> "Trades Societies and Strikes . . .," *Report to Natl. Assn. for Promotion of Social Science* (1860), p. 463.

<sup>6</sup> *Bee Hive*, 18/10/62, 29/11/62, 4/4/63, 25/4/63; *Times*, 26/11/62; *Minutes of London Trades Council*, 24/11/63 (newspaper extract).

Spasmodic private charity was insufficient to meet the needs of the time. Wigan was the first town to set up a Relief Committee. It was formed on January 3, 1862, and had collected £2000 by January 18. The town was divided into districts, each of which had a special sub-committee: relief was given in the form of tickets which could be exchanged for goods in shops. Blackburn soon followed suit and had collected £5234 by May: here, as at Wigan, the committee distributed soup. On February 1, a Relief Committee was set up at Rochdale and £3300 was collected by May. Preston, too, had a Relief Committee in February—£7500 was subscribed by May and was administered by 120 voluntary helpers: 2400 quarts of soup and 1500 loaves were distributed daily. At Ashton a committee was relieving 2600 persons in May, 1862.<sup>1</sup>

Manchester and Liverpool were in no hurry to set up Relief Committees, for they did not feel the strain of the Cotton Famine so soon or so severely as other Lancashire towns. Further, Manchester already had an organisation—the Manchester and Salford District Provident Society—to meet such distress as could not be coped with by the guardians. It had been founded in 1833 for “the encouragement of industry and frugality; the suppression of mendicancy and imposture, and the occasional relief of sickness and unavoidable misfortune.” It had little success as a savings bank but it did good work in helping the poor. This task was carried out by dividing the boroughs of Manchester and Salford into districts each of which was in charge of a sub-committee and visitors—an organisation and a method of relief which entitled the Provident Society to be regarded as “the parent of those one hundred and seventy Relief Committees which were subsequently at work within the district.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> R. A. Arnold, pp. 100-2, 131-2; J. Watts, pp. 133, 142-3, 154; Mrs. Bayly, pp. 21-2; *M. Daily E. & T.*, 4/2/62.

<sup>2</sup> R. A. Arnold, pp. 100-2; J. Watts, pp. 143-4. Cf. H. C. Irvine, *The Old D.P.S., 1833-1933* (1933), pp. 10-13.

Meetings to consider the prevailing distress were held in Manchester Town Hall on April 25<sup>1</sup> and on April 29, but no action was taken. A month later another meeting was held which discussed a scheme for granting loans to unemployed operatives and then adjourned for a week. During the week a committee was formed. It was announced at the adjourned meeting (June 5) that £1384 had been raised. It was decided to assist the whole of the cotton district and to receive and distribute—but not to collect—subscriptions.<sup>2</sup>

As for Liverpool, it was not until August 1 that a meeting was held, with the Mayor in the chair, to discuss distress. £15,645 was subscribed at once and eventually £96,412 10s. 2d. was raised.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, on June 20, the Central Relief Committee was formally established in Manchester with Mr. J. W. Maclure as its very able Hon. Secretary. It consisted of prominent Manchester business men, and of mayors and ex-mayors of the cotton districts. It passed and distributed to important officials throughout the country the following resolution :—

“That the existing distress of the workpeople connected with the cotton trade in Lancashire, Cheshire, Yorkshire and Derbyshire, and the well-founded expectation of its increasing intensity as the winter approaches, warrants the Committee in communicating to the various counties, cities and towns of the country, that it is prepared to receive any sums that may be subscribed for the object in view, and will give its best attention to the proper and judicious distribution thereof.”<sup>4</sup>

Thus by the end of 1862 there was a Central Relief Committee at work in Manchester,<sup>5</sup> and almost every town in the distressed area had its Relief Committee ;

<sup>1</sup> *Times*, 26/4/62.

<sup>2</sup> J. Watts' account (p. 171) has been followed in preference to R. A. Arnold's (p. 122).

<sup>3</sup> *Liverpool Journal*, 2/8/62 ; *Liverpool Mercury*, 2/8/62.

<sup>4</sup> R. A. Arnold, p. 123.

<sup>5</sup> R. A. Arnold, pp. 121-3, and J. Watts, pp. 169-71, deal with the forming of the Central Relief Committee.

some had more than one. By November, 1862, over 200,000 persons were assisted by Relief Committees.<sup>1</sup>

The organisation of the Central Committee at Manchester and the system by which it carried out relief in the distressed districts in co-operation with local committees, was summarised by Farnall in a report to Villiers, dated November 14, 1862. He wrote: "There is in Manchester a Central Relief Committee, and also a Central Executive Relief Committee; the duty of the former is to solicit subscriptions to aid the distressed operatives, the duty of the latter is to make grants on money to the resident Local Committees of charity throughout the distressed districts. The Central Executive Committee is limited to twenty-six persons, of whom I am one. The General Committee is unlimited in numbers. The Mayor of Manchester is Chairman of the General Committee, and the Earl of Derby is Chairman of the Central Executive Committee, which Executive Committee was appointed by the General Committee. All subscriptions are received by the General Committee, and are forthwith paid to their bankers, Messrs. Heywood, Brothers & Co., Manchester. All payments made by the Central Executive Committee are made through the medium of a cheque on Mr. A. H. Heywood, their Treasurer. Each resident Local Committee of Charity is formed of the landowners, ministers of religion, and employers of labour in each district, and to these local committees the Central Executive Committee make grants of money. The Board of Guardians in each district opens its books for the inspection of the Local Committees of Charity, and the Local Committees open their books for the inspection of Boards of Guardians. No grant is made to any Local Committee by the Central Executive Committee without the following information—the net rateable value of the district; its population; the number of cotton mills; the number of operatives usually employed; the number of operatives in full and in short

<sup>1</sup> J. Watts, p. 120.

work; the number wholly unemployed; the number of persons relieved by the guardians, and the average scale of the relief; the number of persons relieved by the Local Committee, and the average scale of the relief; the number of persons aided both by the guardians and the Local Committees, and the average scale of the combined relief; the amount of local funds collected and promised in the distressed districts; the cash in hand; and the amount of money received from other than local sources. When the questions are satisfactorily answered in writing the Central Executive Committee draws a cheque on their Treasurer for such an amount as the requirements of any distressed district may call for, and the receipt of such cheque is acknowledged by the Local Committee, and no cheque is drawn without the vote of the Executive Committee being taken on it. The information sent to the Executive Committee is tested personally, either by Mr. Adamson or myself, and written reports of such investigations are sent to and are invariably read by the Executive Committee. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

The working of a Local Committee was thus described to Dr. Smith by Mr. Sykes of Edgely: “Stockport . . . is divided into ten districts and each district is supplied with money from the Central Committee to the accompanying scale, and in this district we give the relief one-third in money and two-thirds in food. For instance, a family of four, have 8s. worth of relief per week to receive. They are paid 2s. 8d. in money and have 5s. 4d. to receive in food. We give them a ticket, which they can bring to the kitchen each day, and receive food, meal, rice, flour, potatoes or tea, and they can exchange any part of their money ticket for food.”<sup>2</sup>

It was only with considerable reluctance that Lancashire admitted first that the Poor Law and then that unorganised private charity could not alone deal with

<sup>1</sup> R. A. Arnold, pp. 271-5.

<sup>2</sup> *5th Report of M.O. of P.C. (1862)*, Appendix V., No. 3, by Dr. E. Smith, p. 336.

the emergency. Still greater reluctance was shown in facing the fact that Lancashire could not bear the burden alone, but must seek the assistance of the rest of the country. This reluctance may be seen in the criticism which Alderman Boyle levelled at Mr. Charles Tiplady, a fellow member of the Blackburn Council, who had appealed in *The Times* for national aid on behalf of the operatives: Mr. Tiplady, said Mr. Boyle, "had held up the people as national paupers," and "his letter was a disgrace to Blackburn."<sup>1</sup> It may be seen also in the fact that when Stockport received £250 from the Mansion House Fund "the reception of money from a distance in aid of the town was considered, by some, humiliating, and the Hon. Secretary had almost to apologise for being the medium of such a transaction."<sup>2</sup> And it was stated that in Manchester "a strong feeling is expressed very generally . . . against the subscriptions proposed to be raised in London for the relief of the unemployed operatives here or to any assistance from the Exchequer."<sup>3</sup> However humiliating it might appear to Lancashiremen, outside assistance had to be obtained. The funds of local relief committees were dwindling: at Rochdale, for example, the relief fund was becoming exhausted by the end of May.<sup>4</sup>

On April 14 appeared in *The Times* a letter from Wigan signed "A Lancashire Lad." The writer was Mr. Whittaker, and he pleaded for national assistance for the distressed operatives. He subsequently wrote to Mr. Cubitt, Lord Mayor of London, that "local means are nearly exhausted, and I am convinced that if we have not help from without, our condition will soon be more desperate than I or anyone else who possesses human feelings can wish it to become. . . . Will you do for us what you have done for others—become the recipient of whatever moneys those who are inclined to

<sup>1</sup> *M. Daily E. & T.*, 3/5/62; Mr. Tiplady's appeal appeared in *The Times* of 23/4/62.

<sup>2</sup> *Factory Report for the Half-Year ending 30/4/63.*

<sup>3</sup> *Times*, 7/5/62.

<sup>4</sup> *M. Daily E. & T.*, 31/5/62.

help may send to you?"<sup>1</sup> Mr. William Cotton and other City merchants visited the Lord Mayor, made a similar request to that of Mr. Whittaker, and before separating, formed themselves into a provisional committee. Immediately after receiving this deputation the Lord Mayor, on taking his seat in the justice room said that "he was ready, with the assistance of the gentlemen of the deputation, to act in the way desired. . . . He could not himself take any part in the distribution. All he could do was to be the medium of transmission, and as he knew that some organisation had been formed . . . in which the public might feel confidence, he should be ready to send the small sums he had already received, and any others that might be entrusted to him."<sup>2</sup> So started the Lancashire and Cheshire Operatives Relief Fund (generally known as the Mansion House Fund or the Lord Mayor's Fund). Money came in fast and eventually £528,336 9s. 9d. was raised. Weekly grants to the distressed areas were made between May 8, 1862, and June 6, 1865.<sup>3</sup>

Another important fund was started in London at this time. A meeting of Lancashire noblemen and members of Parliament was held at Lord Ellesmere's residence (Bridgewater House) in June, 1862, at the suggestion of Col. Wilson Patten, M.P., and the Earl of Derby (Leader of the Opposition). Nothing was done until July 19, when, at a second meeting, a committee was set up with Lord Derby as Chairman, Colonel Patten as Hon. Treasurer, and Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth as Hon. Secretary, to collect and administer a Cotton Districts Relief Fund. The subscription list, which began with £11,000 contributed on the spot and rose to £17,000 in five days, and to £40,000 by August, eventually reached the sum of £52,000. The money was distributed through the (Manchester) Central Relief

<sup>1</sup> *Times*, 26/4/62; cf. *Times*, 14, 22, 28/4/62; 5, 12, 27/5/62; 5/6/62; 3, 11, 18/9/62; J. Watts, pp. 156-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Times*, 26/4/62; J. Watts, pp. 159-60.

<sup>3</sup> R. A. Arnold, pp. 118-120.

Committee. To enable this to be done—and to secure the co-operation of the organisers of the Liverpool Fund—the General Committee agreed to the appointment of a reorganised and more representative Central Executive Committee. Lord Derby was Chairman, Kay-Shuttleworth Vice-Chairman, and Maclure Hon. Secretary. The effective work of distributing over £800,000 in 1862-64 was done by the new committee.<sup>1</sup>

The original General Committee was not, however, dissolved, and it was after a special meeting of this committee on November 3, 1862, that Cobden appealed for a greater activity in soliciting subscriptions so that the needs of the distressed operatives during the coming winter might be adequately met. Subscriptions then in hand amounted to £180,000, but Cobden declared that £1,000,000 would be needed. A Collecting Committee was subsequently appointed and subscriptions from Manchester and Salford increased. A great impetus to the relief funds was given by a County Meeting held in Manchester on December 2, 1862. Lord Derby addressed the influential and wealthy audience and £130,000 was raised—"as the contribution of a single county, at a single meeting, to a single object, it is certainly without a parallel in our history and without example in any other nation."<sup>2</sup>

Besides the two big funds of the Bridgewater House Committee and the Lord Mayor, other national subscriptions were raised for the benefit of the operatives. Cardinal Wiseman, in a pastoral letter, appealed to Roman Catholics to help, and the Chief Rabbi addressed the Jewish community on the subject. Wesleyans, Baptists, Congregationalists, Quakers, Swedenborgians, and others

<sup>1</sup> R. A. Arnold, pp. 175-81 and 494-5; J. Watts, pp. 171-3. J. Watts prints at the end of his last chapter the balance sheet of the Central Executive Committee from 9/6/62 to 31/12/64. In 1872 the Central Executive Committee had a surplus fund (including interest) of £51,927 14s. 9d. and the Cotton Districts Relief Committee had £79,320 5s. 3d.; it was decided to apply to the Court of Chancery for permission to use the surplus to build and endow a hospital (*Times*, 18/4/71, 18 and 28/1/73).

<sup>2</sup> *Times*, 3/12/62; cf. 4, 20, 21/11/62; J. Watts, p. 179.



## RELIEF OF DISTRESS IN LANCASHIRE 81

also collected money. The *Daily Telegraph* raised £6302 12s. 6d., the *British Workman* £3564 10s. 1d.<sup>1</sup>

At one time it was felt that certain wealthy Lancashire manufacturers had not supported the relief funds as they should have done. At Preston the proprietors of 71 mills gave £1842 15s. At Blackburn the owners of 91 mills gave only £700. At Wigan and Rochdale, at Manchester and Liverpool, similar complaints were made.<sup>2</sup> *The Times* in its leading articles returned to the subject again and again, and complained that the manufacturers were sitting "as still as their own machinery, and as cold as their own boilers."<sup>3</sup> There was, in some parts of the country, a reluctance to help Lancashire on this account.<sup>4</sup>

Lord Derby, however, in his speech of December 2, 1862, showed that such a sweeping indictment could not be substantiated. Doubtless some employers did not help as much as they might have done, but since—at a time when other relief funds and charitable institutions were receiving assistance<sup>5</sup>—well over £1,000,000 was collected at home to relieve distress in Lancashire, it cannot be said that the English people as a whole failed to do their duty. Louis Blanc stated that Englishmen were struck with the contrast between the large sums raised for Lancashire by means of the great publicity given to

<sup>1</sup> *Times*, 1/12/62 (Roman Catholics), 4/12/62 (Jews), 11/10/62 (Wesleyans), 14/10/62 (Baptists), 24/11/62 (Congregationalists), J. Watts, p. 254 (Swedenborgians), p. 170 and p. 258 (*Daily Telegraph* and *British Workman*). The Meeting for Sufferers of the Society of Friends in an address of 10/11/62, reminded Friends that "the call for help is loud and urgent and the need increasing" (*Meeting for Sufferers: Minutes beginning First Month, 1857, in Library of Friends House (MS.)*).

<sup>2</sup> *Times*, 3/9/62 (Preston, cf. J. Watts, p. 133), 28/4/62, 2 and 3/9/62, 19 and 20/12/62 (Rochdale), 4 and 21/11/62 (Manchester), 1/12/62 (Liverpool), J. Watts, p. 133 (Wigan).

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by R. A. Arnold, pp. 200-1.

<sup>4</sup> *Times*, 14/10/62, 20/11/62; *Northern Whig*, 22 and 23/12/62.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. Indian Mutiny Relief Fund (£440,200 18s. 6d. collected in London and £17,394 10s. 5d. in Manchester), Royal Patriotic Fund (£1459 14s. 3d.), Hartley Colliery Fund (£83,234 17s. 9d.), and fund to relieve those who suffered from the Holmfirth and Sheffield floods (J. Watts, pp. 250-1).

the distress, with the smallness of the subscriptions collected in France for the unemployed cotton operatives of Rouen.<sup>1</sup>

Lancashire was assisted not only by the rest of England but by the whole world. Colonial and foreign subscriptions totalling £183,031 2s. 5d. were sent to the Mansion House Fund and £93,041 17s. 1d. to the Central Executive Committee. Every corner of the globe was represented in the subscription lists—colonists, British residents and foreigners joined to help the distressed operatives. The Pope sent £100 through the Roman Catholic Bishop of Liverpool and regretted that he could not afford more.<sup>2</sup> An unfortunate misunderstanding occurred with regard to the money sent from New South Wales. This was kept apart as a separate fund and was administered on behalf of the Central Executive Committee by Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth who acted in conjunction with the Sydney Commissioner, Sir Daniel Cooper and Mr. Hamilton. Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth used the money to give educational facilities to both young and old unemployed operatives. Opposition to this arose in New South Wales, where it was felt that the fund should be spent in affording relief and not in educational experiments. Apparently the style of the minutes and reports issued in connection with the administering of the fund irritated the subscribers. Arnold quoted the following sentence from one of these reports and suggested that it was "not exactly tuned to catch the Australian ear": "Your committee are of opinion that these schools for men and youths have been eminently useful in maintaining order, in promoting cheerfulness, and in preventing the contraction of evil habits during a period of unwonted leisure, as well as in communicating rudimentary knowledge."<sup>3</sup> To meet the complaints

<sup>1</sup> Louis Blanc, *Lettres sur l'Angleterre* (1865), I., p. 390.

<sup>2</sup> J. Watts, pp. 161-8 and 325; *M. Daily E. & T.*, 1/1/63. "Return showing the Amounts Contributed by . . . (various colonies) . . . to the Fund for the Relief of those who suffered . . . from the Cotton Famine in Lancashire" (*P.P.*, 1870, XLIX., p. 473).

<sup>3</sup> R. A. Arnold, p. 385.

from New South Wales the money already spent on schools—£7795—was credited to the general fund and all New South Wales subscriptions were in future merged into that fund.

The Northern States of America did more than subscribe to relief funds opened in England. It was felt there that since the Civil War was the chief cause of the distress in Lancashire the operatives had some claim upon the benevolence of the Northern States where, though the war entailed much suffering, there had been an excellent harvest in 1862 and plenty of corn was available for export. The political value of their action was not wholly absent from the minds of those who were most active in promoting the sending of food to Lancashire. On December 4, 1862, a meeting of New York merchants resolved that in view of the sufferings of the manufacturing districts of Great Britain "while our own country is blessed with extraordinary abundance . . . a committee of fifteen be appointed by the Chair . . . to collect subscriptions, both in money and food, from all parts of the country, and especially from the great food producing States." Two letters were read. The first was from the firm of N. L. and George Griswold offering to transport food to the Lancashire operatives free of charge in their new 1800 ton ship the *George Griswold*. The second was from a gentleman who desired to remain anonymous and enclosed \$7000 to buy flour. Before the meeting closed \$26,200 had been collected.<sup>1</sup>

The original General Committee of fifteen appointed by the Chairman of the meeting amalgamated with a committee appointed by the New York Chamber of Commerce to devise some means of relieving suffering

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the American International Relief Committee . . .* (New York, 1864), pp. 10-12. John Bright wrote to Sumner on 6/12/62 (before he could have heard of the New York meeting two days before): "I see that someone in the States has proposed to send something to our aid. If a few cargoes of flour could come, say 50,000 barrels, as a gift from persons in your Northern States to the Lancashire working men, it would have a prodigious effect in your favour here" (quoted by Rhodes, *History of the United States* (1928), IV., pp. 363-4 (n.)).

abroad, and eventually grew until it numbered no less than eighty-six members. It was called the American International Relief Committee for the Suffering Operatives of Great Britain. It met on December 5—the day after it had been appointed—and elected officers and set up a small Executive Committee which issued (Dec. 6) an appeal “to the American people” reminding them that “when the Irish Famine prevailed, in 1847, the American people from the Atlantic to the Mississippi gladly gave of their abundance” and asking them “to relieve men, women and children, who are compelled, without fault of their own, to face a more fearful enemy than war.”<sup>1</sup> An appeal on similar lines was issued on December 13 by a committee of the merchants of the New York Produce Exchange. In response to their appeal the American International Relief Committee received gifts in money and kind totalling \$141,540: this sum included \$19,000 for the free use of the *George Griswold*. It did not, however, include estimates for the gratuitous services of Mr. Bill, who bought most of the cargo for the *George Griswold*, Captain Lunt, who commanded that vessel on her outward voyage, Mr. Murphy, who piloted her to sea, various companies which transported goods to the ship, and the Ballast Masters’ Association which removed the ballast from the ship. The New York Produce Exchange Committee received \$28,875, the Philadelphia Committee collected \$62,000.

With the money thus raised food was bought in America and sent to England. The *Hope* arrived in Liverpool in January, 1863, with 1010 barrels of flour from the New York Produce Exchange. The *George Griswold* left New York early in January, 1863, with a cargo that included 11,236 barrels of flour from the International Relief Committee and 1500 barrels of flour from the New York Produce Exchange. Further supplies were sent in other vessels.

<sup>1</sup> *Report of American Committee*, p. 15.

The *George Griswold* reached Liverpool on February 9, 1863, and the food was distributed by the Central Relief Committee to whom a committee of three Liverpool business men (appointed by the American donors) had entrusted the task.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the difficulties that had to be faced by Relief Committees were discussed by Lord Derby in a minute of January, 12, 1863. He considered that "the first object must be to preserve the population from absolute destitution; the next, and hardly less important, is to draw a broad line between habitual pauperism, and want, the consequence of an unforeseen national calamity." Unemployed operatives should be placed "in a better position than habitual paupers," and it would be better "to err on the side of over-liberality than too great strictness." No relief should be given to those who had money in savings banks, and none should be given to enable operatives to pay contributions to sick clubs or to pay rent. But holders of shares in co-operative stores or cotton mills—shares which had probably much depreciated in value owing to the crisis—had only to mortgage them and did not have to sell them to be eligible for relief. In judging claims of cottage holders, the committees would "estimate only the amount of income actually received, and (would) omit from calculation any property which, for the time, is yielding no return. A somewhat similar principle would apply in the case of the small shopkeeper, whose sole capital is his little stock-in-trade, and who, if from the distress of his customers he does not realise a sum sufficient for the subsistence of his family, may fairly be considered to have a claim on the relief fund."<sup>2</sup>

Relief Committees and Guardians had also to deal with cases of fraud. Mr. Somerset reported in March, 1863, to the Manchester Board of Guardians: "Almost every conceivable variety of fraud, it would appear, has

<sup>1</sup> *Report of American Committee*, p. 43; cf. *Speeches of John Bright* (ed. by J. E. Thorold Rogers, 1876), pp. 115-28.

<sup>2</sup> *Times*, 22/1/63; J. Watts, p. 82.

been practised upon the officers of the Board, as the reports of the special visitors now employed prove every week. Children recently dead have been booked as living; children that never existed have been booked; children have been borrowed to make up families; concealment or misrepresentation of wages seems almost to have been the rule in some districts of the city; men, whose regular work was at night, have obtained relief for want of work in the daytime; sick men have been found drunk in bed; men discharged by employers for drunkenness have obtained relief as decent, respectable artisans; persons have left employment avowedly because they could get a living easier by charity or parish relief than by work; men have been found who, having work at home, were attending the school or the farm; men have been found who were working, but not at their homes, and the short hours required of those sent to the school or the farm, have enabled many to secure wages of which they gave no account whatever; and, to finish this most unpleasant recital, the reports referred to have made the *Guardians* acquainted with the existence, in one district at least, of an amount of immorality which they had not before heard of, a large number of persons living in adultery having obtained relief as married people.”<sup>1</sup>

The Preston Relief Committee reported early in 1863 that “a number of cases of imposition keep turning up which the committee, with the help of the public, are determined to punish.” It was here that a woman obtained on false pretences two blankets, two sheets, calico for seventeen shirts, four pairs of stockings, one pair of trousers and two flannels.<sup>2</sup> At Blackburn Mrs. Barlee heard of “one man who by professing to belong to five different denominations was living on the fat of the land in idleness.”<sup>3</sup> Indeed, it was stated that “it

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted by R. A. Arnold, pp. 363-4; *M. Daily E. & T.*, 20/3/63; cf. *Times*, 12/1/63.

<sup>2</sup> *Times*, 28/1/63; cf. 6/1/63.

<sup>3</sup> E. Barlee, p. 141; cf. *Times*, 6 and 11/10/62, 23 and 28/1/63.

is seldom that the local newspapers do not contain a paragraph or two narrating the success of impositions, which have been all too rife through the whole area of distress."<sup>1</sup>

On March 30, 1863, the Central Executive Committee reported that "many of the District Committees have been engaged in a careful revision of the cases of recipients of relief in order both to arrest every motive for undue reliance on the fund, and to increase the number and force of proper incentives to salutary exertions."<sup>2</sup> The decrease in the number of those relieved early in 1863 was probably due not so much to improved trade as to greater strictness on the part of Guardians and committees.<sup>3</sup>

Some of the precautions taken to guard against imposture on the part of the undeserving poor were resented by the cotton operatives. They disliked being classed by Guardians as ordinary paupers, and felt that more lenient rules should govern the granting of relief to decent workmen who were only temporarily unemployed through no fault of their own. They objected to the manner in which the so-called labour test was enforced and protests against this test were made at meetings of operatives in Manchester on June 26 and on November 9, 1862.<sup>4</sup> An argument used against setting unemployed cotton operatives to pick oakum or to break stones—two common "labour tests"—was that such tasks "are peculiarly unfitted to the cotton operative suddenly shut out from the cotton factory. His hands are singularly soft, which is desirable to secure the requisite delicacy of touch, and is maintained by working indoors in a high temperature and by continual contact with oil and cotton wool. The stone hammer blistered

<sup>1</sup> *Times*, 28/1/63.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of Central Executive Committee*, 30/3/63; J. Watts, p. 262.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 217; cf. *Times*, 20/12/62, 28/1/63, 4/2/63.

<sup>4</sup> J. Watts, p. 130; *M. Daily E. & T.*, 10/10/62; cf. 7/3/62, 6/5/62, and *Times*, 23/8/62.

his hands immediately, and the oakum galled his fingers." <sup>1</sup>

Not only because the operatives objected, but because the greatly increased number of applicants rendered the old kind of "labour test" increasingly difficult to enforce, Boards of Guardians—for example, those of Oldham and Rochdale—appealed to the Poor Law Board to relax its regulations in this matter. The Board declined, and when a number of Lancashire Members of Parliament discussed the matter with Villiers, he contented himself with explaining the existing state of the law and stating that it was sufficiently flexible to meet the crisis. <sup>2</sup>

Eventually, however, the old type of labour test had either to be suspended or the men were employed on useful public works and not on monotonous and degrading tasks. From Preston it was reported that the Guardians had "relaxed their relief tests" and that they were employing 1500 men on the moor "in levelling the land for building purposes, and making a great main sewer for the drainage of future streets." At Blackburn 1000 men were employed by the Guardians in breaking stones and laying out the grounds for the new workhouse and infirmary. Stockport Guardians had between 400 and 500 able-bodied men making roads. <sup>3</sup>

Since existing evening schools for youths and adults continued to be well attended throughout the period of the Cotton Famine, <sup>4</sup> it was not surprising that another method of dealing with the vexed question of the labour test was to introduce schools for the unemployed cotton

<sup>1</sup> R. A. Arnold, p. 144; cf. *Times*, 9/6/62. On the other hand, ten mill-owners and managers held "that outdoor work at this season of the year would not be injurious to able-bodied men usually employed in mills, provided that such men be not kept at work in wet weather, nor required to perform an unreasonable task of work" (Appendix VIII. of *15th Annual Report of the P.L.B.*, 1862-63); cf. *Times*, 28/7/62 and 22/8/62.

<sup>2</sup> *M. Daily E. & T.*, 7/3/62, 25/8/62, 5/5/62; R. A. Arnold, pp. 126-7.

<sup>3</sup> *M. Daily E. & T.*, 27/5/62, 5/8/62, 1 and 10/6/62; *Times*, 18/8/63; E. Waugh, p. 117.

<sup>4</sup> See Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth, *Social Problems* (1873), p. 62.



operatives in receipt of relief. Guardians had been permitted since the passing of Denison's Act of 1855 either to start a school or to pay for the education of recipients of outdoor relief. Manchester Guardians had availed themselves of the powers conferred by the Act.<sup>1</sup> The educating of adult paupers was another matter. At the meeting of Manchester operatives held on June 26, 1862, Mr. Thomas Evans—mover of the resolution condemning the labour test—was sent in a deputation to the Guardians. At the interview, Evans, replying to a Guardian who inquired how imposition could be prevented if there were no test, asked—"Why not adopt an educational test?" Mr. C. H. Richards (Chairman of the Guardians) and Mr. D. Clarke agreed that it was desirable to set up schools for adults in receipt of relief and the Central Executive Committee took up the idea.<sup>2</sup> It has already been noticed that in Manchester towards the end of the year Messrs. Clarke opened a school for their employees and William Birch started a sewing school privately.

Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth also interested himself in the scheme and, when the Central Executive Committee received a letter from New South Wales suggesting that moneys raised there for Lancashire should be devoted to some separate and special method of relief, he proposed and—to use J. Watts' graceful phraseology—"the consignees of the fund agreed, that to our Australian brethren should be given the honour and privilege of providing for the mental occupation and improvement of the operatives, so as to fit them for the more complete performance of their social duties whenever physical labour could be again provided for them."<sup>3</sup> Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth suggested to the Central Executive Committee that £15,000 (the estimated total of the New South Wales Fund) might be spent in maintaining for

<sup>1</sup> J. Watts, p. 201.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 130-1; S. and B. Webb state that "one whole trade union (the Society of Makers Up) asked to be sent to school, instead of to labour" (p. 94).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 203.

six months schools for 35,000 females at a cost of £4312, 15,000 youths at a cost of £3750 10s., 30,000 boys and girls at a cost of £6000, while "£1000 might be granted towards the cost of the schooling of younger children of families in the receipt of relief."<sup>1</sup> Actually £22,380 3s. 7d. was spent by the Central Executive Committee on educational purposes in 1862-64.<sup>2</sup> The women and girls were taught sewing and other domestic accomplishments, the men and boys, reading, writing and simple arithmetic. The rooms in which the unemployed were taught were generally in old cotton mills. During the winter of 1862-63 as many as 48,000 men and youths were attending schools. In March, 1863, over 41,000 females were attending sewing classes. The misunderstanding with the Australian subscribers, which has already been discussed, did not check the development of the schools which performed a very useful service at a critical time.<sup>3</sup> Redgrave wrote of the sewing schools: "In many of the sewing schools I was told that one-third of the females knew nothing of sewing upon their first attending the classes. . . . When it is remembered how many hundreds of women and children have been taught to sew well, it is a matter of the greatest gratification that so many will possess for the future in their homes a greater power of increasing their domestic comforts, and of economising their household expenses." He reported that in the adult schools for males "it was impossible not to feel that the time spent there was, compared with their former labour, unproductive; and I was therefore the more impressed with the attention of the men in these classes, and the anxiety of so many to improve themselves, especially in arithmetic."<sup>4</sup>

Other difficulties with which those responsible for

<sup>1</sup> R. A. Arnold, pp. 269-70; J. Watts, pp. 203-4.

<sup>2</sup> This total is obtained by adding figures given in the balance sheet of the Central Executive Committee (J. Watts, pp. 258-9).

<sup>3</sup> J. Watts, pp. 202-5 and 211.

<sup>4</sup> *Reports of Inspectors of Factories for Half-Year ending 31/10/63*, p. 68; R. A. Arnold, pp. 182-4; *Punch*, 10/1/63.

relieving the poor were confronted sprang from religious dissensions—always strong in a district where Roman Catholics, Anglicans and Nonconformists all had many adherents. Religious bodies were unable to resist the temptation of taking advantage of the sufferings of the operatives to propagate the views of their own sect. For men like the Rev. John Baillie denominational management was “the only plan for combining with bodily relief a wholesome care for their immortal souls.” So religious bodies made every effort to gain control over as many local relief committees, adult schools and sewing classes as possible. Sermons were preached to scholars. Dr. Robinson “an active clergyman,” hit on the idea of starting a Bible Class for young women where the New Testament was read by each scholar in turn. “The utmost anxiety was manifested to be allowed to enter the class, a crowd being gathered as the hour approached, struggling to get in.” Possibly the desire to join the class was not entirely due to thirst for spiritual advancement, for “each member of the class got a penny for sitting the hour.”<sup>1</sup> Opposed to the religious bodies were those who desired that, in fairness to applicants, all relief should be on a strictly undenominational basis.

Religious dissensions had unfortunate results. At Ashton, for example, there were rival committees—the General Relief Committee, a predominantly Anglican body run by Dr. Lees, the Mayor of the Manor (an office to which the Earl of Stamford and Warrington nominated), Mr. Gartside and the Rev. F. W. Williams, and the Borough Relief Committee which was presided over by a Churchman (Mr. Kenworthy, Mayor of Ashton) but had as its most influential member Mr. Hugh Mason, an opponent of the Established Church, and was composed of laymen. The Lord Mayor of London at first decided to make no grants from the Mansion House Fund until the committees had come to some agreement, but

<sup>1</sup> J. Baillie, pp. 11 and 19; *Macmillan's Magazine*, VII. (Dec., 1862), p. 158; Ellen Barlee, p. 114; *Times*, 11/10/62, 29/1/63.

eventually he recognised both committees. The Central Executive Committee, however (when both the Lord Mayor and Mr. Farnall had failed to induce the committees to amalgamate), induced the Borough Committee to co-opt the senior clergymen of the district and local Roman Catholic priests and Dissenting ministers and then recognised only this committee. This decision led to an acrimonious correspondence in the Press between the Rev. Mr. Williams and Col. Wilson Patten. The administration of relief by two rival committees left "ample room for imposture of every kind," and it was stated that at least "£500 every week . . . might have been saved if all the relief were distributed by one hand and on one uniform plan."<sup>1</sup>

There was trouble at Preston because Roman Catholic scholars at Knowsley Street School for Distressed Females, which both Roman Catholics and Protestants attended, refused to sing the Doxology. The denominational principle had to be applied to some extent. At Wigan the Doxology also caused difficulty, but the matter was settled without establishing denominational schools. At Stalybridge the feud between the Local Relief Committee and the clergy aggravated the discontent that led to the riots there in March, 1863.<sup>2</sup>

Rawlinson, in one of his reports, referred to "the admirable and perfect system of relief administered so liberally yet so wisely."<sup>3</sup> Such praise is, perhaps, a little excessive. Considering the magnitude of the disaster, however, it must be admitted that relief was rendered to a large number of people for a considerable length of time with remarkably little friction. It is

<sup>1</sup> *Times*, 14/1/63; cf. 18, 24/10/62, 1, 3/11/62, 8/1/63, 7, 16/2/63; J. Watts, p. 198; R. A. Arnold, p. 346.

<sup>2</sup> *Times*, 6/1/63; *M. Daily E. & T.*, 23/12/62; *Northern Whig*, 19/12/62; *The Distress in Lancashire . . .*, p. 77.

<sup>3</sup> *16th Annual Report of the P.L.B.* (1863-64), Appendix XV., p. 55. Relief funds were generally honestly administered but it was reported that a clerk to the Stalybridge Relief Committee had absconded with £422 2s. 11d. (*Northern Whig*, 23/6/63).

## RELIEF OF DISTRESS IN LANCASHIRE 93

satisfactory, too, to note that "the Poor Law authorities and the administrators of charity . . . worked together with great success."<sup>1</sup> The operatives suffered severely, but that the majority of them were not driven either to starvation or to violence was in no small measure due to the steps taken by the Government and by private persons to assist them in their distress.

<sup>1</sup> *Goschen's Poor Law Board Minute*, 20/11/69 (T. Mackay, p. 504).

## CHAPTER V.

### THE LANCASHIRE COTTON OPERATIVES DURING THE FAMINE.

WHILE the reports of Farnall and Maclure, with their statistical summaries of the numbers out of work, give a picture of Lancashire during the Cotton Famine from the point of view of those engaged in administering relief, other sources of information—such as Edwin Waugh's articles in the *Manchester Daily Examiner and Times*,<sup>1</sup> the anonymous *The Distress in Lancashire: a Visit to the Cotton Districts* (1862), pamphlets by Ellen Barlee and the Rev. John Baillie, and Dr. Buchanan's Report on the Health of the Distressed Operatives<sup>2</sup>—all give an impression of the homes of the Lancashire workers during the period of distress and show the human tragedy lying behind the unemployment figures.

Housing conditions, though better than in the forties, were still bad. Dr. Buchanan reported in December, 1862, to the Medical Officer of the Privy Council, that owing to the Cotton Famine the "overcrowding of houses is distinctly on the increase among the operative class in the cotton towns." The better type of operative kept his cottage but might find room

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted under the title *Home Life of the Lancashire Factory Folk during the Cotton Famine* (1867); for E. Waugh see *D.N.B.*, LX., p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen Barlee, *A Visit to Lancashire in December, 1862* (1863); Rev. John Baillie, *What I Saw in Lancashire* (1862); *5th Report of M.O. of P.C.* (1862), Appendix V.; *Reports Relating to the Sanitary Condition of the Cotton Towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire*, No. 1, by Dr. Buchanan, on *The Health of the Distressed Operatives* (*P.P.*, 1863, XXV., and *Times* article on this report, 11/9/63).

for a married daughter who had had to break up her own home ; poorer operatives took in lodgers or moved into a single room. "The registered common lodging houses are, as a rule, very thinly tenanted, their ordinary charge of threepence per night being now beyond the means of their usual occupants." The distressed operatives herded together not merely to save rent but to get warm on cold winter nights. "Six or eight people would come at night into a room 12 foot square, with the window and door closed and padded, and the fire-place (as is almost universal with them) thoroughly papered up, and lie as closely as they could, for the heat of each other's bodies."<sup>1</sup> Overcrowding led to dirtiness. "In the insides of houses inhabited by the poorer classes there is a general want of cleanliness that appears to be in part connected with their having more inhabitants, and in part due to the cost of cleansing materials. Landlords, whose weekly visits for rent are paid in vain, appear to have become careless about the wholesomeness of their houses, and few of the local authorities have acted on their powers in compelling the removal of unwholesome conditions from the interiors of cottages."<sup>2</sup> Sanitary conditions too, were bad. A medical officer reporting on conditions in Gorton and Openshaw at this time stated that "at the back of John Street, Gorton, which consists of thirty-four cottages, there is an open sewer running the entire length of the street. . . . There are also similar open sewers in Kirk Lane and Lees Street, and in these localities zymotic or contagious diseases are of frequent occurrence. At Openshaw many of the cottages had choked-up sewers and overfilled middens. At the back of Back Taylor Street the sewerage collects in a pool some few yards from the houses . . . behind Wolfenden's Buildings . . . and close to the houses as many as fifty pigs are frequently kept; there is also a very offensive slaughter house . . ."<sup>3</sup> Dr. Greenwood reported that

<sup>1</sup> *5th Report of M.O. of P.C. (1862), Appendix V., No. 1, pp. 312-13.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 314.

<sup>3</sup> *M. Daily E. & T.*, 7/6/62.

at Over-Darwen "there appears to be no proper system of scavenging; and night soil and other refuse are allowed to accumulate in uncovered receptacles certainly for many months—it was asserted in one place for several years—without removal."<sup>1</sup> Rawlinson stated that at Haslingden "house drains are an exception, not the rule; and from the defective forms and construction of the main drains, when used for draining water-closets, they become nuisances. Many of the streets are unformed and unpaved. Cess pits are crowded behind cottages, and as a consequence fever and other diseases of a similar character prevail. . . ."<sup>2</sup> Filthy surroundings depressed the operatives. Waugh wrote of a street in Scholes (the Little Ireland of Wigan—"one of those ash-pits of human life which may be found in almost any great town"): "This bye-street of mean brick cottages had an unwholesome outcast look; and the sallow tattered women, lounging about the doorways, and listlessly watching the sickly children in the street, evinced the prevalence of squalor and want there. The very children seemed joyless at their play. . . ."<sup>3</sup> The sanitation of some of the Lancashire towns was improved by means of relief works which, but for the Cotton Famine, would probably not have been undertaken so soon.

The wages of the cotton operatives declined and often disappeared altogether as mills worked short time or closed down during the crisis. Shopkeepers soon began to suffer as custom declined. For example, J. Watts states that the average falling off per quarter of the sales of fourteen representative co-operative stores in the distressed area for the two and a half years ending December, 1863, was £29,811.<sup>4</sup> At Blackburn,

<sup>1</sup> 4th Report of M.O. of P.C. (1861), p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> Rawlinson to Villiers, 12/6/63.

<sup>3</sup> E. Waugh, p. 172.

<sup>4</sup> J. Watt, p. 340; *vide* Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth, *Social Problems* (1873), pp. 109-10. Dr. C. R. Fay's statement that in times of depression the trade of co-operative stores "will go up because spending power is concentrated on the necessaries which they in particular supply" (*Great*



Waugh "heard of several shopkeepers who had not taken more across their counters for weeks past than would pay their rents, and some were not doing even as much as that," and in Trinity Ward, Preston, he "was astonished at . . . the number of struggling owners of little shops who were watching their stocks sink gradually down to nothing, and looking despondingly at the cold approach of pauperism."<sup>1</sup>

Those affected by the crisis fell back first upon their savings. The excess of withdrawals over deposits from savings banks in the cotton districts was £554,150 in 1861-64.<sup>2</sup>

A heavy drain was also made upon the funds of the friendly societies and many of them found themselves in financial difficulties. One society at Ashton-under-Lyne with eighty-four members and £60 in the management fund and £800 in the sick and burial funds, asked the Registrar of Friendly Societies:—

"1st. Can we take money from the sick and funeral fund and place it in the management fund?"

"2nd. Can a society relieve distressed cases from the sick and funeral fund?"

"3rd. Can a society divide equally a portion of the sick and funeral fund to relieve distressed members, by consent of five-sixths of the members?"

"4th. Can a society, by consent of its members at a summoned meeting, agree to suspend its monthly subscriptions for a certain time? I, along with the officers, am convinced that all the propositions are illegal; but we find great difficulty in convincing our starving members."

The Registrar-General replied that—

"Each question is answered in the negative,"

*Britain from Adam Smith to the Present Day* (1928), pp. 310-11) is borne out by the steady progress made by the biggest of the co-operative stores—Rochdale. Smaller stores (Mossley, Dukinfield, Stalybridge, Ashton, Heywood, Middleton, Rawtenstall and Hyde), however, suffered severely, though none of them failed (G. J. Holyoake, "Co-operation during the Cotton Scarcity" (*Trans. of Nat. Assn. for the Promotion of Social Science*, 1865 (London, 1866), pp. 618-22).)

<sup>1</sup> E. Waugh, pp. 9 and 63.

<sup>2</sup> J. Watts, p. 339; cf. *Chambers' Journal*, XVIII., p. 43 (19/7/62).

and suggested that the difficulty might be met by passing a new rule :—

“ that if the members be rendered incapable of paying their contributions . . . the president shall have power to call a summoned meeting to take into consideration such emergency . . . ; such meeting to have power to suspend payment of contributions for any period not exceeding twelve months, if the majority of the members deem it necessary. Should the cause of the distress continue longer than twelve months, another meeting shall be held to consider the necessity of commencing another period not exceeding twelve months under this rule.”<sup>1</sup>

This rule was generally adopted : subscriptions were thus usually waived, but the societies continued to pay sickness and funeral money during the crisis so long as they could do so. Two examples may be given of the strain placed upon the funds of trade and friendly societies in the cotton districts : neither society contained cotton operatives but both were hit by the crisis. The Amalgamated Society of Engineers increased its membership from 22,862 to 28,815 in 1861-64, but in the cotton districts membership increased only from 7011 to 7237 and in 1863 dropped to 6844 ; in the same period £108,668 was paid out to unemployed members and nearly half of this sum (£53,736 7s. 9d.) went to members in the cotton districts. The unemployment benefit paid to members by the Warehousemen and Clerks' Society (of Manchester) rose from £968 in 1860 to £1510 in the following year, and was £1354 in 1862.<sup>2</sup>

Out of work and with their savings spent the operatives pawned furniture, clothes and even bedding to support themselves. R. A. Arnold wrote that “ the pawnbrokers' stores were glutted with the heirlooms of many an honest family.”<sup>3</sup> Dr. Buchanan reported that “ the clothing of the operatives has been gradually disappearing since the beginning of the distress. First the Sunday clothes, then their changes of linen have been sold or pawned. . . .”<sup>4</sup> One started to shave his neighbours (with a single razor) at four for a halfpenny, but

<sup>1</sup> J. Watts, pp. 333-4.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 337.    <sup>3</sup> R. A. Arnold, p. 111.

<sup>4</sup> *5th Report of M.O. of P.C. (1862), Appendix V., No. 1, p. 313.*

his wife remarked that "there's a deal on 'em cannot pay that." Another took to chair bottoming as "he doesn't want to lie upo' folk for relief, if he can help it." Some sold newspapers, religious tracts or back numbers of penny periodicals, though "it is easy to see, from their shy and awkward manner, that they are new to the trade, and do not like it."<sup>1</sup> Others took to street singing. Waugh describes them in a chapter on "Wandering Minstrels; or, Wails of the Workless Poor." "Sometimes they come in a large family all together, the females with their hymn-books, and the men with their different musical instruments—bits of pet salvage from the wrecks of cottage homes. . . . Their faces are sad, and their manners very often singularly shamefaced and awkward. . . . The females, especially the younger ones, generally walk behind blushing and hiding themselves as much as possible. . . . This flood of strange minstrels partly drowned the slang melodies and the monotonous strains of the ordinary street musicians for a while. The professional gleeman 'paled his ineffectual fire' before these sorrowful songsters."<sup>2</sup>

Eventually the distressed operatives were thrown entirely upon the Guardians and Relief Committees. Although strenuous efforts were made to relieve distress the total income of an operative solely dependent upon these sources was very small. At the end of 1862 Dr. Buchanan reported that "taking the great mass of the cotton workers with their families as a whole, their average income (in the present December) from all sources is nearly 2s. per head per week. This is exclusive of clothing, bedding and firing which are now usually supplied in addition."<sup>3</sup> Dealing with Stockport alone Mr. Sykes stated: "We find . . . that we can keep the people on 2s. per head per week."<sup>4</sup> The same figure was given

<sup>1</sup> E. Waugh, pp. 45, 98 and 110.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 201-2.

<sup>3</sup> *5th Report of M.O. of P.C. (1862)*, Appendix V., No. 1, p. 306. On the same page Dr. Buchanan gives a table of average scales of relief.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 3, p. 336. But see *Times*, 12/9/62, where it was stated that in Stockport in the autumn of 1862 those responsible for distributing relief aimed at giving 1s. 3d. per head per week.

later in a *Manual for the Guidance of Local Relief Committees in the Cotton Districts arising out of the experience of 1862-63*—"The Scale of Relief which has obtained the approval of the Central Executive Committee is one which provides, on the average, two shillings per head for the whole mass of recipients; to which may be added, in winter, supply of fuel and clothing, if the family have been long out of work."<sup>1</sup> Lord Derby, discussing this subject at the County meeting of December 2, 1863, said: "Two shillings a head per week is the sum we endeavoured to arrive at as the average receipt of every man, woman and child receiving assistance; consequently, a man and a wife with a family of three or four small children would receive, not two shillings, but ten or twelve shillings from the fund—an amount not far short of that which in prosperous times an honest and industrious labourer in other parts of the country would obtain for the maintenance of his family. I am not in the least afraid that, if we had fixed the amount at four shillings or five shillings per head, such is the liberality of the country, we should not have had sufficient means of doing so. But were we justified in doing that? If we had raised their income beyond that of the labouring man in ordinary times, we should have gone far to destroy the most valuable feeling of the manufacturing population—namely that of honest self-reliance, and we should have done our best, to a great extent, to demoralise a large portion of the population, and induce them to prefer the wages of charitable relief to the return of honest industry."<sup>2</sup> Lord Derby's comparison of the 10s. or 12s. relief received by a man, wife and three or four small children with the wages of an "honest and industrious labourer in other parts of the country" was hardly a just one. A fairer comparison would be between the relief rates and the average wages earned by cotton operatives before the Famine. These have been estimated at about 12s. 4d.

<sup>1</sup> The Manual is reprinted in R. A. Arnold, pp. 546-56.

<sup>2</sup> E. Waugh, pp. 240-1 (where the speech is reprinted).

## OPERATIVES DURING THE FAMINE 101

a week<sup>1</sup> and, as women and children were extensively employed, family wages must have been considerably higher. The drop in family income was therefore a big one.<sup>2</sup>

The diet of the operatives had to be cut down to conform to the reduced family income. Before the Famine (according to Dr. E. Smith) operatives and their families had been spending from 3s. to 6s. a head per week on food: during the Famine they could not afford 2s. Dr. Buchanan observed that in prosperous times operatives lived on a generous diet; they did not then see "the advantages of a careful domestic economy, and now in hard times they have no knowledge how to make the most of their scanty incomes." Dr. Smith wrote: "It is a matter of great difficulty to provide a dietary which shall not suffer from the defective cookery commonly found amongst factory operatives"—a deficiency that was due to ignorance and a lack of fuel and cooking utensils.<sup>3</sup> Well might the Rev. W. N. Molesworth lecture at the Institute for Unemployed Men on "How to make two pounds of meat go as far as two pounds and a half."<sup>4</sup> Very little meat was, however, now eaten by the operatives. "Bread constitutes the greatest part of their daily food. Oatmeal . . . is the next most usual food, made into porridge or into various sorts of bread. To these a little butter or treacle is added, generally for the children, when they can afford it. Potatoes stand next, being happily good, cheap and generally popular. . . . Tea with sugar, but usually without milk, is now the common drink." Milk was scarce. Fortunately "in almost all towns there are

<sup>1</sup> T. Ellison, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen Barlee, p. 4, *Westminster Review* (July, 1863), p. 204.

<sup>3</sup> *5th Report of M.O. of P.C.* (1862), Appendix V., No. 1, p. 309; No. 3, pp. 326 and 339. Dr. Smith has been described as "the medical practitioner who had devoted most attention to working class and convict diet. Poor as his science must now seem, it was the best available at the time" (S. and B. Webb, *English Prisons under Local Government*, 1922, p. 138).

<sup>4</sup> *M. Daily E. & T.*, 25/11/62.

soup kitchens, where a quart of good meat soup is given for a penny, though its materials alone generally cost five farthings or more. . . ." This is corroborated by Dr. Smith who wrote that "at present as compared with former times there is much less of nearly every kind of food eaten, but particularly potato, sugar, butter, meat and milk, with a considerable diminution also of bacon and tea. Bread is now the principal food." He considered that where public authorities were feeding the poor "many of the dietaries are insufficient for the wants of the system, and that it will be better to increase their nutritive value, although it will imply an increased cost."<sup>1</sup>

It might appear to be fairly obvious that the inferior diet upon which so many of the operatives subsisted, and the many hardships which they had to undergo would have an adverse effect upon their health. Considerable differences of opinion, however, existed on the subject. One point of view was tersely expressed by the sexton who told Waugh that business was bad—"Poverty seldom dees. There's far more kilt w' o'er heytin' an' o'er drinkin' nor there is wi' bein' pinched."<sup>2</sup> Arnold considered that the health of the operatives "improved during the years of the Cotton Famine, under the influence of compulsory temperance, of restricted diet, of outdoor exercise, and of greater leisure among the married women to devote to the duties of home." The extent of the compulsory temperance may be judged from the fact that "the Commissioners of Inland Revenue experienced in 1862 a decline of more than 28 per cent. in the quantities of spirits taken into retail stocks in some of the towns in the cotton districts."<sup>3</sup> Edwin Chadwick asserted that "it was not a case of starvation when a man was deprived of beer, gin, or even tea; it was the case of men having bread, simple food with better air, as against a high or ordinary diet with

<sup>1</sup> *5th Report of M.O. of P.C.* (1862), Appendix V., pp. 309, 326 and 367.

<sup>2</sup> E. Waugh, pp. 30-1.

<sup>3</sup> R. A. Arnold, pp. 442 and 158.

impure air.”<sup>1</sup> Dr. D. Noble stated: “I have made many inquiries of surgeons and clergymen, here and elsewhere, as to the condition of the working people, but, in the absence of a preconceived idea, none have reported to me the prevalence of either purpura or any other bodily derangement fairly ascribable to physical destitution.”<sup>2</sup>

Several Poor Law Medical Officers reported to the same effect.<sup>3</sup> The Inspector himself—Redgrave—considered that “the reduction in food and clothing, to which so many thousands have been forced to submit, have not been so great as to induce, as was at one time much feared, low fever and other cognate ailments.”<sup>4</sup> Some Registrars of births, deaths and marriages were of a similar opinion. It was reported that “the Registrar of Wigan states that more freedom to breathe the fresh air, inability to indulge in spirituous liquors, and better nursing of children are believed to have improved public health.”<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand, the Registrar-General reported that “while England enjoyed at least its average amount of health in the two winter quarters of 1861-62, Lancashire was at those times more unhealthy than usual.”<sup>6</sup> Some Poor Law Medical Officers and Registrars of births, deaths and marriages naturally attributed this to the distress. Mr. Wraith (Over-Darwen) reported that “the common people are not in the same robust health as is common to them in ordinary times,” and that “the people who are employed in making up Surat complain very much.” Mr. Bean (Mossley) considered

<sup>1</sup> *M. Daily E. & T.*, 7/10/62.

<sup>2</sup> D. Noble, “On the Fluctuation in the Death Rate with a glance at the Causes: having especial reference to the supposed influence of the Cotton Famine on recent mortality” (*Mc. Stat. Soc.*, 1863-64, pp. 1-8).

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Messrs. Howitt, Sutcliffe, Stewart, Coventry, Ogden and Pilkington in *Reports of Factory Inspectors for Half-Year ending 31/10/63*, pp. 59-60.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>5</sup> *25th Annual Report of the Registrar-General* . . . (1862), pp. xxxiii and xli; cf. *Times*, 3/11/62, 17/2/63.

<sup>6</sup> *26th Annual Report of the Registrar-General* . . . (1863), p. xxiii.

that "the long continued low dieting is gradually undermining the constitutional vigour of great numbers." Mr. Sutcliffe (Stalybridge) qualified his statement that the health of the operatives was very good compared with former times with the admission that "in consequence of the diminished supply of nutritious food, and extra amount of labour which Surat cotton entails, the operatives are generally *thinner*."<sup>1</sup> And the Registrar of Hyde (Stockport) considered that deaths had occurred owing to "privation arising from the want of employment."<sup>2</sup>

Most important was Dr. Buchanan's well-balanced report on the Health of the Distressed Operatives which was the result of two months' inquiry. He discussed in detail "certain morbid conditions, such as are not accounted for by climatic peculiarities (which) have been discovered to exist in the cotton districts with exceptional intensity in the present season." First, the operatives suffered from an insufficient and innutritious diet: he noticed "a loss of strength and flesh among the cotton workers." "The mothers, who most of all starve themselves, have got pale and emaciated": lactation was unduly prolonged, "the mothers pleading inability to purchase the food appropriate for a weaned child." In Preston "there has been a large excess of diarrhoea beyond what is usual in other years" and no such increase was noticed elsewhere. "A hæmorrhagic tendency has been noticed in several towns; actual scurvy has been seen among cotton workers in Stockport, Preston, Blackburn and Salford. Almost all the cases were in women." Children seemed to be healthier than grown-ups. "Medical men and registrars agreed that, apart from special epidemics, the ordinary maladies of childhood have been very lightly felt" owing to "the greater care

<sup>1</sup> *Reports of Factory Inspectors for Half-Year ending 31/10/63*, pp. 61-2; cf. *Times*, 24/10/62 (Letter of Medical Officer of the Ashton Union to Mr. Gartside).

<sup>2</sup> *25th Annual Report of the Registrar-General . . . (1862)*, (P.P., 1864, XVII.).



bestowed on infants by their unemployed mothers than by the hired nursery keepers."

Secondly, bronchitis and pneumonia—due to cold, exposure and bad ventilation—were very common, but "whether they were of singularly greater amount than they would have been without the distress in a season so inclement as the present November (1862) is a question not easy to answer positively."

Thirdly, in consequence of the exceptional dirtiness of houses and persons "an unparalleled quantity of itch has been observed in Blackburn, Manchester, Stockport and Salford."

Fourthly, there were epidemics resulting from a combination of these influences. There were epidemics of typhus fever in Preston and Manchester. "At Preston 227 cases of this fever are known to have occurred between midsummer and the end of November; and those attacked have died at the rate of about 23 per cent. In Manchester there have probably been at least 100 attacks and 20 deaths in the same period." Measles were very prevalent in Ashton, Blackburn, Bury, Chorley and Manchester, whooping cough in Chorley, Manchester, Oldham and Stockport, while in Oldham "there were 169 deaths from scarlatina between midsummer and December 1 (1862)."<sup>1</sup>

The last section of this part of Dr. Buchanan's inquiry concerned "moral peculiarities engendered by the distress." He stated that "drunkenness, with the diseases and accidents produced by it, is unequivocally less in the mass of the cotton towns. In Manchester, Salford and Wigan only has this vice shown itself to its ordinary amount, and in these three towns there are probably the largest number of persons following other occupations than the cotton trade. Venereal disease appears to be in excess of its ordinary amount in Preston and possibly in Stockport."<sup>2</sup> The registered births of illegitimate

<sup>1</sup> 5th Report of M.O. of P.C. (1862), Appendix V., No. 1, Part I.; cf. *Economist*, No. 1001, 1/11/62.

<sup>2</sup> 5th Report of M.O. of P.C. (1862), Appendix V., No. 1.

children in the cotton districts rose from 5408 in 1861 to 5706 in 1862 and 5735 in 1863, and then dropped to 5536 in 1864. The Central Executive Committee tried to penalise immorality by recommending that all cases of suffering resulting from improper conduct should be referred to the Guardians. The Wigan Local Committee thereupon secured a grant of £200 from the Mansion House Fund to assist such applicants. Unkind critics called this "the bastardy promotion fund."<sup>1</sup> A Bolton report referred to "unfortunate females who, in consequence of the Cotton Famine, were at its commencement thrown out of employment, and have thereby become outcasts of society; and now, though trade has revived and work is plentiful, continue members of that unfortunate class, and are likely to continue so. There are also in the borough more youthful prostitutes than I have known for the last twenty-five years."<sup>2</sup>

As might have been expected, both marriages and births declined in the cotton towns during the Famine. There were 19,155 marriages in the cotton districts in 1861; 16,268 in 1862; 18,233 in 1863, and 17,490 in 1864.<sup>3</sup> In some of the great Lancashire towns there were fewer births in 1863 than in 1861.<sup>4</sup> With regard to the death-rate there was considerable controversy. Some held that the death-rate had fallen owing to a decrease in infant mortality (since mothers stayed at home to nurse their children). Others contended that the sufferings of the distressed operatives—particularly of the weak and aged—had led to an increased death-rate. Dr. Noble, who examined the question and made an intensive study of the Ancoats registration area, considered that both views were exaggerated and had "risen from hasty and incompetent handling of the statistics of mortality": too short periods had been

<sup>1</sup> J. Watts, pp. 221 and 350-3.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from the Chief Constable of Bolton in *Reports of Factory Inspectors for the Half-Year ending 31/10/65*, pp. 61-2.

<sup>3</sup> J. Watts, p. 348.

<sup>4</sup> *Reports of Factory Inspectors for Half-Year ending 31/10/62*, p. 58.

taken for purposes of comparison.<sup>1</sup> Possibly both factors were at work and tended to cancel each other out.

Maclure wrote at the end of the Cotton Famine : "The year 1864 tells the same tale as the two which went before it. Its statistics demonstrate that in so far as registers of death and disease tables may be looked upon as an evidence of the public health, the Cotton Famine has failed to bring in its train any of those evils which the most sanguine might have feared. In the country generally the death toll was unusually high. . . . The average annual rate of mortality among the dwellers in towns in England is expressed by 24.2 in the thousand ; last year it reached the higher aggregate of 25.8. Such being the result of the returns from the country generally, it is satisfactory to find that, in so far as *these districts* are concerned, not only was there no proportionate increase over preceding years, but the actual mortality fell below the average of the last three years. . . . The deaths for the year were at the rate of twenty-eight to the thousand as compared with twenty-nine, the average for the three preceding years."<sup>2</sup>

Greatly to the credit of the distressed operatives, crime was not above the average in the cotton districts during the Famine years. Female crime, however, remained higher in Lancashire than elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> Observers agreed that the operatives bore their sufferings with great fortitude. Redgrave reported in 1862 that "at no period in the history of manufactures have sufferings so sudden and so severe been borne with so much silent resignation and so much patient self-respect."<sup>4</sup> The Fifteenth Annual Report of the Poor Law Board (1862-63) stated "that the working classes in the cotton

<sup>1</sup> *M. Daily E. & T.*, 19/11/63 ; cf. *Mc. Stat. Soc.*, 1863-64, pp. 1-18.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by J. Watts, p. 232 ; *vide* F. Purdy, "On the Pauperism and Mortality of Lancashire" (*Brit. Assn.* . . . Section F., *Notices and Abstracts*, 1862, pp. 165-72 ; 1863, pp. 159-61).

<sup>3</sup> J. Watts, pp. 354-5.

<sup>4</sup> *Reports of Factory Inspectors for the Half-Year ending 30/4/62*, p. 10.

manufacturing districts have conducted themselves generally with admirable patience under their privations." <sup>1</sup> Mr. Baron Martin, in charging the Grand Jury at the Spring Assizes at Liverpool in 1863, "referred with much satisfaction to the total absence from the criminal calendar of Lancashire of offences which could be traced to the existing distress." <sup>2</sup> Mr. Justice Blackburn remarked when he charged the Grand Jury at Manchester on December 5, 1864, that although the operatives "had long been suffering, so far as could be perceived by the calendar no crime had been committed by them, a circumstance which led him to think highly of their respectability." <sup>3</sup>

There were, however, disturbances during the Famine. In March, 1863, Dr. J. H. Bridges noted in the distressed districts "the existence of very deep and widespread irritation." He attributed this to five causes. First, Relief Committees were unsympathetic. He quoted a memorial to the Home Secretary (voted at a public meeting at Stalybridge) which complained that "language of a harsh, brutal and disgusting kind is habitually used—not merely by the agents of the committee, but by some of the gentlemen who compose it; and not merely to men but to their wives and daughters. The conduct of the committee has been marked by innumerable instances of capricious favouritism and arbitrary injustice. . . ." <sup>4</sup> Similar criticisms appeared in the *Bee Hive*. It was stated that "the temptation that exists among the manufacturers on these Relief Committees to revenge themselves on their workmen for old grievances, and trade disputes, is very great, and is not often resisted." And on another occasion a leading article said: "From

<sup>1</sup> *15th Annual Report of the P.L.B.*, 1862-63, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in *Annual Register*, 1863, p. 144.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Maclure's Return of 6/12/64 and in *R. Stat. Soc.*, XXVII., 1864, p. 602. Cf. "Report of Executive Committee," 5/3/65; *Times* 17/10/62, 6/12/62.

<sup>4</sup> *Times*, 14/3/63; cf. J. Watts, p. 264 (one member "who was a liberal contributor and a hard worker had the misfortune to be very rude in manner, and much addicted to profane swearing, which made the operatives complain that they were treated like dogs").

evidence that has been laid before us, we are no longer able to doubt not only that relief is doled out on a most inadequate scale, but that the recipients are treated with a harshness and brutality which must soon either crush them into abject pauperism or goad them into a furious outbreak. . . . The men and women who appear before these committees as applicants are treated as if they were standing in the dock of a criminal court, or rather worse; for not only are they presumed *prima facie* to be rogues and imposters, but they are addressed in the coarsest and most insulting language."<sup>1</sup> Secondly, not only Relief Committees but Boards of Guardians were sometimes harsh. "I assert firmly (wrote Dr. Bridges) that of several hundred applicants whom I saw admitted before those two Boards (Preston and Manchester) not one was treated with the decent civility that is shown to Government convicts in Wakefield or Portland. About half a minute is given to the consideration of each case. The decision is final; there is no appeal; any murmur is at once readily silenced by the threat: 'If you complain we will give you the house.' A policeman is at hand to shove the complainant from the room while another introduces the next applicant."<sup>2</sup> Thirdly, those operatives who were at work suffered "enormous reductions" in wages owing to the introduction of Surat or simply to the arbitrariness of employers.<sup>3</sup> Fourthly, operatives felt that they were falling

<sup>1</sup> *Bee Hive*, 27/12/62, 28/2/63.

<sup>2</sup> *Times*, 20/3/62; the Manchester Board of Guardians retorted by passing the following resolution: "This Board . . . declares that the statement contained in Dr. Bridges' letter as to the treatment of recipients of parochial relief, so far as it refers to the practice of the Manchester Board of Guardians, is utterly and absolutely untrue" (*Times*, 30/3/63). Dr. Bridges replied in *The Times*, 4/4/63.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 5/2/63, 20/3/63, 7/8/63. In Blackburn the cotton spinners successfully resisted by means of a three weeks' strike a 10 per cent. reduction "in their already mutilated rate of wages" (undated newspaper extract in Minutes of the London Trades Council). By 1867, however, wages were said to be about 10 per cent. higher than they had been in 1860 (Paris Exhibition, 1867: *Catalogue of British Section*, p. 71).

more and more into the power of their employers : workmen might, for example, owe their employers many weeks' rent.<sup>1</sup> Finally, "many of the working men are most anxious to emigrate. But they find every proposal to assist emigration from public resources steadfastly resisted by their employers, who, as they imagine, wish to reduce wages permanently by keeping on the spot a stock of superfluous labour."<sup>2</sup>

The first disturbance worth noticing somewhat marred the distribution of food sent from America. It was announced in Manchester that in honour of the marriage of the Prince of Wales on March 10, 1863, a meeting of operatives was to be held in Stevenson's Square. The chaplain of the *George Griswold* was to be there, and it was intended that the operatives should march to Kersal Moor where 15,000 2-lb. loaves would be distributed. Two boats drawn by lorries were to take part in the procession ; one, flying the Stars and Stripes, to represent the relief ship, the other—a black vessel destined to be burned on the moor—to represent the *Alabama*. The meeting took place, but the operatives declined to allow political capital to be made out of their distress : no procession was formed, and the loaves were seized from the lorries in the square. The officers of the *George Griswold* were not connected with the affair, and the food had come not by the *George Griswold* but by the *Achilles*.<sup>3</sup>

A week later much more serious riots occurred at Stalybridge and neighbouring towns. The main cause was the dissatisfaction of the recipients of relief (who were largely of Irish origin) with the action of the already unpopular Local Relief Committee<sup>4</sup> in proposing to reduce relief from 3s. 4d. to 3s. a head, to pay this reduced rate in 1s. tickets upon shopkeepers (who were to give in exchange 7d. in goods and 5d. in cash) and to retain one day's pay in hand. The committee considered that the first proposal was necessitated by the reduction of grants

<sup>1</sup> *Times*, 14/3/62.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 and 18/3/63 ; for emigration see below, pp. 115-18.

<sup>3</sup> R. A. Arnold, pp. 390-2.   <sup>4</sup> *Times*, 14/3/63 ; J. Watts, p. 264.

## OPERATIVES DURING THE FAMINE 111

from the Mansion House Committee and by the fact that the old rate "far exceeded the average throughout the district": the second was "to avoid a wasteful expenditure—for it had been discovered that some of the scholars were given to intoxication and gambling":<sup>1</sup> the third was simply "to facilitate their process of book-keeping."<sup>2</sup> The operatives, already annoyed at the stamping of clothes distributed in relief with a mark of the committee, might have accepted one of these proposals without demur: the three together—opposed as they were by a section of the local clergy—aroused sufficient discontent to let loose the forces of disorder. "The retention of a day's pay was denounced as tyranny, and the ticket system as an insult, displaying a thorough want of confidence and involving a general charge of misconduct."<sup>3</sup>

On Friday, March 20, 1863, the operatives in schools—who had made their decision at a meeting held the night before—refused to be relieved by ticket instead of by cash. The officials were hustled as they went from school to school and the windows of their cab were broken. In the afternoon a crowd went to a mill of which Mr. Bates, an unpopular member of the committee, was a partner, smashed windows and damaged machinery. Having beaten off the police the mob looted the clothing store of the Relief Committee, the shop of Mr. Ashton (another member of the committee), a chemist's shop and Dyson's eating-house, and then threw stones at Mr. Bates' private house at Cockerhill, breaking windows and furniture, and hastening the death of Mrs. Bates, who was ill in bed. The windows of the police station and of the central offices of the Relief Committee were smashed and neighbouring houses, where the committee had stored clothes, were plundered. Special constables were sworn in, the Riot Act was read, and a company of

<sup>1</sup> R. A. Arnold, p. 397.

<sup>2</sup> J. Watts, p. 263; R. A. Arnold says that it was done "to ensure the performance of the day's work" (p. 406).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 264.

Hussars from Manchester cleared the streets in the evening. Domiciliary visits were made to discover those who had stolen clothes. About seventy persons, mostly boys and girls, were arrested for their share in the rioting.<sup>1</sup> The next morning, Saturday the 21st, twenty-nine of the men were sent for trial at the following Chester Assizes. Meanwhile, despite notices stating that the Riot Act had been read and that crowds were forbidden to assemble in the streets, a mob had gathered outside the police court. Discharged prisoners were cheered and the Hussars on duty insulted. In the afternoon the police who were conveying to the railway station two omnibuses (filled with the twenty-nine prisoners) were attacked with a shower of stones. When two deputations to Dr. Hopwood, the Mayor, had failed to secure any change in the method of relief proposed by the committee, the mob became more violent. A number of public-houses and bakers' and grocers' shops were visited between 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. : some shopkeepers flung provisions into the street to satisfy the mob but others had their premises invaded and sacked. A company of the 49th Regiment of Foot, a fresh troop of cavalry, and more police were needed to restore order. Sunday (March 22) was a quiet day, the crowds that filled the streets being mostly visitors from neighbouring towns who had come to see the results of the disturbances. As for the rioters, J. Watts mournfully observed that "the reflections of the day do not seem to have wrought much repentance, but rather to have been used in preparing a plan of future operations."<sup>2</sup>

On Monday many were absent from the adult schools : those present passed resolutions refusing to accept relief in tickets. Rioting began again in the afternoon when provision shops and public-houses were looted and the streets were not quiet until ten at night. There were also disturbances at Ashton, Dukinfield and Hyde stirred up by agitators from Stalybridge. At Ashton, Mr.

<sup>1</sup> R. A. Arnold (p. 401) says 60, and J. Watts (p. 266), 80.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 268.



Hugh Mason, mounted on the shoulders of two policemen, warned the rioters of the consequences of their proceedings, and order was restored by the police (reinforced from Liverpool), by newly-sworn special constables and by two troops of Hussars. At Dukinfield shops were sacked but the crowd dispersed in the evening. At Hyde, where looting also took place, the police arrested five rioters who were sent to Chester for trial. On Tuesday (March 24) rioters from Stalybridge were driven out of Ashton and Dukinfield by the police. Fears that there might be disturbances in Hyde, Stockport and Oldham proved to be groundless. At Stalybridge itself all was quiet. There were discussions between the Mayor, the Relief Committee, and representatives of the operatives, and eventually the operatives decided to return to their schools for the time being on the committee's terms in the hope that some modification might be secured by subsequent negotiation.

On the following day—Wednesday, March 25—the Mansion House Committee, having listened to the representations of the Rev. Mr. Floyd of Stalybridge, sent £500 to the Stalybridge Relief Committee with a recommendation to return to the old system of distributing relief. Should the Relief Committee have any difficulty in distributing the money they might delegate the work to the Rev. Mr. Floyd, the Rev. Mr. Hoare and the Rev. Mr. Bell. This action seemed to justify the claims of the discontented operatives. It was condemned by Sir George Grey (Home Secretary) as “extremely injudicious” and *The Times* referred to it as “chucking handfuls of cash to a riotous and insolent mob.”<sup>1</sup> The Relief Committee was so embarrassed that it resolved to resign. Its Chairman acknowledged the receipt of the money and added that he would hold it in hand until the modifications in the method of relieving distress had been introduced. Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth induced the committee to rescind its resolution of

<sup>1</sup> *Times*, 26 and 28/3/63.

resignation. He went to Stalybridge with Mr. Maclure and Mr. Farnall, and discussed the situation with the committee and with representatives of the operatives. No agreement was reached, and on Friday, March 27, Sir James visited Stalybridge again and addressed a meeting of operatives. As a result of his endeavours the operatives agreed to accept the new method of receiving relief which remained the same as originally proposed save that half of each 1s. ticket—that is to say 6d. instead of 5d.—could be obtained in cash.

The blame for the riots mainly rests on the agitators and the small unruly section of the operatives that took advantage of the general distress to stir up trouble, the Relief Committee, which blundered badly in trying to introduce three unpopular changes at once, and the unhappy feud between the committee and some of the clergy. In expressing the hope "that the benevolent people of England will not conclude that the portion of the workpeople of Stalybridge which has been misled represents the operatives of the cotton districts," Farnall made a just distinction between a small minority of roughs and the vast body of the distressed operatives who suffered so long without complaining.<sup>1</sup> At the next Chester Assizes forty-two of the rioters received sentences that varied from one to six months.<sup>2</sup>

There were no further serious riots during the Cotton Famine though minor disturbances occurred occasionally. In April, 1863, for example, there was trouble among the operatives employed on public works at Preston who wanted a six-hour day. The effigy of one of the *Guardians* was paraded to the tune of the "Dead March in Saul" and then buried. Shortly afterwards the recipients of relief at Chorley, who were working in a cemetery, struck for the same reason.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> R. A. Arnold, p. 406.

<sup>2</sup> For Stalybridge riots see London and local Press—particularly *Times*, 23/3/63 to 28/3/63; *Economist*, 23/3/63; *Bee Hive*, 28/3/63; *Annual Register*, 1863 (1864), ch. 5; R. A. Arnold, pp. 396-408; J. Watts, ch. 14.

<sup>3</sup> *M. Daily E. & T.*, 22/4/63 and 2/5/63; *Bee Hive*, 25/4/63.

## OPERATIVES DURING THE FAMINE 115

The disturbances that took place in the spring of 1863 brought the question of emigration to the front. Operatives had already left Lancashire for other parts of England and, when they could afford it or obtain assistance, to the U.S.A. and the colonies. Early in 1862 "the relieving officer of a Yorkshire parish tendered his resignation to the Huddersfield Board of Guardians, on the ground that his house and family were in danger from the violence of wayfarers from Lancashire to Yorkshire consequent upon his inability to relieve the immense numbers of those who made application to him."<sup>1</sup> In the following year Maclure reported that "the continued activity in the trade of Yorkshire has enabled many persons to avail themselves of the opportunities of work which have thus arisen, and I have authentic reports from some districts that very considerable numbers of operatives, especially weavers, have temporarily migrated thither."<sup>2</sup> Probably about 4000 persons from the cotton districts found employment in neighbouring counties during the crisis.<sup>3</sup> It was felt by some of those interested in the relief of distress that the dangers of having an army of operatives dependent upon public charity for an indefinite period—for no adequate supply of cotton could be expected for some time—might be reduced by organising and assisting emigration to these colonies where there was a shortage of labour.

The employers, who in a previous crisis in 1847 had (through the Manchester Chamber of Commerce) asked Parliament to assist in sending unemployed cotton operatives to the British colonies to grow cotton,<sup>4</sup> regarded the movement of 1862-63 with alarm. "The work of manufacturing cotton requires long apprenticeship and great skill. Lancashire operatives had, during

<sup>1</sup> R. A. Arnold, p. 105.

<sup>2</sup> Maclure's Report of 9/11/63.

<sup>3</sup> *Report on Central Relief Committee, 20/12/63; Reports of Factory Inspectors for Half-Year ending 31/10/63*, p. 92. Just before the cotton crisis—in 1859-60—Warwickshire silk operatives had migrated to Lancashire (J. Watts, p. 52).

<sup>4</sup> *P.P.*, 1847-48, LI.

a whole series of generations, acquired this skill. They were specialists, experts in their craft. Without them the spinning and weaving machines would be masses of steel and iron as inert as boilers without coal.”<sup>1</sup> Haywood estimated that the emigration of 50,000 cotton operatives would cost the industry and the country in general £4,000,000 a year.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, it was not clear that the prospects of the emigrants were very rosy, at least in some of the countries that were anxious to attract operatives. A pamphleteer alleged that in Australia the yield of gold, the value of property, the public revenue and the rate of wages had all declined and “that fraudulent dividends have been paid by speculative establishments.”<sup>3</sup> One who had just returned to England after ten years’ residence in Victoria stated that when he left in October, 1862, “all classes were complaining very bitterly of the difficulty of procuring a livelihood.”<sup>4</sup> Mr. John Platt of Oldham stated in April, 1863, that “letters had been received from persons who had emigrated to Queensland which were most discouraging; employment was said to be scarce, and their friends were advised not to come out there to starve.”<sup>5</sup> And an emigrant to this colony wrote in February, 1864: “I have been here six months and only had six weeks’ work out of that: in fact there is no work to be had.”<sup>6</sup>

The opposition of employers, the doubts as to the

<sup>1</sup> M. Tougan-Baranowsky, p. 412.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 414; arguments for emigration were ably stated by Charles Kingsley (*Times*, 31/3/63; cf. *Economist*, 4/4/63, p. 366), and against by E. Potter (*Times*, 24/3/63, and Karl Marx, *Capital* (Everyman’s Library), II., pp. 631-3) in a letter which Ferrand described in the Commons as “the Manifesto of the Manufacturers.”

<sup>3</sup> Old Colonist, *Lancashire Distress and Emigration to Australia* (1864), p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> J. T. in *M. Daily E. & T.*, 10/3/63.

<sup>5</sup> *Times*, 13/4/63; Jordan, a Queensland agent in London, commented that he had “no hesitation in saying that for one discouraging letter received, there are a hundred of the most opposite character.”

<sup>6</sup> *M. Daily E. & T.*, 8/6/64.

prospects in the colonies, and the prevailing economic doctrine that Government should interfere as little as possible in such matters<sup>1</sup> made it a hopeless task for Mr. Ferrand to urge the Government on April 27, 1863, to assist the emigration of cotton operatives. Villiers replied: "I do not mean to say that the Government should discourage emigration. . . . (But) when we know the large amount of capital in the country, and the great increase of it, and are also cognisant of the demand for labour a few years since, I do not think it would be wise of the Government to expend public money on the promotion of emigration."<sup>2</sup>

Certain colonies and the Northern States of the U.S.A. desired to attract Lancashire cotton operatives, and their agents in England were busily engaged in inducing suitable persons to emigrate. For this purpose Victoria and Queensland each set aside £50,000 and Canterbury provided £10,000.<sup>3</sup> Many cotton workers, especially skilled operatives, desired to emigrate.<sup>4</sup> A hundred and fifty Blackburn working men, for example, petitioned the Mansion House Committee for assistance to go to Australia,<sup>5</sup> and 200 Carlisle operatives stated that emigration was "the only permanent remedy" for their distress.<sup>6</sup> In September, 1864, a meeting of the Associated Cotton Spinners of Lancashire, Cheshire, Yorkshire and Derbyshire considered that experience

<sup>1</sup> See e.g. *12th Annual Report of the Poor Law Board* (1859-60), p. 19, Central Executive Committee, 30/3/63, and S.G.O.'s letter to *The Times*, 14/4/63.

<sup>2</sup> Hansard, CLXX., pp. 814-15; S. and B. Webb, p. 142; Karl Marx, *Capital* (Everyman's Library), II., pp. 630-41.

<sup>3</sup> M. Tougan-Baranowsky, pp. 412-15. For Queensland see *Mc. Ch. Comm.* (1858-67), Jan., 1863, p. 428; *Times*, 1/12/62, 27/2/63; Victoria, *Times*, 11/3/63, 21/8/63, 21/12/63; *M. Daily E. & T.*, 9/5/63; J. G. Knight, *A Few Particulars relative to the Colony of Victoria* (Victoria Emigrants' Assistance Society, London, 1863); Canterbury, *Times*, 21/2/63; for New Zealand in general see *Times*, 17 and 18/11/63, 3/12/63; Canada, *Times*, 16/3/63.

<sup>4</sup> *Times*, 14 and 18/3/63.

<sup>5</sup> R. A. Arnold, p. 409.

<sup>6</sup> *Times*, 26/3/63; cf. 1 and 24/6/63, 1/8/63, 12/12/63.

had "proved that it is only by emigration that the position of the working classes can be improved."<sup>1</sup>

The Mansion House Committee did not help the Blackburn operatives, but shortly afterwards it gave £1160 to the Victoria Emigrants' Assistance Society (in two subscriptions), £364 15s. to the Manchester Emigration Society (which was established in April, 1863, and assisted 1000 persons to emigrate), and £54 to a Carlisle emigration society.<sup>2</sup> Another society—the National Colonial Society—selected emigrants not merely from Lancashire but from other parts of England. Local emigration societies were formed in some towns in the distressed districts. Emigration from England varied between 10,000 and 14,000 persons per quarter from May, 1862, to December, 1863, as against from 5000 to 9000 per quarter between January, 1861, and April, 1862.<sup>3</sup> This increase may be attributed partly to emigration from the cotton districts. It was estimated that in 1862 18,244 persons emigrated from these districts and 4000 persons found employment in neighbouring counties.<sup>4</sup>

The main criticism of the policy of emigration was that, with the possible exception of the Northern States of the U.S.A., the countries to which the Lancashire workmen emigrated did not want skilled cotton operatives used to factory work in a high temperature, but pioneer farmers capable of bringing new lands into cultivation.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. Watts, p. 201.

<sup>2</sup> *Times*, 18/3/63, 24/8/63; E. Helm in Palgrave's *Dictionary of Political Economy*, I., pp. 439-41; J. Watts (p. 213) states that the total funds at the disposal of the Manchester Emigration Aid Society were £4600 18s. 6d.

<sup>3</sup> *26th Annual Report of the Registrar-General . . .* (1863), p. xxiii.

<sup>4</sup> *Reports of Factory Inspectors for the Half-Year ending 31/10/63*, p. 92; *Economist*, 21/1/65, 28/1/65.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 1027, 2/5/63; *North British Review*, XXXIX., August, 1863. For emigration see *Economist*, 31/1/63, 28/3/63, 14/4/63, 2/5/63, 11/7/63; J. Watts, pp. 213-17; R. A. Arnold, pp. 408-13; Tougan-Baranowsky, pp. 411-16; *3rd Annual Report of London Trades Council*, 1863.

## CHAPTER VI.

### CONCLUSION.

THE events that have been described and the conclusions that have been drawn from them suggest that the somewhat over-simplified view of the Cotton Famine still sometimes met with needs modification. The crisis, it is clear, was not in its early stages due solely to the blockade of the southern ports but was complicated by over-production in the prosperous years, 1859-60. The Cotton Famine was not simply a factor in Anglo-American relations during the American Civil War and a problem of distress in England. It led to efforts to increase the sources of Lancashire's cotton supply—its influence on the agricultural and industrial development of India and Egypt has been discussed—and it resulted in important changes in the industry at home. In 1860 the Lancashire cotton industry appeared to be all-powerful. In 1870, though it had survived the crisis and to some extent rendered its equipment more efficient, it was already beginning to face abroad a competition that it had not known before.

The crisis in the cotton industry in the sixties was not confined to Lancashire. In New England, where the cotton industry of the United States of America was concentrated, only a third of the spindles were at work in 1862-63; but as the woollen mills were busy making clothes for the army there was little distress, and many women and children were able to return to country homes from which they had only recently come.<sup>1</sup> In Scotland there was distress, especially among the handloom weavers. Able-bodied men were not entitled to relief under the

<sup>1</sup> E. Atkinson, *Report on the Cotton Manufacture of 1862* (Boston ? 1863).

Scottish poor law, and, although this was not very strictly enforced, charitable assistance was needed to meet the emergency of 1862-63. The Unemployed Cotton Operatives' Relief Fund distributed nearly £30,000, mainly in Glasgow; 424 persons were assisted to emigrate to Canada.<sup>1</sup> In Ireland the cotton industry was concentrated in North-West Ulster; there were 20,000 weavers, most of whom still used handlooms, and some 80,000 persons engaged in embroidering muslin. The work was done mainly for Glasgow manufacturers and was badly paid. In January, 1863, a Cotton Operatives' Relief Committee was set up in Lisburn, with H. M'Call as secretary. It relieved agricultural labourers as well as cotton weavers; collected £3231 by June, 1863, helped about a thousand families, and assisted some weavers to emigrate. A. T. Stewart, a native of Lissue, who had made a fortune in the United States, sent a cargo of food worth £4000 to Ireland.<sup>2</sup>

On the Continent there was distress in Normandy where the industry was exclusively concerned with coarse materials; the purchasers were poor people who could not afford to buy when prices rose. Over 100,000 operatives were wholly or partially unemployed at the end of 1862, and more than a million francs were distributed in cash and kind between December, 1861, and July, 1863. The distress alarmed Napoleon III. and his ministers and caused them to favour European intervention to end the American Civil War. In Silesia, Poland and North-West Germany, too, many mills closed down. Alsace, South Germany and Switzerland suffered less: they had considerable stocks in hand and spun a fine article which was sold to a type of customer

<sup>1</sup> *Interim Report of the Proceedings of the Standing Executive Committee of the Cotton Operatives Relief Fund for Glasgow* (27/11/62), 2nd Report . . . (Dec., 1863); reports of meetings of the Executive Committee appeared regularly in the *Glasgow Herald*.

<sup>2</sup> H. . . . (H. M'Call), *The Cotton Famine of 1862-63* (new ed., 1881); further details may be found in the columns of the *Northern Whig* and the *Belfast Newsletter*.



## CONCLUSION

121

whose purchasing power was considerable. Russia was able to obtain some cotton from Central Asia. The crisis caused weak firms to collapse. Many of those that survived introduced new and more efficient machinery (for English machinery was temporarily cheap) and accustomed themselves to work with Indian and other non-American cottons. The Continental, like the Lancashire, cotton industry ultimately gained in efficiency through the reorganisation which it had to adopt owing to the crisis of 1861-65 and its aftermath.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See W. O. Henderson, "The Cotton Famine on the Continent, 1861-65" (*Economic History Review*, April, 1933, pp. 195-207), where full references are given.

## CHAPTER VII.

### APPENDICES.

#### APPENDIX "A."

Liverpool Cotton Prices, 1861-67 (compiled from Williams' Circulars).

| <i>Price per lb.<br/>in pence at<br/>end of month.</i> | <i>Middling Orleans.</i> |                    |                     |                    |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
|  | 1861.                    | 1862.              | 1861.               | 1862.              |
| January . . . . .                                      | $7^{\frac{8}{16}}$       | 13                 | July . . . . .      | $8^{\frac{1}{2}}$  |
| February . . . . .                                     | $6^{\frac{7}{8}}$        | 13                 | August . . . . .    | 9                  |
| March . . . . .  | $7^{\frac{3}{8}}$        | $12^{\frac{5}{8}}$ | September . . . . . | 10                 |
| April . . . . .  | $7^{\frac{3}{16}}$       | $13^{\frac{1}{2}}$ | October . . . . .   | 12                 |
| May . . . . .  | $7^{\frac{7}{8}}$        | $12^{\frac{5}{8}}$ | November . . . . .  | $11^{\frac{5}{8}}$ |
| June . . . . .   | 8                        | 15                 | December . . . . .  | 12                 |
|  |                          |                    | Average . . . . .   | $9$                |
|  |                          |                    |                     | $18^{\frac{1}{2}}$ |

  

|                     | 1863.                    |                      |                         |                    | 1864.                    |                    |                         |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
|                     | <i>Mid.<br/>Orleans.</i> | <i>Egypt.</i>        | <i>Fair<br/>Pernam.</i> | <i>Dboll.</i>      | <i>Mid.<br/>Orleans.</i> | <i>Egypt.</i>      | <i>Fair<br/>Pernam.</i> | <i>Dboll.</i>      |
| January . . . . .   | 23                       | $22^{\frac{1}{2}}$   | $22^{\frac{1}{2}}$      | 17                 | $27^{\frac{1}{2}}$       | $27^{\frac{1}{2}}$ | 28                      | 23                 |
| February . . . . .  | $21^{\frac{1}{2}}$       | 20                   | 21                      | $16^{\frac{1}{2}}$ | $27^{\frac{1}{4}}$       | $26^{\frac{3}{4}}$ | $27^{\frac{1}{2}}$      | $23^{\frac{3}{4}}$ |
| March . . . . .     | 22                       | 21                   | $20^{\frac{1}{2}}$      | 17                 | $26^{\frac{3}{4}}$       | $26^{\frac{1}{2}}$ | $26^{\frac{1}{2}}$      | 22                 |
| April . . . . .     | 22                       | 22                   | $21^{\frac{1}{2}}$      | $17^{\frac{1}{4}}$ | $27^{\frac{3}{4}}$       | 29                 | $28^{\frac{1}{2}}$      | $21^{\frac{1}{2}}$ |
| May . . . . .       | 23                       | $21^{\frac{1}{2}}$   | 23                      | 18                 | $28^{\frac{1}{2}}$       | $29^{\frac{1}{4}}$ | $28^{\frac{3}{4}}$      | $21^{\frac{3}{4}}$ |
| June . . . . .      | $21^{\frac{1}{2}}$       | $20^{\frac{1}{2}}$   | 22                      | 18                 | 30                       | $29^{\frac{1}{2}}$ | $29^{\frac{3}{4}}$      | 22                 |
| July . . . . .      | $22^{\frac{3}{4}}$       | 21                   | $22^{\frac{1}{2}}$      | $18^{\frac{3}{4}}$ | $31^{\frac{1}{2}}$       | $30^{\frac{1}{4}}$ | 32                      | $23^{\frac{1}{2}}$ |
| August . . . . .    | 24                       | $23^{\frac{1}{2}}$   | 24                      | $19^{\frac{1}{4}}$ | 30                       | $30^{\frac{3}{4}}$ | $31^{\frac{1}{2}}$      | 24                 |
| September . . . . . | $27^{\frac{1}{2}}$       | 27                   | 28                      | 22                 | 27                       | 24                 | 25                      | $18^{\frac{1}{2}}$ |
| October . . . . .   | $29^{\frac{1}{2}}$       | $29^{\frac{3}{4}}$   | $30^{\frac{1}{2}}$      | $24^{\frac{1}{2}}$ | 22                       | $22^{\frac{1}{2}}$ | $22^{\frac{1}{2}}$      | $15^{\frac{1}{4}}$ |
| November . . . . .  | $28^{\frac{1}{4}}$       | 29                   | $29^{\frac{1}{2}}$      | 24                 | $27^{\frac{1}{2}}$       | $29^{\frac{1}{4}}$ | 28                      | $19^{\frac{1}{2}}$ |
| December . . . . .  | $28^{\frac{1}{2}}$       | 29                   | $29^{\frac{1}{2}}$      | 24                 | 27                       | $27^{\frac{1}{2}}$ | $26^{\frac{3}{4}}$      | 20                 |
| Average             | $24^{\frac{1}{2}}$       | $23^{\frac{11}{12}}$ | $24^{\frac{1}{2}}$      | $19^{\frac{3}{4}}$ | $27^{\frac{3}{4}}$       | $27^{\frac{3}{4}}$ | $27^{\frac{11}{12}}$    | $21^{\frac{1}{4}}$ |

APPENDICES

123

|           | 1865.                          |                                |                                |                                | 1866.                          |                                |                                |                                  |
|-----------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|           | Mid.                           |                                | Fair                           |                                | Mid.                           |                                | Fair                           |                                  |
|           | Orleans.                       | Egypt.                         | Pernam.                        | Dboll.                         | Orleans.                       | Egypt.                         | Pernam.                        | Dboll.                           |
| January.  | 24 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 23 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 23 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 18                             | 18 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 22 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 19 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 16 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>   |
| February  | 19 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 18 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 18 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 15 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 19 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 22                             | 20                             | 16                               |
| March .   | 15 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 14 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 14 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 11                             | 19 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 23 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 20 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 16                               |
| April .   | 14 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 14 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 14 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 11                             | 15 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 19 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 17                             | 12                               |
| May .     | 16 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 16 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 15 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 11 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 14                             | 18 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 14 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 9 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>    |
| June .    | 20 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 18 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 19 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 14 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 14                             | 18 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 14 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 9 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>    |
| July .    | 19 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 17 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 18 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 14 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 14 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 23                             | 17 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 10                               |
| August .  | 18 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 17 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 18                             | 13                             | 14                             | 20                             | 16 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 9 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>    |
| September | 21 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 20 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 20 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 15 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 14 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 19                             | 16 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 10 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>   |
| October   | 22 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 23                             | 24                             | 18                             | 15 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 17 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 16 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 11 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>   |
| November  | 21                             | 23                             | 21 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 16 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 14 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 16 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 14 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 10 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>   |
| December  | 21 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 23 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 22                             | 17 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 15 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 17                             | 15 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 12 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>   |
| Average   | 19 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 19 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>3</sub> | 19 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>6</sub> | 14 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>6</sub> | 15 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>6</sub> | 19 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 17                             | 11 <sup>11</sup> / <sub>12</sub> |

| 1867.     |                                |                                |                                |                                |
|-----------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| January.  | 15 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 16 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 15 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 12 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> |
| February  | 13 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 16 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 14 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 11 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> |
| March .   | 13 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 16                             | 14                             | 11 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> |
| April .   | 11 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 14                             | 12 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 9 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>  |
| May .     | 11 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 15 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 12 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 9 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>  |
| June .    | 11 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 15 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 12                             | 9                              |
| July .    | 10 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 13 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 11                             | 8 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>  |
| August .  | 10 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 12                             | 10 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>  |
| September | 8 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>  | 10                             | 8 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>  | 6                              |
| October   | 9                              | 9 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>  | 8 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>  | 6 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub>  |
| November  | 7 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>  | 9 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>  | 8 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>  | 6 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub>  |
| December  | 7 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>  | 7 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>  | 7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>  | 5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>  |
| Average   | 11                             | 13                             | 11 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 8 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>12</sub> |

APPENDIX "B."

Limited Liability Cotton Companies, 1856-65.

I am indebted to Mr. H. A. Shannon of the London School of Economics for the following tables which amplify those given in his article in *Economic History*, January, 1932.

- 1.—Number of limited liability cotton companies formed, 1856-65 :  
 "Abortive" registrations (no substantive returns after first registration) = 22.

## 124 THE LANCASHIRE COTTON FAMINE

"Effective" formations =

| <i>Date of<br/>Registration.</i> | <i>Cotton.</i> | <i>Cotton<br/>plus.</i> |       |
|----------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------|
| 1856                             | 1              | 0                       | } 13  |
| 1857                             | 1              | 0                       |       |
| 1858                             | 1              | 1                       |       |
| 1859                             | 9              | 0                       |       |
| 1860                             | 32             | 13                      | } 101 |
| 1861                             | 30             | 23                      |       |
| 1862                             | 2              | 1                       |       |
| 1863                             | 2              | 0                       | } 21  |
| 1864                             | 7              | 0                       |       |
| 1865                             | 12             | 0                       |       |
|                                  | 97             | 38                      |       |
|                                  |                |                         | 135   |

*Note.*—"Cotton" firms are those which gave their objects as cotton spinning and/or weaving and sometimes as manufacturing; those firms called "Cotton plus" took in addition to cotton spinning and/or weaving wide powers for farming, mining, building, etc. Cf. *Parliamentary Papers*, 1864, LVIII.

## 2.—(a) History of "Effective" Formations (Duration and Mode of Dropping Out).

| <i>Date of<br/>Registration.</i> | <i>3 Yrs. and under.</i> |   |   |   | <i>4 to 5 Yrs.</i>   |   |   |   | <i>6 to 10 Yrs.</i>  |    |    |   |   |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|---|---|---|----------------------|---|---|---|----------------------|----|----|---|---|
|                                  | S                        | C | V | U | S                    | C | V | U | S                    | C  | V  | U |   |
| 1856-59                          | —                        | — | — | — | —                    | — | — | — | —                    | 1  | —  | — | — |
| 1860-62                          | 1                        | 2 | 6 | 4 | —                    | 3 | 5 | — | 1                    | 13 | 7  | — |   |
| 1863-65                          | —                        | 1 | 1 | — | 1                    | — | 3 | — | 1                    | 1  | 4  | — |   |
| Total                            | 1                        | 3 | 7 | 4 | 1                    | 3 | 8 | — | 3                    | 14 | 11 | — |   |
|                                  |                          |   |   |   |                      |   |   |   |                      |    |    |   |   |
|                                  | <i>11 to 15 Yrs.</i>     |   |   |   | <i>16 to 20 Yrs.</i> |   |   |   | <i>21 to 30 Yrs.</i> |    |    |   |   |
| 1856-59                          | —                        | 1 | — | — | —                    | 1 | — | — | —                    | 1  | 1  | — |   |
| 1860-62                          | 1                        | 2 | 4 | — | —                    | 2 | 3 | — | 1                    | 8  | 2  | — |   |
| 1863-65                          | —                        | — | — | — | —                    | — | — | — | 1                    | —  | 2  | — |   |
| Total                            | 1                        | 3 | 4 | — | —                    | 3 | — | — | 2                    | 9  | 5  | — |   |

## APPENDICES

125

|         | <i>31 to 40 Yrs.</i> | <i>41 to 50 Yrs.</i> | <i>51 Yrs. and over.</i> |
|---------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1856-59 | 1 — — —              | — — — —              | 1 — 1 —                  |
| 1860-62 | 1 4 1 —              | — 2 — —              | 6 2 4 —                  |
| 1863-65 | 2 — — —              | — — — —              | — — 1 —                  |
|         | 4 4 1 —              | — 2 — —              | 7 2 6 —                  |
| Total   |                      |                      |                          |
|         | <i>Totals.</i>       | <i>Existing.</i>     |                          |
| 1856-59 | 3 3 2 1              | 4                    |                          |
| 1860-62 | 11 38 32 11          | 9                    |                          |
| 1863-65 | 5 2 11 0             | 3                    |                          |
|         | 19 43 45 12          | 16                   |                          |
| Total   |                      |                      |                          |

2.—(b) Mode of Dropping Out in three-yearly periods :—

|      | <i>Existing.</i> | S | C | V | U |
|------|------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1859 | 13               | — | — | — | — |
| 1862 | 112              | 1 | 3 | 7 | 8 |
| 1865 | 114              | 1 | 8 | 7 | 1 |
| 1868 | 97               | 2 | 9 | 8 | — |
| 1871 | 78               | 1 | 1 | 4 | — |
| 1874 | 72               | 1 | 3 | 2 | — |
| 1877 | 66               | — | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| 1880 | 59               | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| 1883 | 53               | 1 | 5 | 2 | — |
| 1886 | 45               | — | — | — | — |
| 1889 | 45               | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| 1892 | 40               | — | 2 | — | — |
| 1895 | 38               | 3 | 2 | — | — |
| 1898 | 33               | — | — | — | — |
| 1901 | 33               | — | 1 | — | — |
| 1904 | 32               | — | 1 | — | — |
| 1907 | 31               | — | — | — | — |
| 1910 | 31               | 1 | — | — | — |
| 1913 | 30               | — | — | 1 | — |
| 1916 | 29               | — | — | — | — |
| 1919 | 29               | 6 | — | 4 | — |
| 1922 | 19               | — | — | — | — |
| 1925 | 19               | — | 2 | 1 | — |
| 1928 | 16               | — | — | — | — |

*Note.*—S = Sold, amalgamated or reconstructed.

C = Wound up by or under the Court and for reasons of liabilities.

V = Unexplained voluntary winding up.

U = Unknown (*details omitted from third year but included in totals of 2 (a).*)

# 126 THE LANCASHIRE COTTON FAMINE

## APPENDIX "C."

Table showing the net result of the improvements of machinery in the English cotton industry, 1858-68 (from Karl Marx, *Capital* (Everyman's Library), I., p. 466):—

### *Number of Factories.*

|                   | 1858.       | 1861.       | 1868.       |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| England and Wales | 2046        | 2715        | 2405        |
| Scotland . . .    | 152         | 163         | 131         |
| Ireland . . .     | 12          | 9           | 13          |
| U.K. . . . .      | <u>2210</u> | <u>2887</u> | <u>2549</u> |

### *Number of Power-Looms.*

|                       | 1858.          | 1861.          | 1868.          |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| England and Wales . . | 275,590        | 368,125        | 344,719        |
| Scotland . . . . .    | 21,624         | 30,110         | 31,864         |
| Ireland . . . . .     | 1,633          | 1,757          | 2,746          |
| U.K. . . . .          | <u>298,847</u> | <u>399,992</u> | <u>379,329</u> |

### *Number of Spindles.*

|                       |                   |                   |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| England and Wales . . | 25,818,576        | 28,352,152        | 30,478,228        |
| Scotland . . . . .    | 2,041,129         | 1,915,398         | 1,397,546         |
| Ireland . . . . .     | 150,512           | 119,944           | 124,240           |
| U.K. . . . .          | <u>28,010,217</u> | <u>30,387,494</u> | <u>32,000,014</u> |

### *Number of Persons Employed.*

|                       |                |                |                |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| England and Wales . . | 341,170        | 407,598        | 357,052        |
| Scotland . . . . .    | 34,698         | 41,237         | 39,809         |
| Ireland . . . . .     | 3,345          | 2,734          | 4,203          |
| U.K. . . . .          | <u>379,213</u> | <u>451,569</u> | <u>401,064</u> |

## APPENDIX "D."

### *Trade Customs in Manchester, 1882.*

Some of the problems connected with the purchase of the raw material have been discussed in the concluding paragraphs of Chapter II. The following letter (from F. Amos to A. D. Shaw, U.S. Consul in Manchester) describes the buying and selling of cloth in Manchester. It was written

some twenty years after the Cotton Famine, but Mr. Amos deals with long-established customs as well as developments that were new in 1882, and his description is so clear that it is worth giving in full. It appeared in A. D. Shaw's *Extracts from a Special Report on the Cotton Goods Trade of Lancashire, September, 1882* (Manchester, 1883):—

“ I should premiss by remarking that among the terms of the cotton trade of Lancashire a cotton *spinner* means one who changes raw cotton into cotton yarn, and the place where this is done is termed a *mill*: whereas a cotton *manufacturer* is one who changes cotton yarn into cotton cloth, and his work-place is termed a *weaving-shed*. Further it must be understood that what I have to say applies only to yarn and cloth in a grey condition. I have nothing to say as to the trade in bleached, dyed, printed or finished cotton goods.

“ The sale or commission of cotton yarn and cloth forms the great staple commission trade of Manchester. Probably three-fourths of all the cotton yarn spun in the U.K. is sold in Manchester, and even a larger proportion of the cotton cloth produced is sold here likewise. The sale of these two articles is occasionally carried on by one and the same commission house, but the general rule, with few exceptions, is that the commission trade for the sale of yarn and cloth constitute two separate businesses.

“ First, then, as to *yarn*. Until the past few years each spinning mill sold its entire production through one agent, though this same agent might act (and did act) for several mills. Latterly the tendency among spinners has been to employ several agency firms as the recognised agents for the mill. The yarn agents, besides having their places of business in Manchester, and attending daily of the Manchester Exchange, have salesmen constantly canvassing for orders among the weaving-sheds scattered over the cotton districts of Lancashire, Cheshire and Yorkshire. The spinner notifies to his agent from time to time the price at which he is prepared to sell; and the agent's business is to find customers at the price named, or to offer the nearest approach thereto obtainable. Of course, in actual practice there is not a reference by the agent back to the spinner in every case where a lower price is offered: for a certain amount of discretion in selling must always be left to the agent.

“ When the agent has effected a sale he sends an advice-note thereof to the spinner, directing him to what address, and at what date, he has to forward the yarn. It is an understanding of the trade that the spinner must deliver the yarn free of freight charge to the buyer in Manchester; or if the buyer requires delivery elsewhere than Manchester (and for home trade purposes this is generally so), then the buyer has to pay only such freight charges as prevail between the place where he requires delivery and Manchester and Oldham. At one or other of these towns the spinner's liability for freight charges ends.

“ All yarn is sold subject to certain discounts. If the yarn is sold for export purposes (which requires parcelling and packing quite different from yarn intended for home purposes) it is subject to a discount of

95 days' interest, though as a matter of fact payment is made within 14 days after delivery, and interest at 5 per cent. for 95 days is deducted from the account. If the yarn is sold for home-trade purposes, that is, for consumption in an English weaving-shed, it is subject to a discount of  $2\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. for cash, payable in 14 days after delivery; or, less frequently, a discount of  $1\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. for cash, payable in 30 days; but in this latter case the 30 days do not begin to reckon until the 24th of the current month. Of course these differences of discounts are factors in regulating the price paid for the yarn, so that neither the exporter nor the home consumer has actually any advantage over the other.

"The agent is paid by the spinner a commission on all yarn sold. In some few instances where the entire production of the mill is sold by one agent, the commission is what we term 'a commuted commission,' that is to say, a fixed sum or salary per annum is paid irrespective of the varying extent of the business. In such cases the agent's relation to the spinner is rather that of a servant, and he is required to disclose to the spinner the name of the buyer. The spinner then invoices the yarn in his own name to the buyer. Of course in such case the risks of payment lie entirely with the spinner.

"The general mode is for the spinner to pay his agent a per centum commission. In such cases only the selling commission of 1 per cent. is paid, in which case the agent discloses to the spinner the name of the customer, and all risks have to be taken by the spinner. But, as I have said, the prevailing custom is to pay both a selling and guaranteeing commission, and the spinner rarely knows even the name of the customer, or any particulars of the transaction beyond quantity and quality sold, price paid and time for delivery. The spinner forwards the yarn to the order of the agent to whatever railway or canal depot the agent may direct. In this (which is the prevailing custom) the agent pays his spinner at the end of 14 days from date of delivery the full value of the yarn less discount and commission, 4 per cent. What proportion of this 4 per cent. represents discount given to the agent's customer is a matter of indifference to the spinner. Generally it is  $2\frac{3}{4}$  per cent., as before stated, which leaves only  $1\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. to the agent for selling and guaranteeing. Or, if the discount allowed is  $1\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. with 30 days' interest, counting from the 24th of current month, then the agent has rather more than  $1\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. but his risks of bad debts become increased, and he requires considerably larger capital to work his business.

"Where the yarn has been sold for export purposes (as before referred to) the agent deducts from his spinner's account only  $2\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. for discount, selling and guaranteeing, of which he has allowed the buyer the equivalent discount of  $1\frac{3}{4}$  per cent., that is, 95 days' interest at 5 per cent., which leaves only 1 per cent. to the agent.

"Secondly, as to *grey cotton cloth*. The customs are very similar to those described as applying to yarn. The buyers of cotton cloth are all congregated in Manchester, either acting as principals or as buying agents; these latter represent London, Glasgow, and foreign houses.



All cotton-cloth selling agents are here, and the great bulk of the cloth manufactured is sold through agents, though some of the largest manufacturers have their own 'houses' in Manchester and sell their products either by salaried salesmen or resident partners. Of this cloth sold through agents a limited portion is sold for 'a commuted commission' exactly as I have described in the case of yarn. Then again, as in the case of yarn, some is sold for a commission of 1 per cent. paid to the agent, who discloses the buyer's name, and in such cases the agent's risk and trouble ends with the sale. But, speaking generally, the custom is for the agent both to sell and guarantee payment; in which case he deducts from the invoice of the manufacturer 4 per cent. to cover discount, selling and guaranteeing commission. The buyer receives a discount varying from 2 per cent. to 2½ per cent. (according to bargain) on the invoice value, so that the agent's commission varies from 1½ per cent. to 2 per cent. For this commission the agent has to sell, guarantee payment, oftentimes warehouse the cloth until the customer is ready to receive it, and has to pay the cost of portering the cloth from his own to the buyer's premises. All cost of freight from the weaving-shed to the agent's door is paid for by the manufacturer.

"The terms of payment by the buyer to the seller are very favourable to the soundness of trade. Some little business is done on what are known as 'long terms'; that is a discount of 1½ per cent. and 30 days' interest. But the great bulk of cloth is sold for 'cash terms'; that is, payment within a period varying (according to known custom of the particular buyer) from three to seven days after delivery.

"In the case both of yarn and cloth the agent generally acts as a financier for the spinner and manufacturer, readily advancing money upon their production as it arrives in the agents' hands and before payment falls due; the account current between the two being made up monthly, and interest at 5 per cent. per annum charged on all advances. Moreover, in the case of the cloth agent he is expected to keep his manufacturer's machinery steadily and continuously working on 'orders,' and to advise the manufacturer of all new demands and all changes in the requirement of the market, that the manufacturer may adapt his production to the varying wants of the world. Very few manufacturers confine their machinery to one description of cloth, but keep themselves prepared and equipped to work in a wide range and for various markets" (pp. 26-7).

#### APPENDIX "E."

List of limited liability companies formed to grow (or to promote the growth of) cotton in countries other than the U.S.A. that are mentioned in the Return of all Joint-Stock Companies having Special Acts of Parliament which are registered at the office of the Registrar of Joint-Stock Companies (*Parliamentary Papers*, 1864, LVIII.). Registrations up to November, 1862, were under the Act of 1856; registrations after that date were under the Act of 1862.

# 130 THE LANCASHIRE COTTON FAMINE

## England.

| <i>Number.</i> | <i>Name.</i>  | <i>Date of Registration.</i> | <i>Nominal Capital.</i> |
|----------------|---|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 598            | British Cotton Co., Ltd.                                  | 17/2/58                      | £30,000                 |
| 822            | East India Cotton Co., Ltd.                               | 14/12/58                     | 1,000,000               |
| 1144           | Oriental and Colonial Cotton, Flax and Fibres Co., Ltd.   | 23/1/59                      | 100,000                 |
| 1653           | Jamaica Cotton Co., Ltd.                                  | 9/5/61                       | 20,000                  |
| 1862           | E. India Cotton Growing Agency, Ltd.                      | 15/11/61                     | 500,000                 |
| 1886           | Natal Cotton Co., Ltd.                                    | 2/12/61                      | 50,000                  |
| 1956           | Manchester Queensland Cotton Co., Ltd.                    | 17/2/62                      | 12,000                  |
| 2142           | Queensland Cotton Growing and Selling Co., Ltd.           | 1/8/62                       | 150,000                 |
| 2211           | West African Co., Ltd.                                    | 3/10/62                      | 250,000                 |
| 2407           | Cotton Plantation Co. of Natal, Ltd.                      | 29/1/63                      | 150,000                 |
| 2458           | British Honduras Cotton Co., Ltd.                         | 27/2/63                      | 200,000                 |
| 2604           | Ottoman Cotton Co., Ltd.                                  | 28/5/63                      | 100,000                 |
| 2799           | Asia Minor Cotton Co., Ltd.                               | 8/9/63                       | 100,000                 |
| 3138           | Kinnaon and Oude Plantation Co., Ltd.                     | 31/12/63                     | 100,000                 |
| 3200           | Umzinto Plantation and Trading Co. of Natal, Ltd.         | 9/3/64                       | 125,000                 |
| 3336           | Manchioneal Cotton Co., Ltd. (to grow cotton in Jamaica). | 16/4/64                      | 10,000                  |

## Scotland.

|     |   |         |         |
|-----|---|---------|---------|
| 102 | Clarendon Cotton Co., Ltd. (to grow cotton in Jamaica). | 22/9/62 | £50,000 |
|-----|---|---------|---------|

## APPENDIX "F."

Mr. Shannon has been good enough to give me the following particulars of "effective" cotton growing companies formed in 1856-65:—

|         | <i>Colonial.</i> | <i>Foreign.</i> | <i>Total.</i> |
|---------|------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 1856-60 | 0                | 0               | 0             |
| 1861    | 2                | 0               | 2             |
| 1862    | 2                | 0               | 2             |
| 1863    | 3                | 3               | 6             |
| 1864    | 1                | 2               | 3             |
| 1865    | 0                | 0               | 0             |
|         | <hr/>            | <hr/>           | <hr/>         |
| Total   | 8                | 5               | 13            |

## APPENDICES

131

*Duration of these companies and mode of extinction :—*

|         | 3 years<br>and under. | 4 to 5<br>years. | 6 to 10<br>years. | 11 to 15<br>years. | 16 to 20<br>years. |
|---------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|         | S C V U               | S C V U          | S C V U           | S C V U            | S C V U            |
| 1860-62 | - 1 1 1               | - - - 1          | - - - -           | - - - -            | - - - -            |
| 1863-65 | - - 1 -               | - - 5 -          | - 1 - -           | - 1 - -            | - - - -            |

21 to 30 years.

|         |         |     |
|---------|---------|-----|
| 1860-62 | - - - - | = 4 |
| 1863-65 | - - 1 - | = 9 |
| Total   |         | 13  |

*Mode of Dropping Out in three-yearly intervals :—*

|      | <i>Existing.</i> | S | C | V | U |
|------|------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1862 | 4                | - | 1 | 1 | - |
| 1865 | 10               | - | - | 3 | 2 |
| 1868 | 5                | - | 1 | 2 | - |
| 1871 | 2                | - | 1 | - | - |
| 1874 | 1                | - | - | - | - |
| 1877 | 1                | - | - | - | - |
| 1880 | 1                | - | - | - | - |
| 1883 | 1                | - | - | - | - |
| 1886 | 1                | - | - | - | - |
| 1889 | 1                | - | - | - | - |
| 1892 | 0                | - | - | 1 | - |

*Note.*—S = Sold, amalgamated or reconstructed.

C = Wound up by or under the Court and for reasons of liabilities.

V = Unexplained voluntary winding up.

U = Unknown.

(*Cf. Economic History, II., pp. 396-424.*)

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## 156 THE LANCASHIRE COTTON FAMINE

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## 158 THE LANCASHIRE COTTON FAMINE

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Armstrong & Berey; M. Barton & Son; M. Bower & Son; W. Bright; D. E. Buchanan; S. M. Bulley; Burns' Monthly Colonial Circular and Commercial Glance (Manchester); C. Cambell & Son; J. Cambell & Co.; W. Clare & Sons; I. Cooke & Sons; Cowie, Smith & Co. (annually); Cruttenden & Oulton; Cunningham & Hinshaw; Danson & Wild (annually); Duckworth & Rathbone (annually); Ellison & Haywood (annually); W. Fox; Franceys & Comer; G. Frazer, Son & Co. (Manchester); J. Gaskell; J. W. Good (annually); W. A. Gorst (annually); T. Haigh & Co.; Hall & Mellor (later R. C. Hall—who



## 162 THE LANCASHIRE COTTON FAMINE

published the Liverpool Cotton Brokers' Association Weekly Circular after 22/4/64); Hime, Milnes & Co.; Hodgson & Ryley (annually); F. Hollins (annually); Hollinshead, Tetley & Co. (annually); G. Holt & Co.; Hornby & Robinson; Houghton, Vance & Co.; J. Howell & Son; S. M. Hutchinson; E. Jardine; J. & M. Joynson; T. Joynson; P. Joynson; S. Jowett; Kearsley & Cunningham; Lea (Waddington) & Walthew; W. T. Lees; T. & H. Littledale; Marriott & Co.; Mayall & Anderson; W. Meers; E. Meugen & Co.; E. Musgrove & Co.; Neill (New York); Neill Brothers' Circular (Manchester); Newall & Clayton; D. Payton; Reynolds & Gibson; Robson & Eskrigge; Rogers & Calder (annually); S. Smith (later Smith, Edwards & Co.) (annually); Stead Brothers; J. Stock & Sons; Stolterfoht, Sons & Co.; Thornley & Pownall (annually); Titherington, Gill & Co.; W. D. Tomlinson & Co.; M. Williams (annual circulars for 1861-68 with review of the Cotton Trade on 1/5/68, were republished as *Seven Years' History of the Cotton Trade*, Liverpool, 1868); J. Willis, Jr.; W. Winter Raffles (annually); W. P. Wright & Co. (New York); J. Wrigley & Sons (annually).

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<sup>1</sup> It is necessary to distinguish between C. F. Adams, Snr., 1807-86, U.S. Minister in London, 1861-68, and his sons, C. F. Adams, Jnr., 1835-1915, Henry Brooks Adams, 1838-1918 (who dropped the name "Brooks") and Brooks Adams, 1848-1927. See *Dictionary of American Biography*.

## 164 THE LANCASHIRE COTTON FAMINE

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## 166 THE LANCASHIRE COTTON FAMINE

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## INDEX.

- Acts of Parliament,**  
 Public Works Act, 1863, 59  
 Union Relief Aid Act, 1862, 57  
**Africa, see** Algeria, Egypt, etc.  
**Algeria,**  
 cotton growing in, 47  
**Alsace,**  
 Cotton Famine in, 120  
 Amalgamated Society of Engineers, 98  
**America, South,**  
 cotton growing in, 47  
**America, United States of, see** United States of America  
**American Chamber of Commerce, see** Liverpool  
**American Civil War,**  
 not the only cause of crisis in Lancashire cotton industry, 11, 119  
**Amos, F.,** letter to Mr. A. D. Shaw on Manchester trade customs in 1882, 126-129  
**Anglo-French Treaty of Commerce of** 1860, 9  
**Angola,**  
 cotton growing in, 48  
**Ashton-under-Lyne,**  
 distress in, 56  
 Friendly Society's query to Registrar, 97  
 religious dissension in, 91  
**Associated Cotton Spinners of Lancashire, etc.,**  
 favoured emigration, 117  
**Associations,**  
 Cotton Brokers' Association, see Liverpool  
 Cotton Spinners' Association, see Manchester  
 Cotton Supply Association, 36-38  
**Australia,**  
 cotton growing in, 42  
 grants to assist emigrants to, 117  
**BACUP,**  
 charity of a lady in, 72  
**Baillie, Rev. J.,**  
 favoured denominational management of relief committees, 91  
**Banks,**  
 Bank Act of 1844 suspended in 1866, 24  
 Bank of Liverpool results, 1861-64, 8  
 Manchester and Salford Bank results, 1861-64, 8, 9 (n.)  
**Barbados,**  
 cotton growing in, 42  
**Bazley, Sir Thomas** (cotton manufacturer ; M.P. for Manchester),  
 estimate of employers' losses, 19  
 helped to send Mackay on mission to India, 36  
 his operatives well housed, 3  
**Birch, W.,**  
 started sewing schools for unemployed female operatives, 72  
**Birley & Co., Messrs.,**  
 dispute with Chorlton Guardians, 54  
**Births,**  
 in cotton districts during crisis, 106  
**Blackburn,**  
 borrowed £3517 under Union Relief Aid Act, 59  
 distress in, 55  
 instance of fraud in, 86  
 Mrs. Gerald Potter's work in, 72  
 Mr. Tiplady's appeal in *Times* for help, 78  
 new mills in, 18  
 operatives resisted wage reduction, 109 (n.)  
 operatives subscribed to relief funds, 73  
 operatives wanted to emigrate, 117  
 relief committee set up in, 73, 74  
 shopkeepers in distress, 96  
**Blackburn, Mr. Justice,**  
 praised conduct of operatives, 108  
**Blanc, Louis,**  
 contrasted relief funds in France and England, 81  
**Blundell, Mr.,**  
 gift of coal, 72  
**Bolton,**  
 immorality in, 106  
 new mills in, 18  
**Bombay,**  
 chief Indian cotton port, 39

## 172 THE LANCASHIRE COTTON FAMINE

- Boyle, Alderman,  
criticised public appeal for national aid  
for Blackburn, 78
- Brazil,  
cotton growing in, 47
- Bridgewater House Fund, 79
- Bright, John,  
chairman of Select Committee on Growth  
of Cotton in India (1848), 36  
helped to send Mackay on mission to  
India, 36  
on American help for operatives, 83 (n.)
- British Guiana,  
cotton growing in, 42
- British Workman*,  
relief fund of, 81
- Brokers,  
letter of "Liverpool Cotton Broker" to  
*Times*, 16  
Liverpool Cotton Brokers' Association,  
see Liverpool  
profits made during Cotton Famine, 14
- Bruzzesi,  
favoured cotton growing in Italy, 49
- Buchanan, Dr.,  
*Report on Health of Distressed Operatives*,  
94, 98, 101, 104, 105
- CAIRD, J.,  
reported favourably on Algerian cotton  
prospects, 47
- Canning, Lord (Governor-General of  
India),  
scheme to sell waste lands, 40
- Cape of Good Hope,  
cotton growing in, 42
- Cardinal Wiseman,  
Pastoral Letter on Lancashire distress, 80
- Carlisle,  
cotton operatives wished to emigrate,  
117
- Carwar, see Sedashegur
- Chambers of Commerce, see Liverpool,  
Manchester, Sydney
- Chorley,  
disturbance in, 114
- Chorlton,  
dispute of Guardians with Messrs.  
Birley & Co., 54
- Clarke, D.,  
favoured educational test, 89
- Cobden, Richard,  
Cobden Treaty (Anglo-French Treaty  
of Commerce), 9  
declared £1,000,000 subscriptions necessary  
for Lancashire, 80
- Colne,  
new mills in, 18
- Commercial crisis,  
of 1857, 9  
of 1864, 22  
of 1866, 23
- Companies (limited liability),  
Angola Cotton Company, 49  
cotton growing companies, 130  
Joint Stock Companies Act (1856), 21  
Manchester Cotton Company, 40  
Natal Cotton Growing Company, 42  
Overend, Gurney & Co., 23  
Queensland Cotton Company, 43  
speculation in, 22
- Coolies,  
in Australia, 43  
in Natal, 42  
in Tahiti, 48
- Co-operative stores,  
before 1860, 4  
in 1861-64, 96
- Cotton,  
Cotton Brokers' Association, see Liver-  
pool  
cotton circulars, 161-162  
Cotton Districts Relief Fund, see Relief  
Funds  
"cotton drain," 20  
cotton prices in Liverpool, 1861-67 50,  
122-123  
Cotton Spinners' Association, see Man-  
chester  
cotton supply, see various countries  
(India, Egypt, etc.)  
Cotton Supply Association, 36-38
- County Meeting,  
Lancashire (at Manchester), Dec. 2,  
1862, 80
- Crime in cotton districts, 107
- Crisis, see Commercial Crisis
- Cubitt, Mr. (Lord Mayor of London),  
asked to open relief fund, 78  
opened Mansion House Fund, 79  
"recognised" rival relief committees at  
Ashton, 91  
sent £200 to Wigan ("bastardy promo-  
tion fund"), 106  
sent £500 to Stalybridge after riots, 113
- Daily Telegraph*,  
relief fund of, 81
- Death rate, see Mortality
- Denominational management of adult  
schools,  
advocated by Rev. J. Baillie, 91
- Derby, Earl of (Chairman of Manchester  
Central Executive Committee),  
addressed County Meeting (Manchester),  
Dec. 2, 1862, 80

- Derby, Earl of,  
 defended manufacturers against charges  
 of failure to subscribe to funds, 81  
 Minute of January 12, 1863 on relief,  
 85  
 on minimum rate of relief, 100  
 present at Bridgewater House meeting  
 (June, 1862), 79
- Devincenzi, G. (President of Italian Royal  
 Commission for Cotton Cultivation),  
 and cotton growing in Italy, 49
- Diet of operatives, 101
- Disturbances in cotton districts,  
 causes of, 108-110  
 Ashton-under-Lyne, 112  
 Chorley, 114  
 Dukinfield, 112  
 Manchester, 110  
 Preston, 114  
 Stalybridge, 110-114
- Dutch Colonies,  
 cotton growing in, 48
- Economist*,  
 opinion of cotton prospects, July, 1862,  
 56
- Education test for relief, 89
- Ellesmere, Lord,  
 Cotton Districts Relief Fund started at  
 meeting in his residence (Bridgewater  
 House), 79
- Emigration during the Cotton Famine, 115-  
 118
- Engineers, see Amalgamated Society of  
 Engineers
- Europe,  
 cotton growing in, 49
- Evans, T.,  
 suggested education test, 89
- FARNALL, H. B. (Government Special  
 Commissioner in the distressed dis-  
 tricts),  
 appointment, 53  
 mistakes, 54  
 on Union Relief Act, 59  
 reports of tour in May and June, 1862,  
 55  
 unpopularity, 53
- Floyd, Rev. Mr.  
 induced Mansion House Committee to  
 send £500 to Stalybridge after riots,  
 113
- Forbes, Dr. G. F.,  
 accompanied Haywood to India, 38
- France,  
 Cotton Famine in, 120  
 cotton growing in French colonies, 47
- Fraud,  
 in obtaining relief, 85  
 in packing cotton, 27
- Friendly Societies in 1861-64, 97
- Funds, see Relief Funds
- Futures, increased dealings in, 16
- "George Griswold,"  
 arrival, 85  
 cargo, 84
- German States,  
 Cotton Famine in, 120
- Gold reserve declined during Cotton  
 Famine, 20
- Gorton, insanitary condition of, 95
- Goschen, Viscount,  
 on relief of distress during crisis, 92-93
- Granville, Lord,  
 referred to Mr. Farnall, 53
- Greenwood, Dr.,  
 on insanitary condition of Over-Darwen,  
 95, 96
- Guiana,  
 cotton growing in, 42, 48
- HANDLOOM weavers, distress among during  
 Cotton Famine,  
 in Ireland, 120  
 in Scotland, 119
- Haslington, defective sanitation in, 96
- Haywood, G. R. (Secretary of Cotton  
 Supply Association),  
 mission to India, 38  
 visit to Egypt, 44
- Health of Lancashire cotton operatives,  
 102
- Helm, E.,  
 on cotton in Brazil, 47
- Hibbert, J. T. (M.P. for Oldham),  
 favoured empowering Guardians to  
 raise loans, 57
- Holland,  
 cotton growing in Dutch colonies, 48
- Holmes, Sir W. H.,  
 advocated cotton growing in British  
 Guiana, 42
- Housing,  
 good accommodation at Hyde (T.  
 Ashton's operatives) and Halliwell  
 (T. Bazley's operatives), 3  
 in 1861-64, 94
- Hyde,  
 housing, 3
- IMMORALITY in Lancashire during Cotton  
 Famine, 105
- India, cotton growing in, 39-41
- Ireland, Cotton Famine in Ulster, 120

# 174 THE LANCASHIRE COTTON FAMINE

- Ismael Pasha (Viceroy of Egypt), encouraged cotton growing in Egypt, 44  
Italy, cotton growing in, 49
- JAMAICA, cotton growing in, 42  
Jeaffreson, Rev. Mr., relief work in Stockport, 70
- KAY, Dr. J. P. (Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth),  
Hon. Secretary of Cotton Districts Relief Fund, 79  
share in settling disputes after Stalybridge riots, 113  
Vice-Chairman of (Manchester) Central Executive Committee, 80
- Kenworthy, Mr. (Mayor of Ashton-under-Lyne),  
Chairman of Ashton Borough Relief Committee, 91
- Kingsley, Charles,  
on Lancashire rates, 57
- LABOUR test,  
Manchester, 87  
Oldham, Rochdale, Blackburn, Stockport, 88  
Lancashire,  
controversy on Lancashire rates, 56  
East Lancashire Central Operatives Relief Committee (Padiham), 73  
Lancashire and Cheshire (Mansion House) Operatives Relief Fund, see Relief Funds  
"Lancashire Lad," see Whittaker  
reasons why cotton industry became concentrated there, 1
- Lang, Rev. J. D.,  
advocated cotton growing in Australia, 42
- Lees, Dr. (Mayor of the Manor of Ashton-under-Lyne),  
on Ashton General Relief Committee, 91  
Linen industry in Ireland during Cotton Famine, 10
- Liverpool,  
American Chamber of Commerce :  
and fraudulent packing of cotton, 28, 29  
and tare allowance, 30  
and terms of payment, 31  
Bank of Liverpool results during Cotton Famine, 8  
bank failures in 1865-66, 23  
Central Committee of Liverpool United Trades' Protective Association, 73  
cotton prices, 122  
cotton sent back to America from, 14
- Liverpool,  
Cotton Brokers' Association :  
and fraudulent packing of cotton, 27, 28  
and remuneration of brokers, 33  
and tare allowance, 30  
and terms of payment, 31  
*George Griswold* arrived at, 85  
Relief Fund, 75  
Roman Catholic Bishop received £100 from the Pope, 82  
Lodging houses in Lancashire, unsatisfactory condition of, 95  
London,  
London Trades Delegation meeting, 73  
Lord Mayor of, see Cubitt  
Working Men's Central Committee formed in, 73  
Lord Mayor of London, see Cubitt  
Losses during the Cotton Famine, 19
- McCALL, H.,  
Hon. Secretary of Lisburn Cotton Operatives Relief Committee, 120
- Macclesfield,  
Farnall's blunder on Macclesfield unemployment statistics, 54
- MacCullagh Torrens, see Torrens
- Mackay, A.,  
*Western India* (reports to various Chambers of Commerce, 1853), 36
- Maclure, J. W. (Hon. Secretary of (Manchester) Central Executive Committee),  
his statistics preferred to those of Farnall, 54  
views on health of operatives, 107
- McNeill, Sir John,  
on Public Works Act, 66
- Malaga, cotton spinning in, 49
- Manchester,  
bankruptcies in, 25  
Central Executive Committee, 76  
Central Relief Committee, 75  
Chamber of Commerce :  
and damage caused by mildew in cloth, 26  
and false packing of cotton (1841), 28  
and terms of sale of cotton, 32  
emigration of operatives opposed, 115  
stated that there was over-production in cotton industry in 1859-60, 11  
stated that trade was bad in 1869, 25  
Cotton Spinners' Association, 27, 31, 32, 33  
District Provident Society (Manchester and Salford), 74  
Dr. Bridges on how Guardians administered relief, 109

- Manchester,**  
 Emigration Society, 118  
 labour test criticised in, 89  
 Manchester Cotton Company, 40  
 Manchester and Salford Bank, results for  
 1861-64, 8, 9 (n.)  
 Public Works Act in, 63, 64 (n.)  
 Relief Committee formed in, 75  
 trade customs in 1882, 126-129  
 typhus in, 105  
 Warehousemen and Clerks' Society, 98  
**Mann, J. A.,**  
 opinion of British cotton industry in  
 1860, 1  
**Mansion House Fund,** 78  
*Manual for Guidance of Relief Committees,*  
 scale of relief recommended in, 100  
**Marriages during Cotton Famine,** 106  
**Martin, Baron,**  
 on good conduct of cotton operatives, 108  
**Marx, Karl,**  
 on economic results of Cotton Famine,  
 26, 126  
**Mason, Hugh,**  
 criticised Union Relief Aid Act, 59  
 leading member of Ashton-under-Lyne  
 Borough Relief Committee, 91  
 tried to quell riot in Ashton-under-  
 Lyne, 113  
**Migration of Lancashire cotton operatives**  
 to other counties, 115  
**Morality during Cotton Famine,** 105  
**Mortality of manufacturing districts in**  
 1861-65, 102  
**Mozambique,**  
 cotton growing in, 48  
  
**NAPOLKON III. and intervention in American**  
 Civil War, 120  
**Natal,**  
 cotton growing in, 42  
**National Colonial Society assisted emigra-**  
 tion, 118  
**New England,**  
 Cotton Famine in, 119  
**New South Wales,**  
 cotton growing in, 42  
 New South Wales Fund, 82, 89  
**New York Produce Exchange,**  
 committee raised funds for Lancashire, 84  
**New Zealand,**  
 grant from Canterbury to assist English  
 emigrants, 117  
**Noble, Dr. D.,**  
 on health of cotton districts, 103  
 on mortality statistics, 106  
**Normandy,**  
 distress in, 120  
  
**OLDHAM,**  
 distress in, 56  
**Openshaw,**  
 insanitary condition of, 95  
**Ottoman Empire,**  
 cotton growing in, 43, 46  
**Over-Darwen,**  
 insanitary condition of, 96  
**Overend, Gurney & Co., Ltd.,**  
 failed on May 9, 1866, 23  
  
**PADIHAM,**  
 East Lancashire Central Operatives  
 Relief Committee at, 73  
 new mills in, 18  
**Patten, Colonel Wilson, M.P.,**  
 correspondence with Rev. Mr. Williams,  
 92  
 Hon. Treasurer of Cotton Districts  
 Relief Fund, 79  
**Pawnbrokers busy during Cotton Famine,**  
 98  
**Penny Bible Class,** 91  
**Philadelphia,**  
 committee collected funds for Lancashire,  
 84  
**Poland,**  
 Cotton Famine in Russian Poland, 120  
**Poor Law,**  
 co-operation with charitable relief, 93  
 during the Cotton Famine, 52-57  
 position regarding able-bodied unem-  
 ployed in 1860, 52  
 Unions affected by the cotton crisis, 52  
**Pope sent £100 to relieve distress in**  
 Lancashire, 82  
**Portuguese colonies,**  
 cotton growing in, 48  
**Potter, Mrs. Gerald,**  
 good work in Blackburn, 72  
**Preston,**  
 distress in, 55  
 disturbances in, 114  
 doctor's good work in, 71  
 fraud in, 86  
 relief committee set up, 74  
 religious difficulties in, 92  
 small shops hard hit, 97  
 typhus in, 105  
 Union Relief Aid Act, 59  
**Price of cotton (1861-67),** 50, 122-123.  
**Profits made during the Cotton Famine,** 14  
  
**QUAKERS,** see Society of Friends  
**Queensland,** see Australia  
  
**RAWLINSON, Sir ROBERT,**  
 and Public Works Act, 65-67

# 176 THE LANCASHIRE COTTON FAMINE

- Redgrave (H.M. Inspector of Factories), gave examples of employers' generosity, 69  
gave examples of school fees being waived, 71
- Relief Committees,  
Ashton-under-Lyne, relief committee, 74  
rival committees, 91
- Glasgow, committee of Unemployed Cotton Operatives Relief Fund, 120
- Lisburn, relief committee, 120
- Liverpool, relief committee, 75  
United Trades Protective Association, 73
- London, Mansion House Committee and emigration, 118  
Mansion House Committee sent £500 to Stalybridge after the riots, 113  
Working Men's Central Committee, 73
- Manchester, Central Executive Committee, 76, 80 (n.)  
Central Relief Committee, 75  
District Provident Society, 74  
relief committee, 75
- Padiham, East Lancashire Central Operatives Relief Committee, 73
- Preston, relief committee, 74
- Rochdale, relief committee, 74
- Stalybridge, relief committee quarrelled with local clergy, 92
- Stockport, relief committee, 77
- Wigan, relief committee, 74
- Relief Funds,  
*British Workman*, 81  
Cotton Districts Relief Fund (Bridge-water House Fund), 79, 80 (n.)  
*Daily Telegraph*, 81  
inadequately supported by some manufacturers, 81  
Lancashire and Cheshire Operatives Relief Fund (Mansion House Fund or Lord Mayor's Fund), 78  
New South Wales Fund, 82, 89  
Relief funds for other objects, 81 (n.)  
Unemployed Cotton Operatives Relief Fund (Glasgow), 120
- Religious dissensions, 91-92
- Ricasoli, grew cotton on his estate (in Italy), 49
- Richards, C. H. (Chairman of Manchester Board of Guardians), favoured education test, 89
- Riots, see Disturbances
- Rivett-Carnac, Mr., estimate of total Indian cotton crop in 1868, 39 (n.)
- Robinson, Rev. Dr., ran Penny Bible Class, 91
- Rochdale, co-operative stores, 4, 96-97 (n.)  
relief committee, 74  
relief fund becoming exhausted by May, 1862, 78  
schools in, 71
- Roman Catholics, Cardinal Wiseman's Pastoral on Lancashire distress, 80  
Pope sent £100 to relieve distress, 82  
Roman Catholic scholars refused to sing Doxology at a Preston school, 92
- Royal Commission on Poor Laws, 1909 opinion of Minority Report on Public Works Act, 67 (n.)
- Russell, Lord John, stated that consuls might not incur expense in attempting to increase sources of Lancashire's cotton supplies, 38
- Russia, Cotton Famine in, 121
- SALFORD, Manchester and Salford District Provident Society, 74  
Savings of cotton operatives, 97  
Scholes (in Wigan), 96  
Schoolmasters, sacrifices by, 71
- Scotland, Cotton Famine in, 119  
Sedashegur (Carwar) Harbour, 40  
Seine-Inférieure, see Normandy
- Sewing schools, run by Central Executive Committee, 90  
started by William Birch, 72
- Shaw, A. D., extract from his *Report on Cotton Goods Trade of Lancashire* (1882), 126
- Smart, Professor William, opinion of Public Works Act, 67
- Smith, Dr. E., health and diet of cotton operatives, 101
- Society of Friends, ran soup kitchen in Manchester, 71

- Society of Friends,  
reference to Lancashire distress at Meeting for Sufferers, 81 (n.)
- Society for placing unemployed factory women in domestic service, 72
- Somerset, Mr.,  
report to Manchester Board of Guardians on frauds, 85
- Soup kitchens, 71, 72, 74
- South Africa,  
cotton growing in, 42
- South America, see Brazil, Venezuela
- Smyrna,  
cotton growing in, 46
- Spain,  
cotton growing in, 49
- Speculation during Cotton Famine, 16, 22
- Stalybridge,  
criticism of relief committee at public meeting, 108  
riots in March, 1863, 110-114
- Statistics,  
of relief, 54  
of trade, 7-9
- Stewart, A. T.,  
assisted distressed Ulster cotton weavers, 120
- Stockport,  
distress in, 56  
organisation of relief in, 77  
rate of relief, 99 (n.)  
Rev. Mr. Jeaffreson's work in, 70
- Substitutes for cotton, 51
- Supply of cotton,  
Algeria, 47  
Brazil, 47  
British Empire :  
Australia, 42  
India, 39  
West Indies, 41  
Cotton Supply Association, 36  
Dutch colonies, 48  
Europe :  
Spain, 49  
Italy, 49  
Ottoman Empire :  
Smyrna, 46  
Egypt, 43  
Southern States of U.S.A., 5, 35  
results of efforts to increase sources of cotton supply, 50
- Switzerland,  
Cotton Famine in, 120
- Sydney,  
export of cotton from (1832), 42
- TABBIT,**  
cotton growing in, 48
- Temple, Dr. (Headmaster of Rugby School),  
on Lancashire rates, 57  
on millowners' sacrifices, 69
- Test,  
educational, 89  
labour, 87-88
- Times,*  
letters from :  
"A Cotton Broker" on dealings in futures, 16-17  
Charles Kingsley on Lancashire rates, 57  
"A Lancashire Lad" (Mr. Whittaker) on Lancashire distress, 78  
Dr. Temple on Lancashire rates, 57  
Mr. Tiplady on Blackburn distress, 78
- Tiplady, Charles (member of Blackburn Council),  
wrote to *Times* appealing for national assistance, 78
- Torrens, W. T. MacCullagh,  
on Public Works Act, 63, 66-67
- Tougan-Baranowsky, M.,  
on Lancashire operatives in 1861, 3
- Trade customs of Manchester (1882), 126-129
- Trevelyan, Sir Charles,  
on Public Works Act, 66
- Turkey,  
cotton growing in, 43
- ULSTER,**  
Cotton Famine in, 120  
Union Relief Aid Act, 58-60  
Unions affected by cotton crisis, 52 (n.)
- United States of America,  
Northern States :  
Cotton Famine in, 119  
mercantile marine declined, 10  
relief sent to Lancashire, 83-85  
Southern States :  
chief source of cotton manufactured in Lancashire, 5  
cotton harvests of 1859-60, 11  
cotton exports during Civil War, 35
- VENEZUELA,**  
cotton growing in, 47
- Verity, Rev. E. A.,  
started East Lancashire Central Operatives Committee (Padiham), 73
- Villiers, Mr. (Home Secretary),  
saw deputation of Lancashire M.P.s on labour test, 88  
sent Rawlinson to investigate possibilities of public works in Lancashire, 60



## 178 THE LANCASHIRE COTTON FAMINE

- WAGES** of cotton operatives,  
 attempted reduction in Blackburn, 109  
 before Cotton Famine, 100  
 in 1867, 109
- Warehousemen and Clerks' Society** (Manchester), 98
- Watts, Dr. John** (member of (Manchester) Central Relief Committee),  
 on Public Works Act, 67  
 on Union Relief Aid Act, 59
- "Wessex,"  
 Charles Kingsley's comparison of its rates with those paid in Lancashire, 57
- West Indies**,  
 cotton growing in, 42
- Whittaker, Mr.** ("A Lancashire Lad"),  
 letters to *Times* on Lancashire distress, 78
- Wigan**,  
 first town to have relief committee, 74  
 housing conditions in Scholes, 96
- Wigan**,  
 new mills in, 18  
 soup kitchens in, 72  
 Union Relief Aid Act, 59
- Williams, Rev. F. W.** (of General Relief Committee, Ashton-under-Lyne),  
 correspondence with Col. Wilson Patten, 92
- Wiseman, Cardinal**,  
 Pastoral Letter on Lancashire distress, 80
- Wood, Sir Charles** (Secretary of State for India),  
 and Indian waste lands, 41
- Woollen industry** during the Cotton Famine, 9-10
- Worsted industry** during Cotton Famine, 9-10
- YORKSHIRE**,  
 activity of trade in 'sixties, 9-10  
 migration of Lancashire operatives to, 115

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