

The Sadler Report: Child Labor in the United Kingdom, 1832

By the early nineteenth century, the Industrial Revolution had spread from England and was beginning to transform Europe from a rural to an urban society. In England, this transformation often depressed the living standards of workers beneath even those of the cottage manufacturing system of an earlier era. In doing so, however, it paved the way for its own reform, for it bared to the public eye in an aggravated form conditions that had long existed but had passed relatively unnoticed. Poverty and misery could be overlooked as long as the workers remained scattered about the countryside, but once they were congregated in the hideous slums of the Midlands industrial centers, their plight became too obvious to remain unheeded. Consequently, social reform became the order of the day.

Among the most prominent of the English reformers was the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury (1801-1885), who concentrated on working conditions in the factories. At Shaftesbury's instigation, another reformer, Michael Sadler, introduced a bill in Parliament in 1831 designed to regulate the working conditions of children in textile mills. The bill was referred to a committee, with Sadler as chairman. The selection that follows is an excerpt from the evidence presented before the committee. The committee's recommendations resulted in the Factory Act of 1833, which limited the working hours of children and set up a system of inspection to insure that its regulations would be carried out.

The Sadler Report requires no comment; it speaks for itself. The selection included here was picked almost at random from a bulky volume of testimony provided by hundreds of witnesses. Although these witnesses were presumably selected with some care, their accounts provide a generally accurate picture of the conditions of many factory workers, children in particular, in early nineteenth-century England. Source: The Sadler Report: Report from the Committee on the Bill to Regulate the Labour of Children in the Mills and Factories of the United Kingdom (London: House of Commons, 1823).

THE SADLER REPORT VENERIS, 18° DIE MAII, 1832

Michael Thomas Sadler, Esquire, in the Chair

MR. MATTHEW CRABTREE, called in; and Examined.

What age are you? - Twenty-two.

What is your occupation? - A blanket manufacturer.

Have you ever been employed in a factory? - Yes.

At what age did you first go to work in one? - Eight.

How long did you continue in that occupation? - Four years.

Will you state the hours of labour at the period when you first went to the factory, in ordinary times? - From 6 in the morning to 8 at night.

Fourteen hours? - Yes.

With what intervals for refreshment and rest? - An hour at noon.

Then you had no resting time allowed in which to take your breakfast, or what is in Yorkshire called your "drinking"? - No.

When trade was brisk what were your hours? - From 5 in the morning to 9 in the evening.

Sixteen hours? - Yes.

With what intervals at dinner? - An hour.

How far did you live from the mill? - About two miles.

Was there any time allowed for you to get your breakfast in the mill? - No.

Did you take it before you left your home? - Generally.

During those long hours of labour could you be punctual; how did you awake? - I seldom did awake spontaneously; I was most generally awoken or lifted out of bed, sometimes asleep, by my parents.

Were you always in time? - No.

What was the consequence if you had been too late? - I was most commonly beaten.

Severely? - Very severely, I thought.

In whose factory was this? - Messrs. Hague & Cook's, of Dewsbury.

Will you state the effect that those long hours had upon the state of your health and feelings? - I was, when working those long hours, commonly very much fatigued at night, when I left my work; so much so that I sometimes should have slept as I walked if I had not stumbled and started awake again; and so sick often that I could not eat, and what I did eat I vomited.

Did this labour destroy your appetite? - It did.

In what situation were you in that mill? - I was a piecener.

Will you state to this Committee whether piecening is a very laborious employment for children, or not? - It is a very laborious employment. Pieceners are continually running to and fro, and on their feet the whole day.

The duty of the piecener is to take the cardings from one part of the machinery, and to place them on another? - Yes.

So that the labour is not only continual, but it is unabated to the last? - It is unabated to the last. Do you not think, from your own experience, that the speed of the machinery is so calculated as to demand the utmost exertions of a child supposing the hours were moderate? - It is as much as they could do at the best; they are always upon the stretch, and it is commonly very difficult to keep up with their work.

State the condition of the children toward the latter part of the day, who have thus to keep up with the machinery. - It is as much as they do when they are not very much fatigued to keep up with their work, and toward the close of the day, when they come to be more fatigued, they cannot keep up with it very well, and the consequence is that they are beaten to spur them on.

Were you beaten under those circumstances? - Yes. Frequently? - Very frequently.

And principally at the latter end of the day? - Yes.

And is it your belief that if you had not been so beaten, you should not have got through the work? - I should not if I had not been kept up to it by some means.

Does beating then principally occur at the latter end of the day, when the children are exceedingly fatigued? - It does at the latter end of the day, and in the morning sometimes, when they are very drowsy, and have not got rid of the fatigue of the day before.

What were you beaten with principally? - A strap.

Anything else? - Yes, a stick sometimes; and there is a kind of roller which runs on the top of the machine called a billy, perhaps two or three yards in length, and perhaps an inch and a half or more in diameter; the circumference would be four or five inches; I cannot speak exactly.

Were you beaten with that instrument? - Yes.

Have you yourself been beaten, and have you seen other children struck severely with that roller? - I have been struck very severely with it myself, so much so as to knock me down, and I have seen other children have their heads broken with it.

You think that it is a general practice to beat the children with the roller? - It is.

You do not think then that you were worse treated than other children in the mill? - No, I was

not, perhaps not so bad as some were.

In those mills is chastisement towards the latter part of the day going on perpetually? - Perpetually.

So that you can hardly be in a mill without hearing constant crying? - Never an hour, I believe. Do you think that if the over-looker were naturally a humane person it would be still found necessary for him to beat the children, in order to keep up their attention and vigilance at the termination of those extraordinary days of labour? - Yes, the machine turns off a regular quantity of cardings, and of course they must keep as regularly to their work the whole of the day; they must keep with the machine, and therefore however humane the slubber may be, as he must keep up with the machine or be found fault with, he spurs the children to keep up also by various means but that which he commonly resorts to is to strap them when they become drowsy.

At the time when you were beaten for not keeping up with your work, were you anxious to have done it if you possibly could? - Yes; the dread of being beaten if we could not keep up with our work was a sufficient impulse to keep us to it if we could.

When you got home at night after this labour, did you feel much fatigued? - Very much so.

Had you any time to be with your parents, and to receive instruction from them? - No.

What did you do? - All that we did when we got home was to get the little bit of supper that was provided for us and go to bed immediately. If the supper had not been ready directly, we should have gone to sleep while it was preparing.

Did you not, as a child, feel it a very grievous hardship to be roused so soon in the morning? - I did.

Were the rest of the children similarly circumstanced? - Yes, all of them; but they were not all of them so far from their work as I was.

And if you had been too late you were under the apprehension of being cruelly beaten? - I generally was beaten when I happened to be too late; and when I got up in the morning the apprehension of that was so great, that I used to run, and cry all the way as I went to the mill. That was the way by which your punctual attendance was secured? - Yes.

And you do not think it could have been secured by any other means? - No.

Then it is your impression from what you have seen, and from your own experience, that those long hours of labour have the effect of rendering young persons who are subject to them exceedingly unhappy? - Yes.

You have already said it had a considerable effect upon your health? - Yes.

Do you conceive that it diminished your growth? - I did not pay much attention to that; but I have been examined by some persons who said they thought I was rather stunted, and that I should have been taller if I had not worked at the mill.

What were your wages at that time? - Three shillings [per week - Ed].

And how much a day had you for over-work when you were worked so exceedingly long? - A half-penny a day.

Did you frequently forfeit that if you were not always there to a moment? - Yes; I most frequently forfeited what was allowed for those long hours. You took your food to the mill; was it in your mill, as is the case in cotton mills, much spoiled by being laid aside? - It was very frequently covered by flies from the wool; and in that case they had to be blown off with the mouth, and picked off with the fingers before it could be eaten.

So that not giving you a little leisure for eating your food, but obliging you to take it at the mill, spoiled your food when you did get it? - Yes, very commonly.

And that at the same time that this over-labour injured your appetite? - Yes.

Could you eat when you got home? - Not always.

What is the effect of this piecening upon the hands? - It makes them bleed; the skin is completely rubbed off, and in that case they bleed in perhaps a dozen parts.

The prominent parts of the hand? - Yes, all the prominent parts of the hand are rubbed down till they bleed; every day they are rubbed in that way.

All the time you continue at work? - All the time we are working. The hands never can be hardened in that work, for the grease keeps them soft in the first instance, and long and continual rubbing is always wearing them down, so that if they were hard they would be sure to bleed.

Is it attended with much pain? - Very much.

Do they allow you to make use of the back of the hand? - No; the work cannot be so well done with the back of the hand, or I should have made use of that.

Is the work done as well when you are so many hours engaged in it, as it would be if you were at it a less time? - I believe it is not done so well in those long hours; toward the latter end of the day the children become completely bewildered, and know not what they are doing, so that they spoil their work without knowing.

Then you do not think that the masters gain much by the continuance of the work to so great a length of time? - I believe not.

Were there girls as well as boys employed in this manner? - Yes.

Were they more tenderly treated by the overlookers, or were they worked and beaten in the same manner? - There was no difference in their treatment.

Were they beaten by the overlookers, or by the slubber? - By the slubber.

But the overseer must have been perfectly aware of the treatment that the children endured at the mill? - Yes; and sometimes the overseer beat them himself; but the man that they wrought under had generally the management of them.

Did he pay them their wages? - No; their wages were paid by the master. But the overseer of the mill was perfectly well aware that they could not have performed the duty exacted from them in the mill without being thus beaten? - I believe he was.

You seem to say that this beating is absolutely necessary, in order to keep the children up to their work; is it universal throughout all factories? - I have been in several other factories, and I have witnessed the same cruelty in them all.

Did you say that you were beaten for being too late? - Yes.

Is it not the custom in many of the factories to impose fines upon children for being too late, instead of beating them? - It was not in that factory.

What then were the fines by which you lost the money you gained by your long hours? - The spinner could not get on so fast with his work when we happened to be too late; he could not begin his work so soon, and therefore it was taken by him.

Did the slubber pay you your wages? - No, the master paid our wages.

And the slubber took your fines from you? - Yes.

Then you were fined as well as beaten? - There was nothing deducted from the ordinary scale of wages, but only from that received for over-hours, and I had only that taken when I was too late, so that the fine was not regular.

When you were not working over-hours, were you so often late as when you were working over-hours? - Yes.

You were not very often late whilst you were not working over-hours? - Yes, I was often late when I was not working over-hours; I had to go at six o'clock in the morning, and consequently had to get up at five to eat my breakfast and go to the mill, and if I failed to get up by five I was

too late; and it was nine o'clock before we could get home, and then we went to bed; in the best times I could not be much above eight hours at home, reckoning dressing and eating my meals, and everything.

Was it a blanket-mill in which you worked? - Yes.

Did you ever know that the beatings to which you allude inflicted a serious injury upon the children? - I do not recollect any very serious injury, more than that they had their heads broken, if that may be called a serious injury; that has often happened; I, myself, had no more serious injury than that.

You say that the girls as well as the boys were employed as you have described, and you observed no difference in their treatment? - No difference.

The girls were beat in this unmerciful manner? - They were.

They were subject, of course, to the same bad effects from this over working? - Yes.

Could you attend an evening-school during the time you were employed in the mill? - No, that was completely impossible.

Did you attend the Sunday-school? - Not very frequently when I work at the mill.

How then were you engaged during the Sunday? - I very often slept till it was too late for school time or for divine worship, and the rest of the day I spent in walking out and taking a little fresh air.

Did your parents think that it was necessary for you to enjoy a little fresh air? - I believe they did; they

never said anything against it; before I went to the mill I used to go to the Sunday-school.

Did you frequently sleep nearly the whole of the day on Sunday? - Very often.

At what age did you leave that employment? - I was about 12 years old.

Why did you leave that place? - I went very late one morning, about seven o'clock, and I got severely

beaten by the spinner, and he turned me out of the mill, and I went home, and never went any more.

Was your attendance as good as the other children? - Being at rather a greater distance than some of

them, I was generally one of the latest.

Where was your next work? - I worked as bobbin-winder in another part of the works of the same firm.

How long were you a bobbin-winder? - About two years, I believe.

What did you become after that? - A weaver.

How long were you a weaver? - I was a weaver till March in last year.

A weaver of what? - A blanket-weaver.

With the same firm? - With the same firm.

Did you leave them? - No; I was dismissed from my work for a reason which I am willing and anxious to explain.

Have you had opportunities of observing the way in which the children are treated in factories up to a late period? - Yes.

You conceive that their treatment still remains as you first found it, and that the system is in great want of regulation? - It does.

Children you still observe to be very much fatigued and injured by the hours of labour? - Yes.

From your own experience, what is your opinion as to the utmost labour that a child in piecemeal could safely undergo? - If I were appealed to from my own feelings to fix a limit, I should fix it

at ten hours,
or less.

And you attribute to longer hours all the cruelties that you describe? - A good deal of them.
Are the children sleepy in mills? - Very.

Are they more liable to accidents in the latter part of the day than in the other part? - I believe they are;

I believe a greater number of accidents happen in the latter part of the day than in any other. I have known them so sleepy that in the short interval while the others have been going out, some of them have fallen asleep, and have been left there.

Is it an uncommon case for children to fall asleep in the mill, and remain there all night? - Not to remain there all night; but I have known a case the other day, of a child whom the overseer found when he went to lock the door, that had been left there.

So that you think there has been no change for the better in the treatment of those children; is it your opinion that there will be none, except Parliament interfere in their behalf? - It is my decided conviction. Have you recently seen any cruelties in mills? - Yes; not long since I was in a mill and I saw a girl severely beaten; at a mill called Hicklane Mill, in Batley; I happened to be in at the other end of the room, talking; and I heard the blows, and I looked that way, and saw the spinner beating one of the girls severely with a large stick. Hearing the sound, led me to look round, and to ask what was the matter, and they said it was "Nothing but paying [beating - Ed.] Ôhis ligger-on."

What age was the girl? - About 12 years.

Was she very violently beaten? - She was.

Was this when she was over-fatigued? - It was in the afternoon.

Can you speak as to the effect of this labour in the mills and factories on the morals of the children, as far as you have observed? - As far as I have observed with regard to morals in the mills, there is every-thing about them that is disgusting to every one conscious of correct morality.

Do you find that the children, the females especially, are very early demoralized in them? - They are. Is their language indecent? - Very indecent; and both sexes take great familiarities with each other in the mills, without at all being ashamed of their conduct.

Do you connect their immorality of language and conduct with their excessive labour? - It may be somewhat connected with it, for it is to be observed that most of that goes on toward night, when they begin to be drowsy; it is a kind of stimulus which they use to keep them awake; they say some pert thing or other to keep themselves from drowsiness, and it generally happens to be some obscene language.

Have not a considerable number of the females employed in mills illegitimate children very early in life? - I believe there are; I have known some of them have illegitimate children when they were between 16 and 17 years of age.

How many grown-up females had you in the mill? - I cannot speak to the exact number that were grown up; perhaps there might be thirty-four or so that worked in the mill at that time.

How many of those had illegitimate children? - A great many of them; eighteen or nineteen of them, I think.

Did they generally marry the men by whom they had the children? - No; it sometimes happens that young women have children by married men, and I have known an instance, a few weeks since, where one of the young women had a child by a married man.

Is it your opinion that those who have the charge of mills very often avail themselves of the

opportunity they have to debauch the young women? - No, not generally; most of the improper conduct takes place among the younger part of those that work in the mill.

Do you find that the children and young persons in those mills are moral in other respects, or does their want of education tend to encourage them in a breach of the law? - I believe it does, for there are very few of them that can know anything about it; few of them can either read or write.

Are criminal offences then very frequent? - Yes, theft is very common; it is practised a great deal in the mills, stealing their bits of dinner, or something of that sort. Some of them have not so much to eat as they ought to have, and if they can fall in with the dinner of some of their partners they steal it. The first day my brother and I went to the mill we had our dinner stolen, because we were not up to the tricks; we were more careful in future, but still we did not always escape.

Was there any correction going on at the mills for indecent language or improper conduct? - No, I never knew of any.

From what you have seen and known of those mills, would you prefer that the hours of labour should be so long with larger wages, or that they should be shortened with a diminution of wages? - If I were working at the mill now, I would rather have less labour and receive a trifle less, than so much labour and receive a trifle more.

Is that the general impression of individuals engaged in mills with whom you are acquainted? - I believe it is.

What is the impression in the country from which you come with respect to the effect of this Bill upon wages? - They do not anticipate that it will affect wages at all.

They think it will not lower wages? - They do.

Do you mean that it will not lower wages by the hour, or that you will receive the same wages per day? - They anticipate that it may perhaps lower their wages at a certain time of the year when they are working hard, but not at other times, so that they will have their wages more regular.

Does not their wish for this Bill mainly rest upon their anxiety to protect their children from the consequences of this excessive labour, and to have some opportunity of affording them a decent education? - Yes; such are the wishes of every humane father that I have heard speak about the thing.

Have they not some feeling of having the labour equalized? - That is the feeling of some that I have heard speak of it.

Did your parents work in the same factories? - No.

Were any of the slubbers' children working there? - Yes.

Under what slubber did you work in that mill? - Under a person of the name of Thomas Bennett, in the first place; and I was changed from him to another of the name of James Webster.

Did the treatment depend very much upon the slubber under whom you were? - No, it did not depend directly upon him, for he was obliged to do a certain quantity of work, and therefore to make us keep up with that.

Were the children of the slubbers strapped in the same way? - Yes, except that it is very natural for a father to spare his own child.

Did it depend upon the feelings of a slubber toward his children? - Very little.

Did the slubbers fine their own spinners? - I believe not.

You said that the piecening was very hard labour; what labour is there besides moving about; have you anything heavy to carry or to lift? - We have nothing heavy to carry, but we are kept upon our feet in brisk times from 5 o'clock in the morning to 9 at night.

How soon does the hand get sore in piecening? - How soon mine became sore I cannot speak to exactly; but they get a little hard on the Sunday, when we are not working, and they will get sore again very soon on the Monday.

Is it always the case in piecening that the hand bleeds, whether you work short or long hours? - They bleed more when we work more.

Do they always bleed when you are working? - Yes.

Do you think that the children would not be more competent to this task, and their hands far less hurt, if the hours were fewer every day, especially when their hands had become seasoned to the labour? - I believe it would have an effect for the longer they are worked the more their hands are worn, and the longer it takes to heal them, and they do not get hard enough after a day's rest to be long without bleeding again; if they were not so much worn down, they might heal sooner, and not bleed so often or so soon.

After a short day's work, have you found your hands hard the next morning? - They do not bleed much after we have ceased work; they then get hard; they will bleed soon in the morning when in regular work. Do you think if the work of the children were confined to about ten hours a day, that they would not be able to perform this piecening without making their hands bleed? - I believe they would.

So that it is your opinion, from your experience, that if the hours were mitigated, their hands would not be so much worn, and would not bleed by the business of piecening? - Yes.

Do you mean to say that their hands would not bleed at all? - I cannot say exactly, for I always wrought long hours, and therefore my hands always did bleed.

Have you any experience of mills where they only work ten hours? - I have never wrought at such mills, and in most of the mills I have seen their hands bleed.

At a slack time, when you were working only a few hours, did your hands bleed? - No, they did not for three or four days, after we had been standing still for a week; the mill stood still sometimes for a week together, but when we did work we worked the common number of hours. Were all the mills in the neighbourhood working the same number of hours in brisk times? - Yes. So that if any parent found it necessary to send his children to the mill for the sake of being able to maintain them, and wished to take them from any mill where they were excessively worked, he could not have found any other place where they would have been less worked? - No, he could not; for myself, I had no desire to change, because I thought I was as well off as I could be at any other mill.

And if the parent, to save his child, had taken him from the mill, and had applied to the parish for relief, would the parish, knowing that he had withdrawn his child from its work, have relieved him? - No. So that the long labour which you have described, or actual starvation, was, practically, the only alter-native that was presented to the parent under such circumstances? - It was; they must either work at the mill they were at or some other, and there was no choice in the mills in that respect.

What, in your opinion, would be the effect of limiting the hours of labour upon the happiness, and the health, and the intelligence of the rising generation? - If the hours are shortened, the children may, perhaps, have a chance of attending some evening-school, and learning to read and write; and those that I know who have been to school and learned to read and write; have much more comfort than those who have not. For myself, I went to a school when I was six years old, and I learned to read and write a little then.

At a free-school? - Yes, at a free-school in Dewsbury; but I left school when I was six years old. The fact is, that my father was a small manufacturer, and in comfortable circumstances, and he

got into debt with Mr. Cook for a wool bill, and as he had no other means of paying him, he came and agreed with my father, that my brother and I should go to work at his mill till that debt was paid; so that the whole of the time that we wrought at the mill we had no wages. THOMAS BENNETT, called in; and Examined. Where do you reside? - At Dewsbury. What is your business? - A slubber.

What age are you? - About 48.

Have you had much experience regarding the working of children in factories? - Yes, about twenty-seven years.

Have you a family? - Yes, eight children. Have any of them gone to factories? - All. At what age? - The first went at six years of age. To whose mill? - To Mr. Halliley's, to piece for myself. What hours did you work at that mill? - We have wrought from 4 to 9, from 4 to 10, and from 5 to 9, and from 5 to 10.

What sort of a mill was it? - It was a blanket-mill; we sometimes altered the time, according as the days

increased and decreased.

What were your regular hours? - Our regular hours when we were not so throng, was from 6 to 7. And when you were the strongest, what were your hours then? - From 5 to 9, and from 5 to 10, and from 4 to 9. Seventeen hours? - Yes. What intervals for meals had the children at that period? - Two hours; an hour for breakfast, and an hour for dinner.

Did they always allow two hours for meals at Mr. Halliley's? - Yes, it was allowed, but the children did

not get it, for they had business to do at that time, such as fettling and cleaning the machinery. But they did not stop in at that time, did they? - They all had their share of the cleaning and other work to do.

That is, they were cleaning the machinery? - Cleaning the machinery at the time of dinner.

How long a time together have you known those excessive hours to continue? - I have wrought so myself very nearly two years together.

Were your children working under you then? - Yes, two of them.

State the effect upon your children. - Of a morning when they have been so fast asleep that I have had to go up stairs and lift them out of bed, and have heard them crying with the feelings of a parent; I have been much affected by it.

Were not they much fatigued at the termination of such a day's labour as that? - Yes; many a time I have seen their hands moving while they have been nodding, almost asleep; they have been doing their business almost mechanically.

While they have been almost asleep, they have attempted to work? - Yes; and they have missed the carding and spoiled the thread, when we have had to beat them for it.

Could they have done their work towards the termination of such a long day's labour, if they had not been chastised to it? - No.

You do not think that they could have kept awake or up to their work till the seventeenth hour, without being chastised? - No.

Will you state what effect it had upon your children at the end of their day's work? - At the end of their day's work, when they have come home, instead of taking their victuals, they have dropped asleep with the victuals in their hands; and sometimes when we have sent them to bed with a little bread or something to eat in their hand, I have found it in their bed the next morning. Had it affected their health? - I cannot say much of that; they were very hearty children.

Do you live at a distance from the mill? - Half a mile.

Did your children feel a difficulty in getting home? - Yes, I have had to carry the lesser child on my back, and it has been asleep when I got home.

Did these hours of labour fatigue you? - Yes, they fatigued me to that excess, that in divine worship I have not been able to stand according to order; I have sat to worship.

So that even during the Sunday you have felt fatigue from your labour in the week? - Yes, we felt it, and always took as much rest as we could.

Were you compelled to beat your own children, in order to make them keep up with the machine? - Yes, that was forced upon us, or we could not have done the work; I have struck them often, though I felt as a parent.

If the children had not been your own, you would have chastised them still more severely? - Yes. What did you beat them with? - A strap sometimes; and when I have seen my work spoiled, with the roller.

Was the work always worse done at the end of the day? - That was the greatest danger.

Do you conceive it possible that the children could do their work well at the end of such a day's labour as that? - No.

Matthew Crabtree, the last Witness examined by this Committee, I think mentioned you as one of the slubbers under whom he worked? - Yes.

He states that he was chastised and beaten at the mill? - Yes, I have had to chastise him.

You can confirm then what he has stated as to the length of time he had to work as a child, and the cruel treatment that he received? - Yes, I have had to chastise him in the evening, and often in the morning for being too late; when I had one out of the three wanting I could not keep up with the machine, and I was getting behindhand compared with what another man was doing; and therefore I should have been called to account on Saturday night if the work was not done.

Was he worse than others? - No. Was it the constant practice to chastise the children? - Yes.

It was necessary in order to keep up your work? - Yes.

And you would have lost your place if you had not done so? - Yes; when I was working at Mr. Wood's mill, at Dewsbury, which at present is burnt down, but where I slubbed for him until it was, while we were taking our meals he used to come up and put the machine agoing; and I used to say, "You do not give us time to eat"; he used to reply, "Chew it at your work"; and I often replied to him, "I have not yet become debased like a brute, I do not chew my cud." Often has that man done that, and then gone below to see if a strap were off, which would have shown if the machinery was not working, and then he would come up again.

Was this at the drinking time? - Yes, at breakfast and at drinking.

Was this where the children were working? - Yes, my own children and others.

Were your own children obliged to employ most of their time at breakfast and at the drinking in cleansing the machine, and in fettling the spindles? - I have seen at that mill, and I have experienced and mentioned it with grief, that the English children were enslaved worse than the Africans. Once when Mr. Wood was saying to the carrier who brought his work in and out, "How long has that horse of mine been at work?" and the carrier told him the time, and he said "Loose him directly, he has been in too long," I made this reply to him, "You have more mercy and pity for your horse than you have for your men."

Did not this beating go on principally at the latter part of the day? - Yes.

Was it not also dangerous for the children to move about those mills when they became so drowsy and fatigued? - Yes, especially by lamplight.

Do the accidents principally occur at the latter end of those long days of labour? - Yes, I believe

mostly so.

Do you know of any that have happened? - I know of one; it was at Mr. Wood's mill; part of the machinery caught a lass who had been drowsy and asleep, and the strap which ran close by her caught her at about her middle, and bore her to the ceiling, and down she came, and her neck appeared to be broken, and the slabber ran up to her and pulled her neck, and I carried her to the doctor myself.

Did she get well? - Yes, she came about again.

What time was that? - In the evening.

You say that you have eight children who have gone to the factories? - Yes.

There has been no opportunity for you to send them to a day-school? - No; one boy had about twelve months' schooling.

Have they gone to Sunday-schools? - Yes.

Can any of them write? - Not one.

They do not teach writing at Sunday-schools? - No; it is objected to, I believe.

So that none of your children can write? - No.

What would be the effect of a proper limitation of the hours of labour upon the conduct of the rising generation? - I believe it would have a very happy effect in regard to correcting their morals; for I believe there is a deal of evil that takes place in one or other in consequence of those long hours.

Is it your opinion that they would then have an opportunity of attending night-schools? - Yes; I have often regretted, while working those long hours, that I could not get my children there.

Is it your belief that if they were better instructed, they would be happier and better members of society? - Yes, I believe so.

<http://empiretheory.fortunecity.net/The%20Sadler%20Report%20%20Child%20Labor%20in%20the%20United%20Kingdom,%201832.htm> (Consulted August 21, 2012).