



Source 2

Task

- 2a.** What did Ashley say happened when a woman went to work?
- 2b.** What do you think Ashley believed about the status of men and women?



Source 2

This is an extract from Lord Ashley's Employment of Women and Children Report 1842. He was criticising the employment of women in coalmines and describing what happened in families where the wife worked.

But now mark the effect of the system on women: it causes a total ignorance of all domestic duties; they know nothing that they ought to know; they are rendered unfit for the duties of women by overwork, and become utterly demoralized. In the male the moral effects of the system are very sad, but in the female they are infinitely worse, not alone upon themselves, but upon their families, upon society, and, I may add, upon the country itself. It is bad enough if you corrupt the man, but if you corrupt the woman, you poison the waters of life at the very fountain. Sir, it appears that they are wholly disqualified from even learning how to discharge the duties of wife and mother.

(PRO ref: ZHC 2/79, p.1335)