

**REGION, CLASS, CULTURE:
Lancashire Dialect Literature 1746-1935**

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Region, Class, Culture: Lancashire Dialect Literature 1746-1935

Paul Salveson

Summary of Thesis for Ph.D.

The thesis looks at the origin and development of Lancashire dialect literature between the publication of John Collier's ('Tim Bobbin') A View of the Lancashire Dialect in 1746, and the death of Allen Clarke ('Teddy Ashton') in 1935.

The thesis is partly chronological, paying particular attention to the largely unexplored period of dialect writing between the 1890s and the 1930s, which suggests that earlier assessments of dialect literature need revision. The period before the First World War witnessed the development of a dialect literature closely linked to the labour movement in Lancashire, and contributed to the development of a distinctive socialist culture. For a time at least, dialect literature escaped from the middle class patronage which characterised it in the 1850s and 1860s, aided by the existence of an independent, Lancashire-based, press.

Dialect literature was never a pure, unadulterated 'voice of the people', and it was used both by middle and working class social forces to support rival value systems. An argument in dialect suggested a practical, common sense, wisdom, regardless of the actual message. Dialect poetry was used by different writers to support imperialist adventures, Irish home rule, left-wing socialism, and to oppose strikes, women's suffrage, and restrictions on access to the countryside. The literature represented divisions within the working class, as well as attempts from the middle class to influence it. Differing class and political standpoints were, on occasions, transcended by a wider regional consciousness in which dialect had a prominent place.

Particular themes within dialect literature are explored, contributing to current debates on class, identity, and gender. The treatment of women, war and imperialism, work, and the 'Cotton Famine' of 1861-4 are examined in separate chapters. Self-criticism, and defences of dialect writing, are looked at in Chapter 6 on "Defending Dialect".

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Lancashire Dialect Tradition of Working Class Literature

The dialect literature of Lancashire is one of the most remarkable examples of a specifically regional, and largely working class, body of English writing. Despite its large readership, and the number of writers producing verse and prose, a full-length study of Lancashire dialect literature has never been attempted before. Historians have begun to look beyond traditional sources of nineteenth century working class history, and pay much greater attention to regional differences: the large body of dialect writing provides a fruitful source of primary material. Dialect literature was never a pure 'voice of the people' but at times it did reflect and promote particular elements of a regional, working class, culture.

This thesis aims to examine the growth, consolidation, and ultimate decline of Lancashire dialect literature in the period marked, at one end, by the publication of John Collier's ('Tim Bobbin') A View of the Lancashire Dialect in 1746, and the death of Allen Clarke ('Teddy Ashton') in 1935 at the other. The objective of the study is to explore a number of themes and debates within contemporary social history, centring on class and class consciousness, and regional identity. The study of dialect literature ought to be a useful way of looking at regional influences on the social history of England, which traditionally were neglected. A central theme running through the thesis is the relationship between region and class, expressed through dialect. What does dialect tell us about working class life which other writing does not?

The thesis is the first attempt at a history of Lancashire dialect literature. Dialect literature has not been the subject of a detailed examination, although some substantial historical works have used dialect literature as key sources. Brian Hollingworth's Songs

of the People (1), a collection of dialect verse and song, contains a valuable commentary on dialect literature in its early, 'classic' period but it is not without faults. Like Vicinus in The Industrial Muse (2 - see below) he focusses almost exclusively on the period between 1850 and 1885 and neglects later developments. This leads him to make a claim for the late nineteenth century which is much more apposite for the 1920s:

We witness in the later nineteenth century, I believe, a divorce between author, subject matter, and audience, which was both inevitable and disastrous. The writer grows more self-conscious, begins to play with a language which he himself does not use and which a steadily diminishing number of his audience are still using. The audience turns to the poetry not for an expression of its present feeling but for a journey into nostalgia. So the dialect form becomes less of an expression of living speech and more a literary exercise. (3)

Hollingworth's comments suggest that Edwin Waugh, perhaps Lancashire's most famous dialect poet, and his circle in the mid-nineteenth century were writing an 'authentic' literature which he counterposes to the work of later nineteenth century writers. However, this does not square with an examination of either their text or their own lives; Waugh was very clearly setting out to develop a popular form of literature which had its own stylistic conventions, permissible areas of subject matter, and it certainly did represent an excursion into nostalgia. If anything, the later writers could be said to be writing a more authentic literature since many of them did address contemporary issues, such as factory conditions, and everyday events in working class life.

Martha Vicinus was the first historian to make serious use of Lancashire dialect literature. The Industrial Muse recognises the importance of dialect literature in the north of England in shaping a regional class identity but fails to adequately recognise the complexity, and development, of dialect literature. In fact, she has a static view of dialect, commenting that:

Dialect writing did not develop or regress during the period 1850-1914, but it probably declined in terms of the sheer quantity of verse written after about 1885.(4)

More detailed research suggests that both comments are incorrect. Dialect writing certainly did develop constantly during this period, and if anything more was written after 1885 than before. These points are examined in detail in later chapters but here we can simply note that Allen Clarke's Tum Fowt Sketches alone sold over a million copies, and were published between 1890 and 1930.

More recently, Brian Maidment's work, both as contributor and editor, in The Poorhouse Fugitives: Self-Taught Poets and Poetry in Victorian Britain considerably expands the earlier work of Vicinus and deepens the analysis of regional working class poetry which she pioneered, although the important contribution of later writers remains unacknowledged. Patrick Joyce's Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class 1848-1914 is the most detailed and sophisticated analysis of the role of dialect literature achieved so far. The work of Joyce in particular raises crucial issues of historical debate about the nature of nineteenth century society, and the ways in which identities are created. Joyce's work is part of a debate over the extent of the significance of 'class' in historical analysis. His stress on the importance of a regional, as well as a class, identity is a major theme of this thesis, although I take issue with some of Joyce's particular interpretations in the course of this work. Margaret Beetham's essay "Healthy Reading: The Periodical Press in Late Victorian Manchester" in City Class and Culture is helpful for the light it casts on dialect journalism and also on dialect writers' relationship with literature generally (5). What is important to note here, however, is that many of the most important developments in the Lancashire periodical press took place outside Manchester: Clarke's Northern Weekly and Andrews' Cotton Factory Times were published in Bolton and Ashton-under-Lyne respectively.

A central argument of this thesis is that 'class', on its own, is an inadequate tool for describing the development of nineteenth century England. Lancashire was the

cradle of the industrial revolution, and the location for the emergence of a modern factory proletariat, as Engels observed in The Condition of the Working Class. Identities were constructed around a combination of class and region, locality, and to an extent ethnicity/religion. Dialect was never a purely 'working class' voice, and frequently represented part of what Joyce calls a "higher-class regional consciousness" (6) which encompassed traditions of civic pride, enthusiasm for local history, and a high-quality magazine culture in places such as Manchester, Leeds, Warrington, and other major northern towns. Dialect literature, as will be argued repeatedly in this thesis, was never a 'natural', or spontaneous written expression of working class speech. To both write and read dialect it was necessary to be comfortable with standard English. Identification of dialect with a particular class (working class) only really became fully established in the twentieth century. Throughout the nineteenth century many members of the northern middle class, in both commercial and professional occupations, would speak dialect, and be proud of it. It was a stamp of northern pride and distinctiveness. However, dialect was pre-eminently plebeian, and some of its middle class speakers would have risen socially from a more modest social background.

The strength of dialect in Lancashire, and in West Yorkshire, lay in the hegemony of cotton (and wool in Yorkshire) and the culture which evolved around the dominance of the industry and its permeation into all areas of life, particularly in the family. Dialect was the warp of the industrial weft, linked inextricably into the all-pervading way of life which was that of the nineteenth century cotton towns. The child piecer of the 1850s spoke the same dialect as his father in the spinning room, mother or sister in the weaving shed, the tacklers, managers, and often owners. The middle class outsiders in the professions could only defer to the strength of this culture, and recognise the literary possibilities of it. The early popularity of dialect literature owed much to middle class sponsorship, although it evolved later into a more direct voice of working class aspirations, by the end of the nineteenth century. It remained, in day-to-day speech, an expression of regional pride in the face of encroaching attack by

metropolitan life and the influence of London. It was able to cross class boundaries.

Joyce is right to emphasise this point:

The association of the north and its regions with work and productive enterprise represents that realisation of class through region and locale.(7)

A question arises as to what extent dialect literature reflected people's perception of reality, or actually moulded it. I would argue that dialect helped to shape people's perceptions of everyday life; dialect literature helped to bond together a distinctive 'cotton-belt culture', which had local variations based on individual cotton towns, but formed a larger, regional, unity. Both the 'classic generation' writers, such as Waugh and Brierley, and the new generation of the 1890s, saw themselves as helping to 'elevate' working class people. In the earlier period, this was elevation into the world of respectability, thrift, co-operation, and Liberalism. By the late 1890s, Socialism was challenging Liberalism for the allegiance of the non-Tory sections of the working class (and, of course, for working class Tories). Dialect speech was part of the fabric of everyday life: dialect literature was used to try and mould popular culture in a particular direction. What is very clear though, is that dialect could be something of a 'wild card' to play: it could blunt the cutting edge of radical socialism by placing 'region' above 'class', and acting as a means of bridging class divides through a 'shared heritage'. Certainly, conservative writers were able to use dialect in the 1920s to put across what they saw as the 'common sense' view of life.

An important theme within this thesis is that dialect literature in Lancashire went through a number of distinct phases, although there is an inevitable overlap in dates. The first period represents the origins of dialect literature, from the mid-eighteenth through to the mid-nineteenth century. Its typical products comprise a combination of broadsheet songs, satirical verse, and humourous occasional pieces. The most well-known figure of this period is John Collier ('Tim Bobbin'). The second period begins in the early 1850s and lasts until the end of the century. It is represented in the work of Edwin Waugh, Ben Brierley, J.T. Staton, and slightly later Samuel Laycock. The third

period extends roughly from 1890 to 1914. Although this new generation of dialect writer, such as Allen Clarke, writes very consciously within a tradition developed by Waugh and his contemporaries, the writing contains significant differences which are outlined below. The final phase is from the end of the First World War to the death of Allen Clarke in 1935. In a sense, a new phase has begun with the marketing of dialect as part of Lancashire's heritage industry. Inevitably, this is a backward looking form of dialect which does not relate to contemporary reality in the declining cotton towns.

John Collier, or 'Tim Bobbin', is known as called the "Father of Lancashire Dialect Literature". His View of the Lancashire Dialect published in 1746 marks the beginnings of the tradition, but little else. The work is virtually unreadable, and I would suggest always has been. I doubt whether it was any more decipherable to a Lancashire readership in the 1740s than it is today. His famous work is in the form of a husband-wife dialogue, between 'Tummas an' Meary'. The following extract indicates the difficulties of the text:

Mary: Well, on heaw went'n ye on ith' Mourning when eh wackn't?
Tummas: Whau, as I'r donning meh thwoanish Clooas, I thowt I'll know heaw meh shot stons ofore I'll wear moor o meh brass o meh brekfast: so I cawd on th'londleday coom, on kestit Throttenpence: So; thowt I t' meh sein, o weawnded Deeol! (8)

The point was not that Collier produced a great work of literature - he did not. What he achieved was to get dialect into print, and encourage other writers to do the same. He had the same status to dialect literature as Marx had to English socialism: everyone deferred to his greatness, but no-one ever read him.

The period from 1746 up to the 1850s saw several attempts at dialect writing in pamphlets, short books, newspapers, and broadsides. In Lancashire, 'broadsheet' is used rather than 'broadside' and is the term used in this thesis. The period is very uneven, with no obvious progression taking place in the form. Dialect was being

published in the 1790s, and in the early 1820s and 1830s, but not in large quantities. There is no doubt that much of it was ephemeral and has not survived - particularly the poems and songs published as local broadsheet songs. Yet of all the broadsheets which have survived, and Manchester Central Library has a large collection, only a minority are in dialect. It seems a reasonable assumption that there was never a large body of dialect broadsheets which have disappeared.

Dialect came out of the doldrums in the 1850s. The period the mid-1850s, when Waugh wrote his famous "Come Whoam To Thi Childer An' Me" poem, up to the late 1890s marks the "Classic Period" of dialect literature. This period saw the publication of Laycock's Cotton Famine poetry, Ben Brierley's 'Daisy Nook' sketches, and Waugh's poetry and sketches. All of these went into several editions and established a canon of Lancashire dialect literature which was aped, more or less successfully, by dozens of other writers.

It did not emerge from a vacuum. The crucial difference from the early period is that from the 1850s dialect literature took off as a mass form, with substantial middle-class support, and - subject to slight local variations - an accepted orthography. It was softened, made more accessible, and became less of an act of endurance to actually read. It established stylistic conventions, and boundaries of acceptable subject-matter from which it became difficult to escape. The stress on home life, nostalgia for the pre-factory age, the countryside, and harmless humour left out the hardships of factory work, ill-health, class conflict (when it occurred), and other grievances of the northern working class. That it did exclude them should not be too surprising: working class readers read dialect as a form of escape, for pleasure. Neither did middle class readers wish to be reminded of the realities of working class life in the 1850s. It was not in the commercial interests of dialect writers to write about uncomfortable subjects which no-one wished to read about. The exception comes with the Cotton Famine, between 1861 and 1864. Here, the hardships were perceived as having an external

cause. People were starving through no fault of their own, or of their employers. Appeals in dialect were seen as the authentic voice of the Lancashire worker.

The first popular writers of dialect, Waugh, Brierley, Staton, and Laycock, were from working class backgrounds. They wrote for two different audiences; the mass working class readership who could afford the 'Penny Readings' and broadsheets, and the provincial middle class, who would pay for the guinea editions of Waugh's Poems and Songs, with gilt-edging and leather bindings. The perspectives of what I have termed "the classic generation" of dialect writers, active between 1850 and 1890, shared a common advanced liberalism, and an attachment to the countryside. The virtues of 'homely life' were stressed, coupled with a nostalgia for the old days, when handloom-weavers were the aristocrats of the cotton trade. 'Humourous sketches' were popular, and Staton and Brierley in particular developed the popular form of 'laughable Lancashire readings', often giving personal readings of their works at social occasions.

Dialect literature took off at about the same time - the 1850s - in other parts of the industrial North. The dialect literature of West Yorkshire shared many similar features with its Lancashire counterpart, though distinct strains also developed on Tyneside, and in the industrial areas of West Cumberland. It was very much a product of the revolution in peoples' culture brought about by industrialisation. It is noteworthy that it emerged after the high-point of Chartism, when working class radicalism, at least in its more extreme and independent form, was on the wane. The substantial literature of Chartism was almost exclusively written in standard English - I have yet to find a 'Chartist' Lancashire dialect poem or sketch. Dialect literature is much more at home with the co-op, the mechanics' institutes, burial clubs, trades unionism, and the chapel or church. Initially, its subject matter is regressive, and extols the virtues of the lost way of life of the hand-loom weavers. Waugh's characters are drawn from what was a bygone age - the besom maker, handloom weaver, distaff spinner, village blacksmith; yet it was an age that had passed recently, and passed with seeming rapidity.

Change in the subject matter of dialect literature becomes evident in the 1880s and a new period of dialect literature becomes discernible from the early 1890s. Both Laycock and Brierley begin to use dialect as a political weapon. Laycock in particular wrote a number of powerful poems advancing the Liberal cause on Ireland, or against the aristocracy. This paved the way for the overtly socialist writing of Allen Clarke, and his circle of writers around Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly. A new period of dialect literature opens up, spanning the years between 1890 and 1914, and going into decline after the war.

Probably the crucial factor in the rise of the new generation was the growth of independent labour politics, coupled with the opportunities for an independent working class press. The Cotton Factory Times and Clarke's own papers were vital in providing an outlet for the writings of labour-inclined dialect poets. Factory life becomes much more central in their writings, in the period between 1890 and 1914. This tended to be a 'balanced' representation, based on everyday life in the factory rather than the exceptional event such as a strike. The dialect sketches, and serialised stories in the Factory Times and Northern Weekly were the equivalent of today's TV 'soaps', in which ordinary people could identify with fictionalised characters who worked in the mill, lived in the same streets and houses as they did, and shared the same problems, tragedies, and joys.

After the First World War dialect literature undergoes a significant shift: it becomes much more artificial, less rooted in ordinary life. It starts the reversion to nostalgia and sentimentality which had characterised it in the 1850s. As radio and then TV develop, its market shrinks. It becomes a quaint curiosity consigned to the occasional poem in the local newspaper. It once again becomes primarily the preserve of the antiquary, rather than a vehicle for expressing contemporary working class life and its values. However, I am aware that from the time of John Collier onwards,

people have been forecasting the 'death' of dialect. It remains popular, and perhaps increasingly so as northern towns try to market dialect writing as part of a tourist strategy which emphasises local and regional culture. However, there is yet to emerge any writer, using Lancashire dialect, who can express the realities of daily life in the 1990s. It has become almost inextricably tied to the past - the imagery of smoking mills, cobbled streets, clogs and shawls. Even the re-introduction of trams to Manchester is unlikely to lead to a more relevant form of dialect writing!

This sketch of the development of dialect literature should be set alongside the comments of Vicinus and Hollingworth that the 1860s period represented the 'high-water mark' of dialect literature. This view, in the light of the more detailed research which has made up this thesis, seems wide of the mark. The 1850s and 1860s represent the first bloom of dialect literature, and if there was a high-water mark, it would have been somewhere between 1890 and 1914 - before the death of Waugh, Brierley, and Laycock, but when younger writers like Allen Clarke were making their mark.

Patrick Joyce in Visions of the People recognises the importance of Allen Clarke and his new generation of dialect writers but does not fully grasp the qualitative differences between their work and that of Waugh and his contemporaries. As will be argued later, Joyce in practice suggests that regional identities were stronger than those of class. He sees the writing of Clarke and his circle as reproducing, with perhaps some 'labourist' add-ons, the same themes as the earlier generation used.

The Hand-Loom Weavers: A Cultural Elite?

The hand-loom weavers occupy a special place in both the production of dialect literature, and in its subject matter. For many Lancastrians they were the personification of the pre-industrial society which had disappeared with the onset of the factory system. The 'myth' of the hand-loom weavers, as a highly skilled, intellectual,

and radical elite is a powerful one, and as we shall see it was fuelled by dialect writers including both Waugh and Clarke.

Clarke's argument is that the weavers were of a different stamp to the factory proletariat of his day, the 1890s. In Effects of the Factory System he counterposes the broad, democratic aims of what he saw as the Chartist-inclined weavers, with the narrow trade union objectives of modern-day spinners:

For the Chartists, the old hand-loom weavers, were men of some ideal; they loved nature, poetry, philosophy; and had visions of a whole world happy in the beauty of brotherhood. They were broad where the factory operatives are narrow, and had lovelier and loftier conceptions of the purpose of existence and the destiny of the human race. (9)

The contribution of the weavers to culture, including elements of a specifically working-class culture, was considerable. E. P. Thompson among others (10) has commented on the high level of intellectual attainment of the weavers, and the numbers of botanists, poets, musicians, painters which came from their ranks. Their combination of no-nonsense down-to-earth lifestyle with high intellectual attainment naturally made them attractive as subject matter and in a sense almost as 'role models', to plebeian intellectuals like Waugh, Laycock, Brierley, and later writers like John Trafford Clegg of Rochdale, who used the pseudonym of 'Th'Owd Weighvur'. The cultural achievement of the hand-loom weavers has yet to be fully written, but there is little doubt that their way of life, with its stress on independence and creativity, was passed on to successive generations of Lancastrians through the mediation of Waugh and his contemporaries.

The question needs to be asked: how accurate is the myth? Duncan Bythell's The Hand-Loom Weavers covers predominantly economic issues, which were accessible through the various Select Committees on the weavers as the trade began to decline. He notes the paucity of primary material on the weavers' way of life. (11)

It is important to recognise that the hand-loom weavers were not a single, homogeneous occupational group. As Munby has shown, there were major skill differences within hand-loom weaving which became more pronounced in the early years of the nineteenth century. Muslin weavers were among the most highly skilled. Basing her argument on material from surviving notebooks of three muslin weavers, she says:

The hand-loom weavers' personal pattern notebooks suggest a greater involvement in pattern making than the mere execution of a set of instructions... (the notebooks) suggest lively and cultured men, whose range of interests was extensive and varied. (12)

The notebooks included mathematical rules, astrological material, and other notes and drawings not directly related to weaving. The will of one of the weavers, Edward Hobson, mentions "all my specimens of plants, insects, minerals, together with my cabinet and books." (13)

A Rossendale weaver, Moses Heap, records in his autobiography the highly developed musical culture which existed in his village of Dean, in the late eighteenth century. The weaver-musicians were known as 'The Larks of Dean' or 'Th'Deighn Layrocks'.(14) Many of the pieces performed by the Larks were sacred works such as Handel's oratorios. However, Heap notes that many 'occasional' pieces about local events were written, and performed on home-made musical instruments. (15)

Roger Elbourne's Music and Tradition in Early Industrial Lancashire 1780-1840 is the most detailed study of the cultural life of the weavers yet made. The book covers the 'golden age' of hand-loom weaving and the cultural products of that period. Elbourne identifies four different types of weaver, from the independent 'customer' weaver, through the 'artisan' weaver who worked for a choice of master, to the 'journeyman' or 'shop' weaver who worked in a small factory, and finally the part-time weaver, who may have woven to supplement farm earnings. (15)

He makes a useful summary of the most common form of weaving process in the 1790s, based on a domestically-based labour process, which was nonetheless part of often quite large-scale capitalist enterprise:

The bulk of weavers were organised on the domestic or putting-out system. The father wove and apprenticed his sons into weaving, whilst the mother was responsible for the preparatory processes. She spun, and taught her daughters to spin, and allocated subsidiary tasks like picking, cleaning, drying and carding amongst the younger children. The central figure of the industry was the manufacturer, who employed putters-out to distribute warp and raw cotton, either direct to the scattered weavers, or to country manufacturers who put out in their own areas. The master received back the finished cloth and paid the weaver for the weaving and spinning. The domestic outworker was a piece-working wage earner in a highly capitalistic system. (16)

The hand-loom weaving process, with considerable autonomy for the home-based weaver, lent itself to opportunities for musical or literary creativity. Equally, it lent itself to less elevated pastimes. As Bythell comments:

The old hand-loom weavers were not always noted for independent mindedness, self-improvement, and self-respect. Depending entirely on personal temperament and inclination, the 'freedom' to work as one pleased, and the relatively high wages of the early days, could just as likely lead to idleness and general demoralisation. (17)

The weaver had a given amount of work to do within the week. It was up to him when he did it, and work patterns were often highly irregular. The Select Committee on Hand-Loom Weavers' Petitions in 1834 heard William Sedgwick testify that he had known weavers "when the wages have been great, play Monday and Tuesday, then work Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, during half the night, take home their work on Saturday, receive their money, and then go to drink again." (18)

Clearly, the work process allowed for both high cultural attainment, and drunken depravity. Even so, Elbourne comments that "these weaving communities seem to have provided a cultural setting which encouraged the blossoming of individual

talents." (19) The writing of Samuel Bamford certainly paints the hand-loom weavers as a quite exceptional group. Here, he describes the "working class" of south-east Lancashire in the 1840s, of which the hand-loom weavers are viewed as the main component:

They are the greatest readers; can show the greatest number of good writers, the greatest number of sensible and considerate public speakers. They can show a greater number of botanists; a greater number of horticulturalists; a greater number who are acquainted with the abstruse sciences; the greatest number of poets, and greater number of good musicians, whether choral or instrumental.
(20)

While the condition of the weavers, and their numbers, began to decline during the 1830s and 1840s, a small number continued to find well-paid work as highly specialised weavers, on Dobbie and Jacquard looms. The quality of their work was difficult to match by the relatively clumsy new power-looms. (21) As shown in Chapter 7 a small number of such skilled weavers survived throughout most of the nineteenth century, and helped to support the 'myth' of all hand-loom weavers being cultural and intellectual giants. A lovely description of a group of the last hand-loom weavers is found in James Swinglehurst's ('J.S.') Summer Evenings With Old Weavers, published around 1880. It describes the author's talks with a group of surviving counterpane weavers, in Great Lever, Bolton. The group includes an Owenite, a Chartist, and an expert on Burns and Shakespeare. Swindlehurst concludes his account thus:

The weavers professed to have opinions of their own; and certainly they were intellectually in advance of other branches of our working population. But the last of them will soon be no more. (22)

Sim Schofield, in Short Stories About Failsworth Folk recalls Fred Kenyon, an old weaver from Woodhouses who visited him in the 1890s. Kenyon was multi-lingual and highly articulate. "I could not have believed," says Schofield, "that a poor hand-loom weaver could have been so informed in the works of so many authors, especially seeing he had never earned more than a mere labourer. I am told Kenyon is also a linguist of no mean order, having mastered a language or two whilst weaving at his loom." (23)

It seems unquestionable that within the hand-loom weaving community there did exist a group of highly articulate men, mostly self-taught, who formed a cultural elite. This group formed the basis for the development of the 'hand-loom weavers' myth, so eagerly promulgated by Allen Clarke, who made perhaps exaggerated, but not totally mistaken claims for their intellectual prowess. Characters like 'Radical Grimshaw', the old weaver in The Cotton Panic helped to maintain the myth, but so also did the few surviving weavers of Bolton, Rossendale, and Woodhouses who kept their shuttles in play until the end of the last century.(24)

The Question of Literacy

The emergence of dialect literature in the 1850s as a form of popular literature raises questions over literacy, and why dialect was used in preference to standard English. There is no doubt that the culture of the Lancashire handloom weavers laid considerable stress on literacy, and several accounts have survived of weavers' cottages displaying the works of Milton, Shakespeare, with the family bible occupying an honoured place. Hollingworth suggests that increasing literacy in the 1850s and 1860s gave Waugh and his contemporaries the basis for a mass audience, but it may well be that a high level of readership existed before then, and literacy levels actually declined with the onset of the factory system (25). E. P. Thompson estimates that two out of every three working men could read in the early part of the century, and this was bolstered by Sunday School education, and working class self-improvement activities. R. K. Webb (26) suggests that literacy among handloom weavers in 1840 compared favourably with other groups of workers. Thompson quotes an example from a child speaking to Sadler's committee on child labour , in 1832:

My work was at the loom-side, and when not winding my father taught me reading, writing, and arithmetic. (27)

Both Stephens, in Regional Variations in Education During the Industrial Revolution), and Sanderson's article Literacy and Social Mobility in the Industrial Revolution have pointed out that literacy levels declined in industrial Lancashire between 1770 and 1815. Factory towns such as Rochdale and Wigan had literacy levels which fell as low as 19%, while rural areas of Lancashire had literacy levels of up to and over 70%. This is not incompatible with the argument that a handloom-weaving elite did possess high relatively high levels of education, much of which was a result of being taught by parents. Stephens fails to recognise the self-taught tradition; the fact that no employers of handloom weavers set up schools for the weavers' children misses the point.(28)

Michael Sanderson comments that power-loom weaving required lower levels of literacy, though this misses the point. The transition from hand-loom weaving to power weaving was not a smooth, orderly process but a highly complicated series of events which ruptured the previous, home-based weaving system. (29) Many of the male weavers stayed at their looms until they were too old to continue, or went into other occupations, including spinning. Most of the power-loom weavers were female, so there were limited openings for male hand weavers in the new weaving sheds. (30) A number, however, became designers for weaving companies, having the necessary skill level to take on such work. (31) T. Laquer has questioned some of Sanderson's findings, and suggests that the decline in literacy levels started some time before the beginning of the Industrial revolution. Laquer also notes the development of working class self-help institutions in the 1840s which encouraged literacy and 'the pursuit of knowledge' suggesting that the growth of schools for working class children was not the only reason for the growth of literacy levels from the 1850s. (32) However, whatever the reasons for the revival of literacy among working class people by the 1850s, there is little doubt that this spurred on the expansion of dialect literature, and in turn may have marginally contributed to the growth of literacy itself, by providing a form of 'phonetic' English, though this must be said with major qualifications. As

argued elsewhere in this thesis, dialect was not an alternative to standard English, it was predicated on a pre-existing grasp of it.

The Start of the Dialect Literary Movement

Dialect literature 'takes off' as a popular form well after the decline of handloom weaving as a major occupation in Lancashire but many of the incomers to the large manufacturing towns were Lancashire country-dwellers who brought there cultural traditions with them. Martha Vicinus has suggested that dialect literature was a response to mass migration from neighbouring villages into the larger towns:

The large numbers of country people who came pouring into the industrial cities provided a link with the country, and in turn they found their old customs still living in the works of writers such as Waugh, Brierley, and Hartley. (33)

Vicinus also stresses the importance of middle class patronage in helping dialect writers get published, though suggesting that the price of this sponsorship was a watering-down of critical subject matter. She goes on to suggest that dialect writing reflected "the increased acceptance of values and customs favoured by the middle class", (34) with its stress on respectability, thrift, and the home. John Foster (35) suggested a similar process, in which the bourgeoisie attempted to 'buy off' a section of the working class through liberalisation, in a sophisticated response to the threat posed by Chartism. Patrick Joyce's Work, Society and Politics (36) places particular emphasis on the role of the factory master, through the labour process, who used a form of cultural domination to secure a docile workforce. This has been challenged from a number of directions, including John Walton's Lancashire: A Social History 1558-1939 (37) who argues that the relationship between employer and workforce was far more complex: local political affiliations based on workplace ties could have emerged voluntarily: Tory workers would have gravitated to a 'Tory shop' and likewise for Liberal workers.

The approach of T. R. Tholfsen (38) allows for a greater degree of working

class cultural autonomy, locating the roots of working class progressive politics in eighteenth century radicalism. This heritage was shared by sections of the middle class and the two political traditions tended to run in parallel, with periods of greater or lesser contact between the two. The argument does have a validity in helping to understand the political formation of the Lancashire working class. The hand-loom weavers were steeped in the political radicalism of the 1780s and 1790s, and names like Tom Paine were venerated in many Lancashire households. In the 1850s and 1860s the example of dialect writing, and the emergence of working class institutions for educational and financial purposes, suggest that middle class and some of the working class' values had become similar. However, there is an important distinction in that working class values tended to be expressed collectively - through bodies like the trades unions, educational bodies, co-operative movement, burial clubs, and friendly societies; whereas middle class values which espoused similar objectives of thrift, education, and advancement were located more on an individualistic level. In dialect writing, an ambivalent message emerges which has led some commentators like Vicinus to assume an adoption of 'middle class' values by a section of the working class. Waugh's poem, "Come Whoam To Thi Childer An' Me" expresses the feelings of a husband who is perhaps too fond of a drink, and is persuaded by his wife to come home to a clean hearth stone and "a quart o'ale posset". The husband responds:

God bless tho' less, aw'll go whoam,
An' aw'll kiss thee an' th'childer o'round
Tha knows that wheerever aw roam
Aw'm fain to get back to th'owd ground;
Aw can do wi' a crack o'er a glass;
Aw can do wi a bit of a spree;
But aw've no gradely comfort, my lass,
Except wi' yon childer an' thee. (39)

The poem is not expressing a temperance message; it is accepted that the husband likes "a bit of a spree" and he is tempted home not just by wife and children, but by the

quart of ale. While the poem sits comfortably with middle class notions of respectability, it is equally fair to say that it exemplifies a working class notion of 'respectability' which owes little to cultural domination by anyone. As with later dialect writers, Waugh was a clever writer who knew what would be popular; the fact that the poem was picked up by middle class philanthropists and extensively circulated does not make Waugh an agent of the middle class and its values. The notion of 'respectability' was largely developed internally, by sections of the working class. It was, however, encouraged by sections of the middle class. As Walton has argued:

...this culture of working class 'respectability' had autonomous roots within the working class itself, and it permeated the trade unions; but aspects of it were encouraged by sections of employer and wider middle class opinion. (40)

There was another side to the success of Waugh's poem. A number of writers, including Brierley, satirised the poem for its sentimentality and over-romanticised view of working class life. Brierley knew Waugh well enough to know that at the time he wrote it, Waugh's wife and children were lodged in the workhouse. (41)

Tholfson's arguments do then help us understand the framework in which working class culture and politics developed in the first half of the nineteenth century, and support Joyce's view that political democracy, rather than class, was the most important mobilising force in working class politics, which allowed for inter-class co-operation in the 1830s, and later during parts of the Chartist campaign. He, like Tholfson, suggests that the words meant something different in working class heads from what they meant to the middle class. However, it would be inadequate to leave the argument purely on the level of ideas which permeated the working class from the 1790s to the 1850s. To take root, the values of self-improvement, democracy, and independence needed to relate to actual, lived, experience. Geoffrey Crossick (42), basing his work on a study of London artisans, has suggested that a working class culture which lauded such values grew out of the material conditions in which they

lived and worked. In the case of London artisans, their contact with the middle class would have been quite different from that of a Lancashire cotton worker: there was none of the dependency that the 'aristocratic' cotton spinner had on the factory master and a tradition of independence could develop with little threat from anyone. However, the cotton spinners of Lancashire had their own form of independence, based on a recognised hierarchy within the work process which was protected by well-organised trades unions for the high-status occupations. It would be exceptional, rather than the norm, for the owner or manager to interfere with the day-to-day running of the spinning room, which was in the hands of the 'minder' or spinner. The lower status workers in the spinning room - side piecer and little piecer - were responsible to the minder who paid them out of his total earnings. Although the minder was in a waged relationship to the owners, and hence ultimately dependent on them, in practical reality he had a large degree of independence, enjoying a relatively high standard of living, who could both sack and take on his assistants. Working class independence was then every bit as much a feature of life in the Lancashire cotton towns as it was in artisan London, except that the basis of the independence differed enormously, based on quite separate relationships within the work process. It should also be said that in weaving, the overlooker enjoyed a similar status of independence as the minder in spinning. Power relations had as much to do with gender as with class. There were limits to the extent of differences within cotton. There was a sense in which the work process was 'vertically integrated' with members of the same family involved in various aspects of the process. The men would work as minders, or in a more junior capacity as side-piecers, and also as tacklers and overlookers; the women would work as carders and beamers, or as weavers.

The institutions of an independent, 'respectable' working class in Lancashire were not revolutionary, but they did meet the needs of a sizeable section of the working class of the second half of the nineteenth century. The working class of the cotton towns, while stratified by occupation and by gender and to some extent by ethnic

composition (the Irish being the most significant ethnic minority), nonetheless had a homogeneity which was striking. The family unit was central to this, and it would not be too crude to suggest that an average family in towns like Bolton or Oldham could well have seen the father employed as a minder, the mother actually or previously having worked as a weaver or warper, sons working as piecers, and daughters as weavers. Walton has identified the importance of the 'respectable working class' as an analytic group, but rejects the suggestion that it is synonymous with a workplace-based 'aristocracy':

The importance of a 'respectable' stratum of thrifty, religious, earnest, self-improvers within the Lancashire working class cannot be denied; but it is impossible to identify it with any specific occupational grouping. The great divide between 'rough' and 'respectable' ran vertically rather than horizontally across cotton town society; and if the growing influence of the latter was conducive to the new political stability, it arose from the role of particular institutions rather than the mass conversion and isolation of a 'labour aristocracy'.(43)

This 'respectable' working class formed the natural audience for Waugh and Brierley: they were brought up within it, and expressed its values. These were, of course, evolving gradually away from the Chartist politics of the 1840s, towards a political accommodation with middle-class Liberalism in the 1850s. The worlds of these two tendencies were increasingly beginning to coalesce.

The voluntary institutions which sprang up within the working class of the 1850s and 1860s, whose importance is noted above by Walton, provided a fertile base for dialect writers, and continued to provide outlets for writers like Sam Fitton well into the twentieth century (see Appendix 28). These institutions include the co-operative societies, friendly societies, trades unions, and a wide range of local bodies. Dialect literature throughout the nineteenth century was written to be performed; the popular "penny readings" were sold in the same way as a modern rock band sells CDs of their music at concerts. Tea-parties, soirees, smoking concerts and parties provided a means of useful employment for writers like Waugh, Brierley, Laycock, and later on Clarke

and his circle. Clarke was particularly successful in shaping a distinctive 'alternative culture' in which dialect played an important role. The means of achieving this was through the press; his Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly had a wide circulation in Lancashire and sponsored a range of concerts, rambling and cycling clubs, parties, and political campaigns.

It was through the columns of his newspapers that Clarke was able to develop a remarkably strong bond with his readers: the letters page of Northern Weekly were full of comment on the previous week's articles, serialised novels, and editorial. Clarke often responded to readers' letters with his own comments and the dialogue continued for several weeks. Of equal importance to Clarke's newspapers was the Cotton Factory Times, whose significance as a medium for Lancashire working class culture has never been seriously studied. Here again, working class writers were given a platform, as well as workers with other skills, such as Sam Fitton, the gifted dialect poet who was also a brilliant cartoonist.

Structure of the Thesis

In the following chapter, on the origins of dialect literature, I look at the emergence of dialect from the oral tradition of the handloom weavers, to the writing of John Collier and his contemporaries. Dialect was used as a form of lampoon, though some broadside ballads see dialect being used to express the views of the "common man" of the day on issues like war, poverty, and the factory system.

Chapter 3 looks at the 'take off' of dialect literature in the 1850s, and who it appealed to. The importance of middle class patronage in this period is stressed, though, as suggested earlier, the actual message was open to several meanings. The importance of less well-documented writers like J. T. Staton, who catered for a narrower, local working class readership, is evaluated.

Developments in dialect literature towards the end of the nineteenth century are discussed in Chapter 4. Middle class sponsorship becomes less significant, and the emergence of independent working class newspapers provides a platform for new talent. For a brief period, dialect literature expresses, to a significant degree, the ideals of the emerging labour movement. Dialect writing becomes more based in contemporary reality, and socially critical. I ask why socialists used dialect as a means of expression, and to what extent they helped create a regional socialist culture in Lancashire.

The decline of the radicalism in dialect literature after the First World War is studied in Chapter 5. Reasons for this within the Lancashire literary movement itself, and within the labour movement, are considered. Middle class patronage is reasserted through organisations such as the Lancashire Authors' Association, and dialect writing declines into a minority interest with content becoming increasingly nostalgic.

From Chapter 6 we move away from a narrative account of the development of dialect literature to a series of more specialised themes within dialect writing. Each theme has been chosen to highlight particular major themes within dialect writing, and also to contribute towards current debates within historical research, for example over work and the labour process, women, war and imperialism. Debates between dialect writers, and attacks and defence of dialect are looked at in Chapter 6. Dialect literature throughout the two centuries from 'Tim Bobbin' in 1746 to Allen Clarke in the 1930s had to defend itself against critics from several quarters: that it was dying and should be left to die a peaceful death; that it was coarse and vulgar; that it could only express a very limited range of feeling.

The treatment of work and factory life by dialect writers is considered in Chapter 7, looking at how dialect writers responded to industrialisation, and to what

extent this could be seen to be representative of working class views of the new factory system.

The Lancashire Cotton Famine of 1861-1864 stimulated the writing of some of the most powerful, and popular, dialect poetry. This is examined in Chapter 8. The work of Laycock, Billington, Staton, Ramsbottom and others help to illustrate the different responses to the Famine, and to the issues related to the American civil war.

The influence of 'imperialist' ideas within the working class, and the suggested strength of loyalism and xenophobia are looked at, through dialect writing, in Chapter 9. Arguments about the use of racism to divide the working class are considered, as are attitudes to major political questions like slavery, Irish home rule, the Boer War, and the First World War.

Women play an important role as subjects in dialect writing, but the number of women dialect writers grew only very slowly in the last century. This issue is looked at in Chapter 10, and the contribution of women writers like Margaret Lahee, and later writers such as Hannah Mitchell, is outlined. Male dialect writers views on women are discussed.

Finally, Chapter 11 looks at the question of whether a regional working class culture began to emerge in Lancashire in the 1890s, and to what extent dialect helped to shape this. Progenitors of this culture in the 1850s and 1860s are looked at, and the particular role of the regional press in the 1880s and 1890s is considered. There are a total of 33 appendices: quite a lot, but the intention is to give the reader a clear impression of the range of dialect writing, in its originally printed form.

Notes

1. Brian Hollingworth Songs of the People - Lancashire Dialect Poetry of the Industrial Revolution Manchester 1977.
2. Martha Vicinus The Industrial Muse - A Study of Nineteenth Century British Working Class Literature London 1974.
3. Hollingworth op.cit. p.6.
4. Vicinus op.cit. p.228.
5. Brian Maidment (ed.) The Poorhouse Fugitives: Self-Taught Poets and Poetry in Victorian Britain Manchester 1987, and Patrick Joyce Visions of the People - Industrial England and the Question of Class Cambridge 1991, Margaret Beetham "Healthy Reading: The Periodical Press in Late Victorian England" in A.J. Kidd and K.W. Roberts (ed.) City, Class and Culture: Studies of Cultural Production and Social Policy in Victorian Manchester Manchester 1985.
6. Joyce op.cit p.273.
7. ibid p.294.
8. This is one of the more popular extracts, and is taken from the translation of Elijah Ridings published in 1862 and re-produced in G.H. Whittaker (ed.) A Lancashire Garland of Dialect Prose and Verse Stalybridge 1936, p.112.
9. Allen Clarke The Effects of the Factory System London 1899 p. 148.
10. E. P. Thompson The Making of the English Working Class London 1963. References are from the revised Pelican edition, 1968, esp. p.322.
11. Duncan Bythell The Handloom Weavers Cambridge 1969.
12. J.Z. Munby unpublished Ph.D thesis Woven Lancashire Cottons: studies in the role of the designer in the production process Manchester Polytechnic 1986 p.13.
13. ibid p.14.
14. The Diary of Moses Heap Manchester Central Library.
15. Roger Elbourne Music and Tradition in Early Industrial Lancashire Woodbridge 1980.
16. ibid p.5.
17. Bythell op.cit p.147.
18. Select Committee on Hand-loom Weavers' Petitions 1834.
19. Elbourne op.cit p.25.
20. Samuel Bamford Walks in South Lancashire Blackley 1844 pp 13-4.
21. see Munby op.cit. and J.G. Timmins The Last Shift Manchester 1993.
22. 'J.S.' (James Swinglehurst) Summer Evenings With Old Weavers Manchester

n.d. circa 1880-1.

23. Sim Schofield Short Stories About Failsworth Folk Blackpool 1905 pp 178-9.
24. Clarke's novel The Cotton Panic was serialised in his newspaper Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly during 1899. See Chapter 7.
25. Hollingworth op.cit p.4. See W.B. Stephens Regional Variations in Education During the Industrial Revolution Leeds 1973 and M. Sanderson "Literacy and Social Mobility in the Industrial Revolution in England" in Past and Present Vol. 56 1972 pp 75-104.
26. R. K. Webb The British Working Class Reader 1790-1848 London 1955.
27. quoted in Thompson op.cit p.321.
28. Stephens appears to rely on Bythell's work which does not take much account of the hand-loom weavers' self-taught tradition.
29. Sanderson op.cit and "Literacy and Social Mobility in Industrial Lancashire: a Rejoinder" Past and Present Vol.64 August 1974.
30. Women tended to be employed on mainly 'plain' weaving, with men undertaking more specialised 'fancy' weaving on jacquard and dobbie looms, which were introduced several decades after the initial application of power to weaving. See D.S.A. Farnie The English Cotton Industry and the World Market 1815-1896 Oxford 1979.
31. see Munby op.cit for an account of the transition which some hand-loom weavers made in the second half of the nineteenth century, from working at the loom, to becoming industrial designers.
32. T.Laqueur note in Past and Present 64, August 1974. See also M. Sanderson "Social Change and Elementary Education in Industrial Lancashire 1780-1840" in Northern History iii 1968.
33. Vicinus op.cit p. 190.
34. ibid p.191.
35. John Foster Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution London 1974.
36. Patrick Joyce Work, Society, and Politics: The Culture of the Factory in Late Victorian England Brighton 1980 and John Walton Lancashire: A Social History 1558-1939 Manchester 1987.
37. John K. Walton Lancashire: A Social History 1558-1939 Manchester 1987
38. T.R. Tholfsen Working Class Radicalism in Mid-Victorian England London 1976.
39. Edwin Waugh Poems and Lancashire Songs London 1870 p.129. First published as a sheet poem in 1856 and reprinted on numerous occasions in editions of Waugh's work.
40. Walton op.cit p.245.
41. The circumstances surrounding the poem are referred to in Martha Vicinus

Edwin Waugh: The Ambiguities of Self-Help Littleborough 1984.

42. Geoffrey Crossick An Artisan Elite in Mid-Victorian London London 1977

43. Walton op.cit p.251.

Chapter 2: The Origins of Dialect Literature 1746-1850

The broad contours of the hand-loom weavers' culture were discussed in the previous introductory chapter. This culture included a strong emphasis on literacy, and a wide range of artistic and scientific inquiry, including music, botany, mathematics, herbalism, and astronomy. While I am not suggesting that every handloom weaver was an accomplished poet or mathematician, a substantial body of evidence does suggest that an exceptionally high degree of cultural attainment existed within the weaving communities (1). Here, I want to examine the different influences which went into the formation of the Lancashire dialect literary movement in the second half of the nineteenth century. I begin by an outline of the oral tradition of the handloom-weavers, with excerpts from some of the songs which were set down, often by later generations of local historians. This oral tradition was far from being an isolated, phenomenon separated from other forms of culture. Classical music impinged on it, and also we see the emergence of distinctive figures, community poets in a sense, whom local people relied on to celebrate popular events in song and verse.

Ironically, dialect writing was not the automatic form of expression used by plebeian song writers and poets in these rural communities. The earliest popular dialect writer - John Collier, or 'Tim Bobbin', was the son of a poor, but respectable, curate rather than a weaver. Many of the genuine weaver poets wrote in the standard English form of poetry which they regarded as being the only vehicle for 'serious literature'. Most of the anonymously written broadside ballads of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century were in standard English. The exceptions which emerge were ballads depicting a rural character - the archetypal handloom-weaver such as 'Jone o' Grinfilt' or 'Johnny Green'. However, these were written in an urban context and exported, via the weavers taking their warps back to the village, from urban

Manchester, Bolton or Preston. Although 'Tim Bobbin' was far from being a 'working class intellectual', his parents were lower middle class, his impact on the future development of working class writing is considerable; all the classic generation of dialect writers paid homage to his role as 'father of Lancashire dialect literature'. Whilst there is a noticeable gap between the death of Tim Bobbin and the emergence of a popular dialect literature in the 1850s, nonetheless some writers were prepared to use dialect to some degree - particularly the Wilson family of Manchester, and also, to a lesser extent, Sam Bamford. What is remarkable though, is the sparseness of dialect writing between 1790 and 1850.

This period saw the production of a substantial amount of working class literature, particularly in the Chartist years between roughly 1839 and 1848. However, this invariably was written in a highly romanticised standard English form. The most successful working class poet to use this form was John Critchley Prince, who played a major role in the 'Poets' Corner' group at the Sun Inn, Manchester. This social-cum-literary group was of major importance for the future of working class literature in Lancashire, and helped shape a distinctive regional working class culture. As well as writers in standard English like Prince, some of the members did use dialect to a limited degree. Prince however was the most influential; for the content, rather than the form, of his writings. Finally, I take a brief look at some of the literary influences outside Lancashire which helped shape dialect literature, the work of Robert Burns standing out.

From Oral Tradition to Broadsheet Songs

I have already emphasised in the introductory chapter the importance of music and literature in the handloom-weaver's culture. Handel and Mozart rubbed shoulders with Shakespeare, Burns, Milton and Bunyan in the homes of many weavers, even in remote areas such as the Rossendale Valley. Writers like Edwin Waugh and Thomas

Newbigging (2) drew attention to the extensive library collection of many weavers' homes. The group of weaver-musicians known as 'Th'Deighn Layrocks' ('Larks of Dean' - see previous chapter) exemplified the mixing of classical tradition with indigenous, semi oral tradition. Samuel Compston, a Rossendale local historian at the turn of the century, wrote of their blending of classical music with a folk tradition:

What a nomenclature was employed by these Deighn Layrocks!
If the compositions came to be printed in a modern tune book their names would certainly be changed. For though mostly meant for scored works some of them have titles which seem utterly incongruous. Yet they are doubtless redolent of the men, their times, and their common mode of expression. "Bocking Warp" suggestive of handloom woollen weaving is mixed up with "Solemnity", "Lark" and "Linnet" with "Robin Hood" and "Whirlwind", "Mount Sion" with "Nab"; "Plover" with "Whineing Tune".(3)

Inevitably, this was primarily an oral tradition, with songs passed on from generation to generation. Few of the hand-loom weaver's songs have survived, at least from their period of prosperity in the eighteenth century. Those which have are often about local customs such as Wakes, Rush-Bearing and May-Day. The "Droylsden Wakes Song", or "Dreighlsdin Wakes" was written around the year 1814, but adapted from a similar song from nearby Woodhouses which was written, according to Higson's history of Droylsden, over thirty years previously. Higson describes the manner in which it was sung:

The ceremonial issued from Greenside, a hamlet in Droylsden, and consisted of two male equestrians grotesquely habited. One, John, son of Robert Hulme of Greenside, personified a man; the other, James, son of Aaron Etchells of Edge Lane, a woman. They were engaged in spinning wheels, spinning flax in the old style, and conducting a dialogue in limping verse, after which they collected contributions from spectators.(4)

The first two verses will suffice to give the flavour of the song:

HE

It's Dreighlsdin wakes, un' wey're comin' to teawn,
To tell yo' o' somethin' o' greet reneawn'
Un' if this owd jade ullem'mi begin,
Aw'l show yo heaw hard un how fast au con spin.

Chorus : So it's threedywheel, threedywheel, dan, don dill, doe.

SHE

Theaw brags o' thisel'; bur aw dunno' think it's true,
For aw will uphowd the, thy faults arn't a few;
For when theaw hast done, un spun very hard,
Oi this aw'm weel sure, thi work is ill marr'd.

Chorus: So it's threedywheel, etc.(5)

Higson himself commented that the song as it had survived was a collation of numerous versions still extant in the Droylsden area when he was writing. In their commentary, Harland and Wilkinson conclude:

Altogether, the ballad, as it reaches us, seems but the debris of an ancient dialogue song in which man and wife quarrel over the domestic manufacture of linen yarn.(6)

The orthography of the song, that is, the form in which it was set down on paper, is that of the 1860s. For instance the spelling of 'thou' given as 'theaw' and 'now' as 'neaw'. The assumption must be that Higson wrote the songs down from the many locally surviving oral versions, using the dialect orthography developed by Waugh in the 1850s and 1860s. "Dreighlsdin Wakes" remains probably the oldest known ballad of the hand-loom weaving communities of South-East Lancashire, on the likely assumption that it is based on an earlier song, which in turn may be founded on even older oral sources. This apparent vagueness of sources is inevitable in studying a primarily oral tradition based on rural communities with no access to printing presses - although this is not to say that they had no access to the printed word. As Bamford and other contemporary observers noted, they were avid readers of 'the classics'. It was only at the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, that the oral tradition of the handloom weavers began to be transformed into print, and this was very much a phenomenon of the new industrial towns, rather than the weaving villages.

From the start of the nineteenth century a crucial new period opens up in Lancashire working class writing. Firstly, the song-writer/poet emerges as a

recognisable figure in the community. One such was Grimshaw, the hand-loom weaver of Gorton who often used the pseudonym of 'Common'. The Wilson family of Manchester produced a large amount of material, little of which survived in print, despite many of their songs having been published as broadsides.

The transition from an amorphous oral song tradition to the individual songwriter producing work in printed form occurs in the period between 1800 and 1840. One of the most popular series of ballads were the 'Jone O'Grinfilt' songs, which commence at the time of the Napoleonic Wars and continue to the 1840s. Bamford relates the story of how they came to be first written; Joseph Lees, a weaver, and Joseph Coupe, a spinner and general handy-man, were returning to Oldham from a night out in Manchester:

...in order to raise the wind, they agreed to compose a song to be sung at certain public houses on the road, there they supposed it would be likely to take, and procure them what they wanted, the means for prolonging their dissipation. A storm came on and they sheltered under a hedge, and the first verse of the song was composed by him (Coupe) in that situation. Lees, composed the next verse, and they continued composing verse after verse until the song was finished and afterwards printed; but it took them three days to complete it. Hey then "put it ith press", and, he said, "we met habin worth mony a hunhert peawnd iv widdin had sense to ta'care o'th brass".
(7)

In this story, two distinct developments are combined; the off-the-cuff production of occasional broadsheet songs to be sung to raise a bit of extra cash for drinking sprees, and the more formalised production of ballads for printing and publishing as broadsheets. In Bamford's description of Coupe, among his many other talents he is described as a 'rhymester', (8) presumably known around the pubs of Oldham as someone who could rattle off a piece of doggerel at a few moment's notice. An important feature in the history of early nineteenth century working class song-writing was the transition from this form of production to the printed word. This implied both access to printing technology, and a market for printed works. Neither pre-condition could have been met in a small weaving village. However, in the large towns both

printers and a large working class market were available. Whilst the publication of broadsheet ballads and songs was not peculiar only to Lancashire, I would suggest that they were primarily a product of improved technology in printing, being able to meet the demands of the newly urbanised industrial working class of south-east Lancashire. Catnach of London, John Marshall of Newcastle as well as Swindells and Jacques of Manchester, and Harkness of Preston promoted a new and vigorous form of working class expression during the years of the industrial revolution in the first half of the nineteenth century. (9) Some of these songs had a general, country-wide appeal, evidenced by the re-printing of many of the London-based Catnach ballads, by Harkness of Preston. These were frequently love songs, celebrations of war-time heroism or tragedies. However, there were an increasing number of locally-specific broadsides being produced, often in dialect, in Lancashire and the North-East during the early years of the nineteenth century. In Lancashire, these were often related to weaving, just as many of the North-East broadsides feature mining. These early Lancashire weavers' songs are of considerable importance for the later development of Lancashire dialect literature, and reflect the major changes which were overtaking the handloom-weaver's culture at the turn of the century.

One of the earliest known weavers' broadsheet song was "The Bury New Loom", printed by Swindells of Manchester in 1804. The period in which it was written was one of prosperity in the weaving trade, and the increasing technical sophistication of looms. The 'fettling' of a young woman's loom by a young man on tramp from Bolton to Bury was a highly popular piece of erotic imagery combined with a pride in the weavers craft. According to A. L. Lloyd it was reprinted many times by Shelmerdine of Manchester:

As I walked between Bolton and Bury, 'twas on a moonshiny night,
I met with a buxom young weaver whose company gave me delight.
She says "Young fellow come tell me if your level and rule are in tune.
Come give me an answer correct, can you get up and square my new loom?" (10)

On one level, the song is a continuation of male fantasies of the eager, over-sexed maidens found in traditional rural folk songs. The hay-loft or cow-shed are exchanged for the loom-shop and the technology of hand-loom weaving at its advanced stage. Unfortunately, the author of the song is not known, though the detailed knowledge of the weaving process would suggest someone from a weaving background. The song is a celebration of the weaver's trade as much as male sexuality at a time when weavers were still the elite of the working class of Lancashire.

Their status was, however, short-lived. From the second decade of the century, the condition of the weavers worsened rapidly. By the 1840s their situation had become desperate. Several later broadsides reflect this change, including "Handloom v. Power-Loom", written by Grimshaw ('Common') of Gorton. The date is only approximate, circa 1825-6:

Come all you cotton-weavers, your looms you may pull down;
You must get employ'd in factories, in country or in town,
For our cotton masters have found out a wonderful new scheme,
These calico goods now wove by hand they're going to weave by steam.

The consequences for the traditional way of life of the weavers is brought out clearly. No longer will the weaver be able to work at his own pace and work late into the night to make up for time spent carousing during the day:

So, come all you cotton weavers,
you must rise up very soon,
For you must work in factories from morning until noon:
You mustn't walk in your garden for two or three hours a day.
For you must stand at their command, and keep your shuttles in play. (11)

Grimshaw also wrote "The Handloom Weaver's Lament", (12) about the plight of the weavers and 'the tyrants of England' who have brought about their ruin. Like "Handloom v. Powerloom" it is written mostly in standard English. The Jone O'Grinfilt ballads were, however, written in dialect by various authors, many of whom

were anonymous. The first version by Lees and Coupe is set at the time of the French Wars, as a dialogue between a weaver and his wife. The full version is printed as Appendix 4. These are the opening lines:

Says Jone to his wife on a hot summer's day,
"Aw'm resolvt i' Grinfilt no longer to stay;
For aw'll goo to Owdham os fast os aw can,
So fare thee weel Grinfilt an' fare thee weel Nan;
For a sodger aw'll be, an' brave Owdham aw'll see,
An' aw'll ha'e a battle wi' th' French.

"Dear Jone," said eawr Nan, un hoo bitterly cried,
"Wilt be one o'th foote, or theaw meons for t'ride?"
"Ods eawns! wench, aw'llride oather as or a mule,
Ere aw'll ceawer i' Grinilt os black as th'owd dule,
Booath clemmin', un' starvin', un'never a fardin',
It ud welly drive ony mon mad."(13)

Harland and Wilkinson comment that the song probably sold more copies than any other song known amongst the rural population of Lancashire. It was eagerly picked up and adapted. The original is clearly loyalist in tone though the poverty of the weavers of Greenfield is not disguised. Later versions emphasise the poverty and become increasingly radical politically. "Jone o'Grinfilt Junior" was collected by Higson of Droylsden from an old hand-loom weaver, and Harland and Wilkinson note that it was written just after the Battle of Waterloo when wages had dropped dramatically.

Aw'm a poor cotton-wayver as mony a one knaws,
Aw've nowt t'ate i'th'heause, un' aw've worn eawt my cloas,
Yo'd hardly gie sixpence fur o' aw've got on,
Meh clogs ur booath baws'n, un' stockings aw've none;
Yo'd think it wur hard, to e ent into th'ward
To clem un do best 'ot yo' con.

The weaver and his wife have become desperate, and the final verse points to violent remedies:

Our Margit declared if hoo'd close to put on,
Hoo'd go up to Lundun an see the big mon
An if things didn't alter when hoo had been
Hoo says hoo'd begin, un' feight blood up to th'e'en,
Hoo's nout agen th'king, bur hoo likes a fair thing,

Un' hoo says hoo con tell when hoo's hurt. (14)

Of course, the message is qualified. Margit will never get to see 'the big mon' by dint of her lack of clothes. As Vicinus notes, the song reflects a common theme in much working class writing of the time that the real evil-doers are the local masters, parsons and merchants and somewhere in London there is 'a big mon' - the monarch - who is the font of justice. If only he knew what was happening, it would get put right. Vicinus continues:

A dominant characteristic of this poem is its insistence on the rights and personal dignity of the individual; the weaver knows his position in the world and has no desire to overturn its hierarchic order, but oppression he will not tolerate. The poem combines a highly specific attack on those in power - the church parson, the putter-out, the shopkeeper and the landlord- with a general acceptance of economic instability as an uncontrollable factor in economic life. (15)

There were many other versions; "Jone o'Grinfilt's Visit to Mr. Fielden" is yet another attempt to appeal to sympathetic members of the upper-classes ('Bob' was probably Peel) to do something for the weaver's plight:

Aw'll say aw'm so clemm'd 'ot aw connot abide,
Un' meh guts are as bare as a jackass's hide,
Aw'll tell Bob and Nosey these toimes are so hard,
They're o' empty heawses welly in eawr yard;
Now money's so scant, theymun drop o' their rent,
Or th'landlords 'ull very soon break. (16)

The 'Jone o'Grinfilt' ballads began an important tradition in Lancashire literature and song: that of the archetypal Lancashire man: from 'Jone', we get 'Johnny Green' in the songs of Alexander Wilson in the 1840's, 'Bobby Shuttle' in the works of Staton in the 1850s and 60s, and 'Bill Spriggs' in the writings of Allen Clarke (as 'Teddy Ashton') from the 1890s onwards. Jone and his successors are the cheerful, often ill-treated, stereotypical male workers of Lancashire; invariably the wife is the stronger figure. In "Jone o'Grinfilt Junior" it is the wife, not the husband, who talks of going to London to seek justice. In Clarke's 'Spriggs' sketches it is Bet Spriggs who ruthlessly dominates the household, complete with rolling-pin.

The ballad tradition did not disappear with the advent of cheap dialect pamphlets like Waugh's "Penny Readings". Many writers including Waugh and Laycock published their more popular poems as broadsheets throughout the nineteenth century. The classic broadsheet song remained popular until the 1850s. It was an important phase in the evolution of Lancashire literature, linking the oral traditions of the hand-loom weavers, and the written dialect literature.

The dialect used varied considerably from one writer to the next, reflecting the lack of a standard orthography which, as we shall see, Edwin Waugh did much to alter. However, broadside ballads were not the only influence on later nineteenth century dialect literature. John Collier ('Tim Bobbin') was recognised by dialect writers as "the father of Lancashire dialect", and later writers such as Bamford and the Wilson family sometimes wrote in dialect without publishing in broadside form.

Tim Bobbin and the Growth of Lancashire Literature

John Collier, better known as 'Tim Bobbin', is an extremely difficult writer to assess. He stands on his own as a writer in Lancashire dialect in the mid-eighteenth century. After his death in 1786 there is a long gap before dialect writing takes off substantially, even in broadside ballad form. His use of dialect is also somewhat individual; he has been criticised by later dialect writers for making up words as he went along and a modern commentator referred to him as "The James Joyce of Lancashire Dialect"!(17) Collier was born in Urmston in 1708 and at the age of thirteen was apprenticed to a dutch-loom weaver in Mottram. His father was a curate who hoped his son would follow him into the ministry. However, at the age of forty he went completely blind, and John was forced to get work immediately to keep himself. He did not stay long as an apprentice weaver, and in 1720 he became a schoolmaster in the small weaving village of Milnrow, near Rochdale, having spent the previous three years as an itinerant school teacher. His most well known work is A

View of the Lancashire Dialect, published in 1746.(18) This took the form of a dialogue between husband Tummus, and wife Meary. The story is about Tummus' ill-fated adventures between Rochdale and Littleborough, told in a near-opaque dialect. Thankfully, the book carried a glossary and later editions, such as that edited by Elijah Ridings,(19) included a complete translation. Bamford, in his edition of 1850, included an enlarged glossary with numerous amendments to Collier's original. In his introduction Bamford criticises Collier's interpretation of Lancashire dialect, suggesting much of it reflects his upbringing in Urmston on the Cheshire border, rather than a correct Lancashire form of speech. He goes on to say:

My chief object in undertaking this revision and correction, has been the production of a true and consistent illustration of the dialect of this Eastern part of South Lancashire, such as it has been spoken during the last eighty years. By this Eastern part I mean the country extending from Blakeley to Littleborough easterly; and from Bury, to Bolton, to Oldham, south-westerly, including all those places and their vicinities. Manchester could not be included, inasmuch as its inhabitants having always been a more mixed people, have never spoken the dialect of the country folks around them.

I have adopted Collier's dialogue betwixt "Tummus and Meary", and his Glossary, as the framework where on to exhibit my amendment, deeming it not only right, but most expedient also, that, as that production has been accepted during many years the true and only exposition of our mode of speech, it should also be made the vehicle for exhibiting the errors which it had so long been the means for propagating, and of substituting a real, and consequently, an improved version of our dialect in its stead.(20)

The importance of Collier's work does emerge in Bamford's criticisms. The content of his dialect writing was ephemeral and, even in his own time, difficult to read. Herbert Kirtlan's comparison of Joyce and Collier is not as far-fetched as it seems; the beginning of 'A View' consists of a conversation between the author and his book, with the reader instructed to "Hear a spon-new Cank between th'Eawther and his Buk". (!) However, his importance rests on his being the first writer to set down, however inaccurately, the dialect of South Lancashire. The "Jone o'Grinfilt" ballads could well have been influenced by the dialogue style of Tim Bobbin, though

the dialect is much less difficult. The tradition of relating exciting, hair-raising or other unusual experiences from husband to wife was continued by, amongst others, Alexander Wilson, J.T. Staton and Allen Clarke. Collier himself became a key reference point for later generations of dialect writers. 'Tim Bobbin' for many dialect writers was a talismanic figure, whose combination of Lancashire wit with his pioneering role as dialect writer, helped to give authenticity and a sense of enduring tradition to successive generations of writer. (21) In 1986, his bi-centenary was celebrated in Rochdale. Bamford was probably the first to write a poem about Tim Bobbin's grave in Rochdale churchyard:

TIM BOBBIN' GRAVE

I stooode beside Tim Bobbin' grave
 'At looks o'er Ratchda' teawn,
 An'th' owd lad 'woke within his yearth,
 An' sed "wheer arto' beawn?"

"Awm gooin' into th' Packer street,
 As far as th' Gowden Bell,
 To taste o'Daniel's Kesmus ale."
 Tim - "I cud like o saup mysel."

"An' by this hont o' my reet arm,
 If fro' that hole theaw'll reawk
 Theaw'st have o saup o' th' best breawn ale
 'At ever lips did seawk."

The greawnd it sturr'd beneath my feet,
 An' then I yerd o groan,
 He shook the dust fro' off his skull,
 An' rowlt away the stone.

I brought him op o deep breawn jug,
 'At o gallon did contain,
 An' he took it at one blessed draught,
 An' laid him deawn again! (22)

Ben Brierley used this poem as a basis for "Sam Bamford's Grave", written in the 1880s.(23) In the same period, Margaret Lahee used 'Tim Bobbin' as a defence against the attacks on dialect by the School Board. At the time of his centenary, 1886, she wrote a poem recording a ghostly conversation between her and 'Tim Bobbin':

I've been a century undergreawnd

It's toime I start bewailin'
To see my grave, yon shabby mound
Beawt e'en a bit o'pailin'.
An' literature is so select,
At th' schoo' board's undertakkin'
To overhaul mi dialect,
An gi mi speech a wackin.

Neaw that mi fiddle string's unstrung,
And cord o'loife is brokken,
Folk sen me 'rude, illiterate tongue'
Should never moore be spokken.
But drot 'em whol mi wark's i'print
I'st live i'history's pages;
If nowt but for mi comic tint
O'th doin's i' past ages. (24)

Edwin Waugh made a pilgrimage to Tim Bobbin's cottage in Milnrow, described in his Lancashire Sketches, Volume 1. (25) In the sketch describing his visit to the birthplace of Tim Bobbin, Waugh acknowledges his debt to Collier, and defends him against his critics. Whilst readily admitting that Tim Bobbin is unreadable to the Southerner, the language in which he writes, argues Waugh, is little different from the language of Chaucer which was once the common form of speech in London:

But great changes have come round since the time of Chaucer, and though an Englishman is an Englishman in general character the world over, there is as much difference now in the tone of manners and language in the North and South as there is between the tones of an organ and those of a piano. I have hardly ever met with a Southern man able to comprehend the quaint dramatic gem which flashes and sparkles with living fire and country humour, under the equally quaint garb of old language in which Tim clothes his story of "Tummus and Meary." (26)

Waugh also notes Tim Bobbin's political radicalism, which emerges in his standard English prose work and letters. In the dialogue between the author and the book, Tim quotes the lines:

Robbing's a trade that's practis'd by the great,
Our ruling men are only th---es of state

to which the book responds, worriedly;

Howd, howd, howd, the dickons tak o'!

I see what's top-most; yoan be hong'd or some mischief -
on then aw'll be whooup with e'o'feeth! (27)

Translated: "you'll be hanged or some mischief - and then I'll be finished, i'faith!", clearly, a warning to Tim himself against letting his political opinions venture too far into his writing! Perhaps Waugh took the warning to heart.

In 1909 a large number of Lancashire dialect writers met to honour the 200th anniversary of Tim Bobbin's birth. From that meeting in Rochdale, the Lancashire Authors' Association was formed, at the suggestion of Allen Clarke. Clarke also used 'Tim Bobbin' themes in his dialect sketches, such as "Tummus Deawn A Coal Pit" and "Tim Bobbin Resurrected".(28) It is difficult to assess Tim Bobbin's immediate influence, though there may well have been a link with broadsheet song writers. However, it is impossible to over-estimate his symbolic importance for the dialect tradition which took off in the 1850s. In this sense he can truly be seen as the "father of the Lancashire dialect", albeit a somewhat wayward parent.

Other 'Bobbins'

An interesting immediate influence was on the writings of a handloom-weaver from Little Moss, between Ashton and Droylsden. Robert Walker used the pen-name 'Tim Bobbin the 2nd' and indeed some of his writing was accidentally bound with the Collected Works of Tim Bobbin in the edition of 1808. Walker was a Jacobin, Paineite radical. His short work Plebeian Politics - The Principles and Practices of Certain Mole-Eyed Maniacs Vulgarly Called Warrites By Way of dialogue Between Two Lancashire Clowns, (29) is clearly based on the dialogues of Tummus and Meary, but it injects a fervent attack on the war against revolutionary France. The work takes its cue from Burke's reference to the 'swinish multitude'. Walker's response was "Theaw Kon ekspekt no mooar eawt of a pig than a grunt". The dedication is to "The Tenants of the Sty in General, and to the Swine of Lancashire in Particular." It is a

major piece of political satire, and the introduction marks an important politicisation of the use of dialect:

I have thought proper to give you this in the Lancashire idiom, exactly in the manner I heard it expressed by Whistle-Pig and Tum Grunt: and however either the language or the characters here introduced may have been despised by the aristocratic and literary pride of Burke, I do assure you, that the opening of this address is done more out of derision to that pensioned apostate, than any contempt for your understanding; for I am perfectly convinced, not only that the provincial dialect of Lancashire contains a rich vein of forcible expression, the venerable and valuable reliques of the ancient Anglo-Saxon and Gallic languages, but that the county of Lancaster, as well as every other county may yet contain,

Some village Hampden, who with dauntless breast
Can bay the little tyrant of his cot;
Tho' when he sees his country's wrongs redress'd,
Can rest contented with his humble lot. (30)

Although the work of Robert Walker was probably unknown to him, Solomon Partington uses the same quote from Shelley over a century later, and similar arguments regarding the validity of Lancashire dialect, in his Romance of the Dialect and The Future of Old English Words.(31) However, Robert Walker/Tim Bobbin 2nd was never widely known and his writing seems to have stopped after Plebeian Politics was issued in 1801 (32). It should be remembered that the whole period from 1792 onwards to the time of the Luddites was one of severe repression and Walker would inevitably have incurred the wrath of the authorities through such outspoken writing.

'Tim Bobbin 2nd's' work must be ranked as an important piece of working class political satire; it was written as a response to the war hysteria which had overtaken the country in the years following the French Revolution and the onset of the war between revolutionary France and conservative England. Its significance lies in being one of the few surviving 'occasional' pieces of dialect expressing a radical politics. His use of dialect was intended to underscore the 'common man' credentials of the characters, rather than as a literary form.

The spirit of Tim Bobbin is conjured up again, in the 1850s, through publication of the Lancashire Fly-bi-Neet, or Ratchda Oldermon, Bury Simblin, and Owdham Bells, edited by none other than 'Tim Bobbin's Ghost'! The publication lived up to its title, and had a very short existence during August and September 1856.

Samuel Bamford: Serious - and Satirical

Samuel Bamford, writing in a slightly later period when working class radicalism was re-emerging as a major threat to the state, from around 1815 onwards, attempted to produce 'serious literature' out of the aspirations of working people. This attempt is an interesting illustration of a contradiction which continues throughout dialect writing in the nineteenth century: working class writers who were writing both in dialect and standard English would invariably opt for the latter form when writing on 'lofty' subjects, and the former when dealing with light, or comic matters. Bamford, of course, played a major role in the events surrounding the Peterloo Massacre, and his activities in the Lancashire radical movement are well described in his autobiography, Passages in the Life of A Radical. Bamford has been the subject of renewed interest recently, with the publication of a biography by Morris Garratt and a detailed analysis of Bamford's politics by Martin Hewitt. (33) Bamford's poetry celebrated the democratic movement of the years between 1817 and the mid-1820s. His "Lancashire Hymn" carried the instruction "For Public Meetings" appended to it, and is a good example of Bamford's use of standard English and the poetic form of the upper classes to express a working class sentiment:

Great God! who did of old inspire
The patriot's ardent heart,
And fil'd him with a warm desire
To die, or do his part.
O let our shouts be heard by thee,
Great genius of liberty.

After a further seven verses in a similar vein, he ends:

Souls of our mighty sires, behod,
This band of brothers join,
O never, never, be it told,
That we disgrace your line -
If England wills the glorious deed,
We'll have another Runnimede. (34)

I have already quoted from Bamford's "Tim Bobbin's Grave" which was written in dialect. The subject is a humorous fantasy celebrating the 'father of Dialect literature'. In the 1864 edition of his poems, out of 107 pieces, only five are in dialect and all of these are light, or satirical, works. In "The Bard's Reformation" Bamford's split personality emerges clearly:

Adieu to the Alehouse, where pounds I have spent
For drinkin' and smokin' bring little content,
Where laughin' and grinnin'
An' bettin' an' winnin'
Cause sorrowful sinnin'
The roar and the rant,
A better beginnin' is now my intent.

After singing of the delights of the fiddle, beautiful lasses, and fun-loving friends he finally vows:

So now to my own little nook I'll retire,
I'll bar out the storm, an' I'll trim up the fire,
This witchery breakin',
All folly forsakin',
To study betakin'
My mind to improve;
My muse ever wakin' to freedom an' love. (35)

Bamford does not convince anyone of his sober intentions, and the song reflects his own uproarious youth, when he was a notorious figure around the pubs of Manchester and Middleton. Though he settled down with his beloved 'Mima' the longing for a spree is still evident, though he thinks he should have his mind on higher matters! It should be pointed out that the song is hardly in dialect at all and the missing of the 'g' at the end of "laughing" and "grinning" is perhaps merely a device to give an

impression of rakishness on the part of the writer. His attack on O'Connor, the Chartist leader, was written in response to O'Connor's boast that soon the Charter would be passed and all would have 'Michaelmas Goose' to celebrate:

Sed goose unto gondor,
Whot felley comes yonder?
'Tis Feargus O'Connor,
I' search of a gonnor,
He wants to bestride one,
And o'er Inglun ride one,
Collecting foo's pennies,
Fro' gawsterin ninnies.... (36)

Bamford uses the metaphor of a gander (given above as 'gondor' and below as 'gonnor') to attack authority. His Song - "The Gonnor" - is based on the reaction of the authorities of Middleton, following a Luddite attack in 1812, towards a group of neighbouring revellers who just come into town for a quiet drink. Suspicion immediately falls on them, as the 'gonnor' spies the 'ducks' 'bent o'merriment'; in this case swimming in a 'bruck':

He chanc't to look into a nook,
An' theer espy'd wi'pleasure,
Some duckys bent o'merriment,
Just tipplin' at their leisure;
Then swell'd his breast, an' he his crest
Tow'rd heaven he distended;
An' deep he swore, by flood an' shore,
There manners shud be mended.

The gonnor produces 'a thing', presumably some official document, from 'the cormorant' in London notifying the ducks that they are persona non grata after certain hours:

Beneath his wing he had a thing,
An' quickly eawt he pood it,
'Twur painted blue, an' yallo' too,
An' to these ducks he show'd it;
He sed 'twur sent by th'Cormorant,
At up at Lunnon keawers,
To banish ducks fro' dams an brucks,
At after sartin heawers.

The ducks insist on staying until there was no water left to paddle in, so the

gonnor reports the case to a superior - a seagull. The seagull doesn't seem too interested and the gonnor becomes a laughing stock:

An' the goose wi'th'bell has provet itsel,
An addle-yeaded gonthur. (37)

This is quite a clever use of dialect as a form of political satire on small town tyrants, who used the Luddite outbreaks to crack down on all and sundry, armed with 'special powers' to harass people after hours of darkness. It is difficult to date when the poem was written. It was not included in the first, 1843 edition, of Bamford's poems. This is not to say it may not have been written much earlier. Bamford himself, in a note to the poem in the 1864 edition, says that the song was "was suggested by an occurrence which took place shortly after the Luddite raid upon Middleton, in 1812". (38) Its obvious topicality makes it seem unlikely that the poem was written retrospectively; political satire like that would quickly lose its appeal. However, we have no evidence other than supposition that Bamford wrote "The Gonner" in 1812. In his "Reminiscences" which preface the 1864 edition of his Poems, Bamford comments that he began writing poems in the period between 1812 and 1819. His first poem which appeared in printed form, "The Snowdrop", was published in 1815 in the Manchester Volunteer. Hewitt also suggests that many of the poems not published in the 1821 edition of his poems, but appearing in the 1864 edition, were almost certainly written in about 1819. (39)

The final piece of Bamford's dialect work is entitled A Dialogue, subtitled Between Peter Spinthreed, A Cotton Manufacturer, and Zekil Lithewetur, a Hand Loom Weaver. Written on the Coming in of the Canning Administration. The dialogue, seemingly written at the time of Canning's administration if the title is anything to go by, is a fascinating piece of political dialect writing. The manufacturer is enthusiastic about the new regime, reflecting a move towards greater freedom for capital. The weaver is less enthusiastic - he realises it will not make his position any

better:

Peter: Well, Zekil, hasto' yerd o'th'reawt,
'At's takken place at Lundun?
King George has turn't hissel' obeawt,
An; Ministers are undun;
Sin' Liverpool laid by his shoon,
O'nailt wi' gowden clinkers,
The growl has to a battle groon,
An' Cannin's bitten th'blinkers.

Zekil: An' what by that? he're nere a friend
To my poor hungry belly;
An' though he shift, unless he mend,
He's still a nowty felly.
"No honest mon" sad Billy Pit,
"Con ston i' sitch a station;
An he who creeps ot flies to it,
Mun sacrifice the nation."

The dialogue continues with Peter enthusing about Canning's imperial plans, to make the Americans buy Lancashire cotton goods and abolish the Corn Laws. Zekil remains unimpressed; at the end, the master in a gush of generosity says he will treat Zekil, who is told to wait by the kitchen door. Presently, the master's daughter appears 'all don'd i' silk', with Zekil's treat:

Hoo gav poor Zeke some buttermilk
An' a plate o' cowd potatoes! (40)

In A Dialogue, Bamford's capacity for satirising the middle class comes across extremely well, and reflects the gap which was opening up between middle class and working class radicalism following Peterloo. Interestingly, the master speaks the same dialect as Zekil; yet the class difference is clearly apparent. While Bamford felt confident in using dialect for satire and humour, he felt hesitant of using it for 'serious' political purposes, such as the Peterloo Massacre, or in mass rallying songs like his "Union Hymn". Already, the circumscribed use of dialect for 'light' subject matter was emerging. Working class literature, as increasingly exemplified by Bamford, was to write about worker's oppression and grievances in the literary form of the middle class. This treatment reached its high point in the poetry of the Chartist

movement, which continued Bamford's use of flowery, and somewhat strained and artificial, verse to put across the Chartists' demands.

The Wilson Family

The next group of writers who require attention are the Wilson family of Manchester. Michael Wilson was from a family of Scots handloom weavers who moved to Manchester at the beginning of the eighteenth century. He was apprenticed as a block printer, but in 1806 set up in business as a furniture broker at Red Bank, Manchester. He appears to have written songs throughout the first part of the century, up to his death in 1840. Few of these survived; those which did were rescued by John Harland, who wrote a series for the Manchester Guardian entitled "Local Descriptive Songs".(41) Later, he edited several editions of Songs of the Wilsons. In Harland's introduction to the songs, he comments that Michael Wilson never set his songs down on paper, and was content to have them sung from memory in local pubs. Despite this, many of his songs continued to be sung throughout the nineteenth century. Much of his recorded work is in dialect, and the content covers a wide range of subject matter: the family theme of extraordinary sights appears in "Jone's Ramble Fro Owdham to Karsy Moor Races":

Come Dick, an' Nan, an' Davy,
An' sit yo' deawn be me awhoile;
An' Sal, an' Mal, an Lavy,
Aw'll tell yo' a tale 'll mak yo smoile;
For aw've just come fro' Karsy Moor,
Wi' uncle Dan and mony moore,
'T wure cover't o'er wi' rich an' poor;
Aw never seed sich seets afoore.

The theme of 'the races' as an extraordinary spectacle, especially for the country dweller, is common in both English and Irish ballads. The Irish song "Galway Races" is almost identical in tone. At the races, people of all classes, denominations and occupations meet. After Jone has told his tale to 'the folks back

home', his 'gronnam' (grandmother) resolves:

"By th'maskins, Jone, theaw'st pleos't meh well,
Ecod, aw'll goo next yeear meh-sel." (42)

His song "Salford Fair" is similar in subject matter to the above, also written in dialect. Harland reproduces an interesting comment on the work of Michael Wilson by his son, Alexander whose work is considered below. His son wrote:

My father's forte, in my opinion, lay more in comic satire on the politics of the day than in subjects such as "Salford fair" such being generally inferior in humour to his political ballads; almost all of which, I deeply lament to say, are no longer in being.(43)

The most well-known political ballad to survive from Michael Wilson's pen is "The Peterloo Massacre". The Stalybridge dialect poet Sam Hill commented in 1906 that he had "often heard this song sung by old folks", (44) giving an indication of the continuing strength of the oral song tradition in late nineteenth century Lancashire. John Harland noted that Michael Wilson wrote the song on the occasion of the Massacre, but only four verses were recovered, from the recollections of one of his sons, William:

Come, Robin, sit deawn, an' aw'll tell thee a tale,
Boh first, prithe, fill me a dobbin o'ale;
Aw'm as drey, mon, as soot, an' aw'm hurt i'mi crop,
Havin' left Sam o'Dick's wheer aw fear he mun stop.

Chorus:
For the gentlemen cavalry,
Cut 'em down cleverly;
Real Royal yeomanry!
Cavalry brave!

Mr. Hunt neaw coom forrad an' spoke a few words,
When the Peterloo cut-my-throats shaken'd ther swords,
Aw thowt sure en of they were runnin' ther rigs,
Till aw seed moor nor twenty lay bleedin' like pigs.

Boh let's ta'e a peep o' these Peterloo chaps,
'At ma'es sich a neyse abeawt cullers an' caps,
See what they'n composed on, an' then we may judge,
For it runs i'mi' moind 'ot ther loyalty's fudge.

Theer's the taxman, exciseman, the lawyer an 'bum,
The pensioner, placeman, an'preycher, that hum:

The fat-gutted landlord, o'licence in fear,
Cuts the throats o'his neybour's who buy his bad beer. (45)

Peterloo was a popular subject for the ballad-writers, and some other 'Peterloo' songs have survived in collections in Manchester and Preston. The above seems to be the only surviving piece written in dialect. The suggestion would appear to be that the narrator is from one of the surrounding country districts, perhaps one of the handloom weavers who made up the bulk of the meeting. This is based on the use of the name 'Sam O'Dicks' - a Lancashire form of identification which would be unlikely to be found in any urban area such as Manchester, even in 1819. The song attacks the sham loyalty of the yeomanry - the petty-bourgeoisie of Manchester who have made their money by exploiting others. It is notable, however, that the criticism does not extend to employers, reflecting their absence from either side of the Peterloo episode. Class antagonism was not perceived as being expressed primarily at work, but through community conflicts - with landlords, lawyers, bailiffs, taxmen and other 'placemen': in other words, local representatives of what Cobbett termed 'The Thing', the ruling class before industrial capitalism had any significant political power in Lancashire. Indeed, "the idle classes" remained the prime target of dialect political criticism well into the 1870s, through the work of Edwin Waugh, and Samuel Laycock. This theme is explored in more detail in the conclusion to this thesis, Chapter 11, and its relevance to the work of other historians such as Patrick Joyce and Gareth Stedman-Jones.

The work of Michael Wilson's sons is less directly political in content. Many of the dialect pieces relate to the country-dweller's impressions of urbanisation and industrialisation, such as Thomas Wilson's "The Countryman's Description of the Collegiate Church", which describes a rustic's reaction to the formality of religious worship in Manchester:

Aw went to th'owd church, twurn Sunday i'th'morn,
Don'd eawt i' mea best, an' mea beart wur new shorn;
Sich seets aw their seed as aw ne'er seed afore,
Boh aw'll steart a'th' beginnink an' tellum yo o'er. (46)

Other songs in dialect, from a similarly rustic perspective, include "The Country Wedding", "Salford Fair" and "Rough Joe In Search Of A Wife". All of these involve an expedition into the town. In "The Country Wedding" the couple and guests travel into Manchester for the ceremony before returning to the country for the festivities. "Salford Fair" is written from the point of view of a visiting country-dweller (like the similar song by his father, reproduced earlier). In "Rough Joe", the hero is tired of country life and resolves to go into Manchester to find a wife:

Aw'r'n tier't o' a dull country life, an' determin'd to go into th'teawn,
An' theer to seek out a noice wife, an' no moor be a country cleawn.

Rough Joe soon finds out that town-life has its drawbacks. He innocently gets caught up with a prostitute, gets robbed and finally resolves to go home and 'forever aw will be content with a country girl for my woife'.(47)

Thomas Wilson's songs were not widely published, according to Harland's first edition of Songs of the Wilsons. The songs of Alexander Wilson appear to have been far more popular. He utilised the popular style of the "Jone o'Grinfilt" ballads, using 'Johnny Green' as the hero of many songs. Hill recorded that his songs were "sold in sheet form all over the district and may be purchased today from the vendors of street ballads at our local wakes and fairs." (48)

'Johnny Green' is a hand-loom weaver, and a country dweller from the Oldham district. "Johnny Green's Trip fro' Owdham To See A Balloon Ascent" is in the familiar style of countryman-sees-awesome-sight-in-town:

Today at noon fro' th'loom aw went,
On Measter Green's balloon intent '
They loosen't th' curds, an' up he went,
It really wurn delightink. (49)

"Johnny Green's Description of Tinker's Gardens" uses the same format, with the narrator describing his visit to the popular Manchester resort known as "Tinker's Gardens", in fact a nickname for Vauxhall Gardens at Collyhurst. Interestingly Waugh refers to the song in his sketch "The Cottage of Tim Bobbin". Waugh is describing his ramble from Rochdale towards Milnrow:

The vale of Roch lay smiling before me, and the wide-stretching circle of dark hills closed in the landscape on all sides except the south-west. Two weavers were lounging on the bridge, bare-headed and in their working gear, with stockin-legs drawn on their arms. They had come out of the looms to spend their 'beggin-time' in the open-air, and were humming one of Alexander Wilson's songs:-

Hey, Hal o' Nabs, an Sam an Sue,
Hey Jonathan, art thea theer too?
We're o'alike, there's nought to do,
So bring a quart afore us!
Aw're at Tinker's Gardens yester noon,
An' what aw seed aw'll tell yo soon,
In a bran new song; it's to th'owd tune -
Yo's ha't if yo'n join chorus.
Fal, lal, de ral. (50)

The comments of Sam Hill and the above quote from Edwin Waugh suggest that Alexander Wilson's songs must have been remarkably popular, and for many years after they were written.

At this stage, we must ask - who were the songs actually written for? Why did so many follow the pattern of a country hand-loom weaver visiting a town, describing his adventures in dialect? An added difficulty is the fact that all the Wilsons were urban dwellers and the 'Johnny Green' figure bears little resemblance to any of the writers themselves. The first point I would make is that there was a considerable amount of communication between the country weaving districts, and towns like Manchester and Oldham. This was rooted in the nature of the work. The weavers would bring their finished cloth into the town, and then spend an afternoon in the pub before taking home their spun cotton ready for the loom. The process is recorded in many dialect sketches and poems, such as Thomas Brierley's "Th'Silk-Weyver's Fust Bearin-

Whoam".(51) In it, the adventures of two drink-besodden weavers trying to find their way home to Middleton are recorded. Sam Bamford in his Early Days describes the visits into Manchester and the social nature of the occasion:

It would sometimes happen that warp or weft would not be ready until after dinner, and on such, occasions my uncle having left his wallet in the care of the putter-out, would go downstairs and get paid in the counting-house, and from thence go to the public house where we lunched on bread and cheese, or cold meat and bread, with ale, to which my uncle added his ever-favourite pipe of tobacco.

Once the materials had been obtained and collected in the weaver's wallet preparations would be made for the journey home. Bamford continues:

Before leaving the town my uncle would probably call at "The Queen Anne" on Long Millgate, to see if there were any suitable company going our way; if there were we took a glass till all were ready, and then we walked on together. Another calling house was Schofields at Scotland bridge, and the last in the town was "The Flower Pot" on Red Bank. (52)

Clearly, the hand-loom weavers were no strangers to the town and had a probably unrivalled knowledge of the local pubs and market-stalls. However, this knowledge of town life by the country-based weavers did not extend to other members of the family, the women and the young. No doubt the weavers would regale their wives and children with exaggerated tales of city life, perhaps to explain the state of intoxication many of them seemed to return in!

I would further argue that songs like "Johnny Green" would fit in with the romantic image of town life, with all manner of excitement and fantastic events taking place, which weavers might have liked to foster back home. The carnival-like nature of their weekly 'bearing-home' clearly involved the spending of a lot of money - this was the day they got paid, so they could go on a spree.

As well as spending money on ale, Bamford mentions buying groceries, fruit and

tobacco in the town. Thus it is highly probable that many weavers would buy the cheap broadside ballads which were widely available in Manchester in the first half of the nineteenth century, as a sort of festive 'souvenir'. Thus the urban-based ballads of Wilsons and obviously other writers, found its way into the country districts. Thus can Waugh find a couple of hand-loom weavers at Belfield, then a rural district of Rochdale, humming one of Wilson's songs, and thus can Sam Hill, well into the twentieth century, recall old people in Stalybridge singing "Johnny Green". This is not to say that town dwellers themselves didn't buy the ballads - perhaps they did but for different reasons. The 'Johnny Green' character to them may have come across as a figure of ridicule and helped them to affirm their self-image as urban sophisticates.

A further confirmation of who Alexander Wilson was writing for is in "Johnny Green's Trip Fro' Owdham To See the Liverpool Railway":

Aw yeard me uncle Nathan say,
They're goink to mak a new railway,
Fro' Manchester to Owdham eh!
Aw wish it warn boh gaited;
For weavers then to th' wareheause soon,
Will ta'e their cuts by twelve at noon,
Besoide th'saveation o'their shoon,
They'll noan so oft get bated (53)

The introduction of rail travel is part of the process of decline of the hand-loom weavers' life. The ritual element of 'bearing home', where the weavers call in at various pubs on their way home, is lost. Instead, a journey to the warehouse in Manchester takes a fraction of the time. There are compensations though: the weavers will avoid fines ('bating') for lateness - and they will save their shoe leather! ('saveation o'their shoon').

For the Wilsons, dialect was a rural form of speech. Other songs by the Wilsons which have a town-based theme are all in standard English. This relates to the comment of Bamford's, quoted earlier, that the geographical area in which the

Lancashire dialect was spoken definitely excludes Manchester itself. It is notable that of all the 'classic generation' of Lancashire dialect writers, and those who followed them, not one came from Manchester. The closest we get is with Ben Brierley, who lived in Harpurhey for much of his life, yet was born in Failsworth - which though only a few miles from Manchester was culturally quite different.

The Wilsons represent a phase of dialect writing which could flourish because of the organic relationship between town and country arising from the nature of handloom-weaving. The collapse of handloom-weaving, which involved a regular visit to the commercial centre, Manchester, broke this connection in dialect literature, and later dialect writers have little to say about city life (as opposed to town life in Rochdale, Bolton, Oldham etc). The pattern of working class life in the textile communities became much more localised, with life revolving around home, mill, and town; excursions to 'the city' (Manchester) were no longer a part of the fabric of life.

However, Manchester continued to be important in one respect - as a literary and publishing centre. Alexander Wilson forms an important link with mainstream regional literature in the first half of the nineteenth century, as part of a closely knit literary group known as 'Poets' Corner'.

The Poets' Corner at The Sun Inn

Dialect writing has never been a literature isolated from other forms of writing. The three main writers' associations which included dialect work, also had writers of standard English. These are the Poets' Corner, at the Sun Inn, Long Millgate, Manchester, which was the most informal of the groups, running from 1830s through to the late 1840s; the Manchester Literary Club founded in 1862 which still exists today, and the Lancashire Authors' Association (L.A.A.) formed in 1909 and also still extant. The history of the L.A.A. is covered in detail for the years between 1909 and

1935 in Chapter 5.

The main figures in the 'Poets' Corner' group were John Critchley Prince, Alexander Wilson, Samuel Bamford, John Bolton Rogerson, Richard Wright Procter, Elijah Ridings, Charles Swain, George Falkner and John Scholes. Many of these writers were from working class backgrounds who made more or less successful attempts to become professional writers. Bamford, Ridings and Prince were all from weaving backgrounds, though Prince was a reed-maker rather than an actual weaver. (54). Scholes was a journeyman felt-hatter, and Procter was a barber. Others were from more literary backgrounds: Swain was a lithographer, Rogerson and Falkner were editors and publishers. Falkner edited Bradshaw's Journal in Manchester between 1841 and 1843, and encouraged worker-writers like Prince to submit material.

The social composition of the group is important. There were too many working class members for them to be looked on as curiosities by the middle class members, in that way that Waugh came to be regarded as the 'stage Lancastrian' by the Manchester Literary Club. There is some evidence that the initiative to set up a writers' group came from one of the working class members, the silk weaver Elijah Ridings. In his preface to the 1844 edition of The Village Muse he says:

It may not be amiss to remark, in consequence of the interest which the Poets of Lancashire have created, that their two first meetings were held at my house; and that I, by circular, invited them to spend a comfortable evening together, which they did, in a manner highly creditable to both host and his congenial company. (55)

Attempts were made in 1841 to turn the group into a more formal organisation. A prospectus for a "Lancashire Literary Association" was issued in July 1841 with the signatures of Prince, Rogerson and Charles Richardson. It was partly an attempt to rebut charges that Lancashire was devoid of any literary talent, and also an effort to

support and help publish less well-known writers:

Many authors, though possessed of much latent talent, have perished in obscurity, or their powers have only been known in their own immediate locality, through the want of facilities which a society such as the one now established will afford; and as the various trades and professions unite for the furtherance of their interests, so may those of literary pursuits meet for the purpose of advancing the interests and adding to the welfare of each other.

... One main object of the association is to show that our county possesses in itself resources which will enable it to stand comparison with any other.
(56)

The subscription was high: two shillings per month, or ten shillings and six pence per annum, for ordinary members. The required finance was not forthcoming; it is difficult to imagine Prince himself being able to afford the cost of membership. Lithgow, in his biography of Prince, refers to the 'miserable circumstances' in which he was living at this time. Indeed, in the following year, 1842, Prince moved to Blackburn to try to improve his income.

The appeal quoted above is in itself important. The allusion to trade union organization in the first paragraph is notable, bearing in mind it was written just a year before the Chartist General Strike in Lancashire. This would not have endeared the project to middle class writers, who could probably find their own publishing outlets without too much difficulty in any case. The emphasis is clearly on supporting unknown local writers both in practical terms and also by providing a congenial meeting place where work could be discussed in a friendly and informal way. As such, the project has much in common with present-day worker writer groups. Another important aspect of the appeal is its regional perspective: Lancashire, rather than Manchester, was the catchment area, and the aim was to project a definitely regional, Lancashire literature. Clearly, dialect writing would have a respected part to play in this.

The fact that the Association did not get off the ground seems unimportant; the Poets' Corner appears to have continued to function informally. 'Poetic festivals' were held, quarterly meetings took place with an elected chairman, but the great strength of Poet's corner continued to be the informal get-togethers. Lithgow quotes Falkner's description of the group's activities:

In addition to the quarterly soirees already alluded to, frequent irregular social meetings took place at "The Sun Inn", at which assembled a circle of authors, rhymesters, literary-amateurs, press-men, theatricals and critics, who often kept up the round of talk, recitation and song, to the small hours. (57)

At one of the formal 'soirees' on 24th March 1842, specially-commissioned poems were recited and later published as The Festive Wreath which contains the essence of the Poets' Corner writings. (58)

Alexander Wilson contributed a song on the group itself, to the tune of "Paddy Whack". It is a humorous description of individual members of the group:

The Sun is a school where the wit or the fool
May improve him by rule, both by night and by morn;
Lit up by a Bamford, the radical gaslight,
Whose flame will shed lustre on ages unborn.
There's Elija the Bellman, who self-taught and well, man,
I'm happy to tell, man, hath courted the muse;
He'll quote and recite, for a day and a night, man,
From "Tim Bobbin", or Shakespeare, at "Owd Willy Booth's"

Chorus:

Then fill up a thumper, a classical bumper,
To tragedy, a comedy, Byron and Burns;
To Milton and Moore, to their genius and lore,
To the ever-green laurels entwining their urns! (59)

Other contributions were more serious in tone, though Elijah Ridings contributed one of his very few dialect pieces, which is anything but serious. "Ale Versus Phisic", about the healing properties of 'Willy Booth's ale'. (60) This is the same Booth mentioned in Wilson's song, and refers to the landlord of The Three

Crowns Tavern, Newton Heath, where Ridings was a regular customer. Other contributions to the book came from Swain, Rogerson, Robert Rose (a creole, known as "The Bard of Colour"), Prince, George Richardson, Scholes, Procter (using the pseudonym of "Sylvan"), Isabella Varley (otherwise known as "Mrs G. Linnaeus Banks"), Isabella Caulton and others.

John Critchley Prince

The central figure in Poets' Corner was John Critchley Prince. In an editorial in Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly many years after Prince's death, Allen Clarke expressed surprise that he never wrote anything in dialect and certainly he was not alone among dialect writers in regarding him as one of Lancashire's greatest writers. Sam Hill called him "this sweetest of all Lancashire singers", (61) and helped raise interest in Prince which led to a memorial portrait being commissioned in 1902 which was donated to Hyde Free Library. Prince clearly had an important place in the Lancashire working class literature tradition, although he never wrote in dialect. Brian Maidment and Stewart Crehan (62) have made a useful recent study of Prince which goes some way towards assessing his importance in this tradition. At the centre of the argument is Prince's political stance; he was writing at the high point of Chartism and could not avoid taking sides. Though he numbered some Chartists among his friends, including the weaver-poet Charles Davlin of Bolton, he was opposed to O'Connor's incendiary style. Crehan quotes part of a letter from Prince to Davlin which he condemns both Socialism (of the Owenite variety) and Chartism as "low things", and "false doctrines and theories". (63) The upholders of these doctrines are described as "restless and desperate banditti", and "ignorant, intolerant and ungenerous". However, Crehan fails to add that Prince qualified the latter description by drawing a distinction between Chartists and Socialists: following the 'banditti' comment he adds:

This remark will apply better to the Chartists than the Socialists; the latter being an intelligent and knowledge - seeking body of men, while the former are ignorant, intolerant, and ungenerous, and in no way disposed to be different in mind and action.

Far from Prince being opposed to reform as such, he sees the tactics employed by O'Connor as being counter-productive. In the same letter he adds:

I must confess that Mr. Fergus O'Connor and others of the same stamp have retarded the cause of reform fifty years at least; they are the very worst enemies of the people. When I write in this way of the Chartists I do not mean individually, but as a body. I have met with many of a very superior character amongst them, yourself amongst the number. You will never rise as you deserve till you take a broader and less exclusive political creed.(64)

I would suggest that Prince is attacking Chartism from within a radical frame of reference with which he identified. His own social circle included several Chartists like Charles Davlin, Elijah Ridings (who had been at Peterloo and adopted the mantle of being an old radical campaigner), as well as middle class Tory radicals like Richard Oastler and Christian Socialists like J. Minter Morgan. Prince's own class position was uncertain. In his job as a reed-maker he was distanced from factory workers and relatively isolated; his main contacts would be with hand-loom weavers, purchasing reeds for their looms. However, it is Prince's social milieu which is crucial for an understanding of his politics, and this, based on the 'Poets' Corner' group, was that of a radical literary coterie, with a significantly large working class element. Most of the workers had, admittedly, left their trades to attempt a precarious living as writers. They did so in many cases though as writers 'serving the people'. Brian Maidment makes the point in discussing the fourth (cheap) edition of Prince's Hours With the Muses, published in 1847. Maidment identifies a move away from the middle-class patronage of earlier editions towards reaching out to a working class readership:

Nearly all the poems contained in the volume were written for, and addressed to, the humble and industrious classes: but the price of the former impressions being beyond their means of purchase, a neat edition for the people has been projected and ventured upon at a large cost, and at the smallest remunerative price.(65)

This is a problem which many working class writers today will be familiar with: the contradictions of writing for a readership who cannot afford or have access to what you are writing. Prince established his literary standing through a middle class patronage whilst attempting to 'elevate' the working class; one section of Hours With the Muses is entitled "Lyrics For The People". He addresses one of his early patrons, J.P. Westhead, MP for York, in the following terms:

A kind advisor thou has been to me,
Leaving me still in thought and action free;
Oh! let me thank thee for such just regard
For I believe that thy superior aim
Is but to raise to comfort and to fame
A long distressed, but now aspiring bard.(66)

Martha Vicinus, describing this piece and Prince's situation as a writer, generalises the problems faced by a working class writer with middle class patronage:

Elevated by a wealthy sponsor, the poet usually felt he had to represent himself and his beliefs in the best possible light both to those above and below him. (67)

However, this balancing act, particularly at a time of acute political conflict, can only last so long. Prince was forced, in his early work, to re-write "some passages... in which the forms of expression adopted might warrant an interpretation far different from that which intended".(68) As Maidment comments, the essential position of working class writers like Prince is one of uncertainty. (69) Eventually, as indicated in the preface to the fourth edition given above, Prince opts for a more engaged relationship with his working class readership, selling his works on the doorstep and factory gate. He died in poverty, needless to say.

I have focussed on Prince's social and political position, in an attempt to situate his work within this study. It may be possible now to understand why he wrote in standard English and avoided dialect. Describing Prince's poem "Death of A Factory

Child", Brian Maidment pin-points a key weakness of much working class poetry in the 1840s:

Dislocated from the language and popular literary forms of his own class by his literary aspirations, the working class poet finds that the available conventional literary modes of established poets only rob his work of its distinctive voice and its individual way of seeing. (70)

There are problems here, though, and the form is not reducible to the immediate practical need of pleasing middle class sponsors. Much Chartist poetry is written in a similar, romantic form. Chartist working class poets could not be accused of trying to please a middle class literary establishment? I would argue that the process by which Prince and others like him adopt the forms of romantic dissent are more unconscious; to have written in any other form would have been difficult for a working class writer wanting to produce 'serious' literature, whether for a middle class patron or The Northern Star. Though Prince was familiar with dialect writing, through his friendship with the Wilsons, Bamford and Ridings, his likely attitude towards dialect writing would be that, however pleasing, it was not 'real' literature. The achievement of Edwin Waugh in the next decade was to elevate dialect literature to such a 'higher' level.

Despite his adoption of middle class literary forms, Prince was immensely popular in Lancashire during his lifetime, and after. What did working class people find attractive in his writing? For all his criticisms of Chartism, he was a great democratic poet, and poems like "Song of Freedom" demonstrate this:

Oh, Isle of my Fathers, fair Queen of the Sea!
Men call thee the land of the fearless and free;
They say thou art first on the records of fame,
They speak of thy glory, not of thy shame!
Despair not my country! for truth is revealed -
Her hands have the fountains of knowledge unsealed!
Thy children shall gather new life from the stream,
Til the pains of the past are forgot as a dream.(71)

Arguably, Prince's use of conventional literary forms brought him greater acceptance amongst the more well read workers than if he had attempted to use dialect - still associated with a more 'coarse' tradition of earthy broadside than 'real' poetry. The very titles of poems, too numerous anyway to quote from, are indicative: "Who Are the Free?", "A Vision of the Future", "A Call to the People", "To the Poles, After Their Subjugation", "The Poor Man's Appeal" and so on. Alongside this democratic content, runs a very strong love of the countryside, echoed in later generations of working class writers, particularly the countryside themes merge:

No more shall haughty Stanedge, bleak and bold,
Clasp him in cloud-ropes, as the steep he scales;
No more Win Hill to his rapt gaze unfold
The quiet beauty of his subject ales;
No more shall Don and Rother, as they flow,
Nor Rivlin, reflecting all that's fair,
Murmur responsive to his joy or woe;
Yet there he reigns! and many a Child of Care,
From Sheffield's crowded glooms, shall seek his spirit there! (72)

The contrast between town and country, so important a theme in dialect literature, is prefigured in Prince. In "Buckton Castle", a historic beauty spot near Stalybridge, he writes:

Ye who in crowded town, o'er toiled, o'er spent,
For bread's sake cling to desk, forge, wheel, and loom,
Come, when the law allows, and let the bent
Of your imprisoned minds have health and room;
So you may gaze upon the free and fair,
Receive fresh vigour from the mountain sod;
So ye may doff the chrysalis of care
In the pure element of mountain air,
And on the wings of thought draw nearer unto God! (73)

The poem is particularly interesting for the phrase "when the law allows", suggesting that both the factory workers, and Prince himself, are aware of the new discipline of factory life. Such a qualification would not have occurred in Waugh or Trafford Clegg writing a generation later; by then the factory system has settled down and industrial discipline was both rigorously enforced and acquiesced to. At the time Prince was

writing the tradition of 'Saint Monday' was still alive, with many factory workers following the traditional domestic workers' pursuit of taking the first day of the working week. Prince is careful to guard himself against middle class accusation that he was encouraging lax discipline, whilst trying to 'uplift' his working class readers to appreciate the joys of the countryside.

Recollections of 'the good old days', so prominent in Waugh, are also found in Prince's writings such as "My Father's Farm": After recalling aspects of his father's farm "each savage glen, each silver nook", we return to present day reality:

Alas! that dear departed time
Of irksome toil but pleasant play,
Of gladsome song, romantic rhyme,
Of dawning thought, of dream sublime-
Has softly slid away!

And now, amid the human waves
Heaving and chasing everywhere, -
I strive with trade's untiring slaves,
Whose spirit gives and craves,
And ask and give my share.

Man must not lie on sunny leas,
Counting the daisies on the sward;
Duties well done must purchase ease!
Love-Labour-Virtue-Truth, tis these
Must bring life's best reward. (74)

Unlike the writer of "Handloom v Powerloom" which we looked at earlier, there is an air of acceptance of the new life, however reluctant. Yet if the values of work, and by implication thrift and self-help, are accepted, the poet still returns to his old surroundings:

But still some intermittent hours
May come, apart from cares and schemes,
When I may thread my native bowers,
Walk 'mong my native heather-flowers,
Drink at my native streams. (75)

In "The Workman's Evening Song", first published in Eliza Cook's Journal in

August 1850, Prince combines a love of the countryside with the pleasures of home - a very early reference to the themes of working class "respectability", and the two main joys of a respectable working man. The setting is an evening, and the sun is going down. Tomorrow morning he will go to work "with willing heart" to perform his "needful share of honest toil". In the meantime, he will enjoy his homely pleasures:

But now I seek that quiet nest,
Shut from the outward world's annoy,
My home, where I am ever blest,
The sanctuary of my joy;
There will my gentle wife with me
Partake the cheerful evening meal, -
Talk with confiding speech and free,
Sweetly and calmly, til I feel
The peace, the bliss her presence brings,
Whilst the bright kettle blithely sings.

After his meal, this somewhat idealised workman will sit down and read 'in some enchanting page', tales, annals and above all poetry. However, on the Sabbath, he shall return to the countryside:

I'll fly to Nature's tranquil breast,
With the same feelings as of old,
And lay me down for thought and rest
In fields of fluctuating gold; (76)

As in the writings of Waugh, there was always a contradiction between the espoused ideals and the personal reality. Prince's home life was never happy, nor did he enjoy the sort of income to even place him in the bracket of working class respectability. He was certainly fond of drinking, at the Sun Inn and elsewhere. This did not stop him from writing "The Happy Change", subtitled "A Temperance Rhyme". It was published in 1856, the same year Waugh had published "Come Whoam To Thi Childer An' Me". The temperance 'movement' was taking off at the time, and there was middle class patronage available for 'suitable' verses aimed at working men. However, I think in both Waugh and Prince's case, there was an

element of guilt in their 'drink' poems - both wanting to reach a higher moral level, through the medium of their writing. The similarities are striking, though the tone of Prince's poem is more didactic: the good wife anxiously awaits the husband asking:

"Oh! will he come?" said Alice Wray,
"He did not once deceive,
And for the dear sake of the past
I will again believe."
So faithful Alice trimmed the hearth,
And made the kettle sing,
Responsive to the cricket's voice
That made the cottage ring.

She waited with a throbbing heart
Until the middle chime,
When William o'er the threshold stepped,
Hours ere his wonted time.
Sober, erect and thoughtful too,
He clasped his joyful wife,
Who deemed that sombre winter eve
The happiest of her life.

The husband has 'seen the light' and forsworn "the cup of deadly ill". They sit down with zest to eat the 'frugal meal' his wife has prepared, and then:

With reverent hands he opened the page
He had not touched for years,
And read and wept, but found at last
Hope, comfort, in his tears. (77)

The themes are remarkably similar to Waugh's famous dialect poem. For all Waugh's sentimentality, his poem succeeds as being more true to life, and less contrived, by its use of dialect. Prince's version has an overt 'conversion' scene, whereas in Waugh the husband's reformation is more implicit. Use of the dialect renders the scene more imaginable, particularly as it is rendered in the first person, rather than from the viewpoint of a narrator in Prince's case, using standard English.

In this section I am more concerned to bring out Prince's influence on future dialect literature than to summarise his work as a whole. Clearly there are important similarities of subject matter and handling of that material with the writings of Waugh.

However, Waugh's generation laid less emphasis on democratic themes (though they are present) and laid more stress on the home, the countryside, and nostalgia for the past. It is important to establish what Prince's connections were with the 'classic generation' of dialect poets on a personal level, if Prince's precise role as a forerunner of the Lancashire dialect literature is to be established.

Lithgow records that at Prince's funeral, amongst the mourners were Edwin Waugh, Ben Brierley, Elijah Ridings, Richard Rome Bealey (the Bury dialect poet), Charles Hardwick (publisher of Country Words, which included much dialect material) and Samuel Laycock.(78) As we shall see later, Waugh, Brierley and Laycock were the corner stones of dialect literature. The fact that they and several other dialect writers were present at his funeral is suggestive of his influence.

It is less easy to identify the personal connections between Prince and the above dialect writers when he was living. Sam Hill records the friendship between Waugh and Prince, and Lithgow notes that they both contributed to The City Muse, published in 1852. (79) He also records a letter Prince sent to Bealey on 10th May 1864 asking for money in return for some poems which he would send on. Lithgow describes Waugh as "Prince's appreciative friend" and quotes a short letter from Waugh to the author where Prince's tragic life is described, and suggests a fairly close relationship between the two writers.(80)

Ben Brierley met Prince on only two or three occasions: in Stalybridge, at a supper-reading in aid of local poet Thomas Kenworthy, and at a dinner in honour of Prince at Lower Broughton. On the latter occasion, which was shortly before Prince's death, Brierley recited Prince's well-known and popular poem "To A Brother Bard". Brierley records that, when he had finished, Prince asked him, in all seriousness, who had written it!(81)

Although Samuel Laycock lived near to Prince, in the Stalybridge-Hyde district, I have not been able to trace any direct links other than his attendance at the funeral, and this piece which he composed for the event:

Farewell, thou gifted singer! thy sweet songs
Have charmed the ears of thousands in our land:
Now thou art gone, we feel we have lost
One of the greatest of gifted band (etc.) (82)

Prince remained popular amongst dialect writers well after his death. I have quoted Allen Clarke and Sam Hill's admiring comments. Further tributes from twentieth century writers include those of James Leigh, the Hyde poet. Leigh campaigned, successfully, to win greater recognition for Prince in his home town. His "Critchley Prince" was part of that campaign:

Aw seed those lines o'thine owd friend,
On poor John Critchley Prince;
An' as aw read 'em, line bi line,
They fairly made me wince
To think that i'mi native teawn,
Weer Prince ran eaut his race,
No fittin' tribute has been raised
To mark his restin' place.(83)

The person to whom the poem is addressed is almost certainly Hill, who wrote "Lines Written At the Foot of the Grave of John Critchley Prince" (May 2nd 1896), part of which reads:

It's thirty year next Tuesday, John,
Sin' theau were claim'd by th'greawnd,
Un' th'mon 'ut's fit to wear thi shoon
To me remains unfeawnd
For tho' thy earthly tenement
Lies 'neath the wilent clay,
Theau's laft a name behind thee, John,
'Ut winna fade away. (84)

In his editorial, recording the unveiling of the memorial portrait of Prince in Hyde Library, Clarke describes him as "a poet of the whom the North may be proud". (75)

Yet there is a further side of Prince, apart from his standard English, which cuts him off from the mainstream of Lancashire working class literature. Though he lived in Lancashire and Cheshire all of his life (apart from brief episodes abroad), he is less recognisably regional in his subject matter than either Waugh or Laycock. Whereas Waugh, in his 'nature poems', is at great pains to bring in local names and places, this is much less common in Prince. Although Prince clearly shared the aspirations of the still-born 'Lancashire Literary Association' to put the county's literature on the map, this was based on producing writing which would have a national appeal. In his efforts to be acceptable to the literary establishment, not only did he avoid use of working class forms of speech, but also seems to have been at pains to avoid accusations of 'provincialism'.

Despite these two qualifications, Prince's central importance to the Lancashire Dialect Tradition should now be clearer. He wrote as a working man, covering themes which had wide appeal for working class readers: the struggle for freedom and democracy, love of the home life, countryside and nature. Through work that appeared in popular magazines, as well as the late cheap editions of his books of poetry, he reached a wide working class audience, at least in Lancashire. His influence on younger working class writers is of major importance, both in showing that a working class poet can 'make it' as a writer, despite all the qualifications and contradictions that went with it and in setting out a range of themes for working class writers to take up and develop. Though he perhaps did not set out to be a 'Lancashire working class writer', this was how he was interpreted by later generations.

In the next chapter I shall argue that the work of Waugh, Laycock, Brierley and others using dialect, was based on a mastery of standard English form and a confidence in being able to progress from there to experiment in using dialect in 'serious' literature. In a sense, Prince marks the culmination of the tradition of self-educated working class poets who tried to make good on the terms set by the middle

class literary establishment. At the same time, working class radicalism in the period up to at least 1850, had a 'universalist' message which dialect could only conflict with. With the demise of Chartism, working class radicalism becomes more diffuse, and more localised. Locality and region become much more important, and eventually a concern over municipal politics overtakes interest in wider international questions. This does need qualification though: throughout the century British politics included major conflicts over international questions, and in the 1880s this was reflected in the writings of dialect poets like Laycock. Writers following after Prince were able to start from where Prince left off, and develop a literature which spoke to a working class readership in their own form of speech, instead of carrying a message in a less familiar form. Not only was this speech to an extent more 'natural', it helped to bolster a growing regional consciousness and pride. The question of middle class patronage remained a difficulty for writers like Waugh, however. We shall, bearing in mind the uncertainties in Prince's life and writing as a result of patronage, consider the effects of patronage on Waugh and Brierley in the next chapter.

Literary Influences Outside Lancashire

The influence of Robert Burns, and also Robert Tannahill, is significant in the development of Lancashire dialect literature. Waugh himself liked to be regarded as 'The Lancashire Burns', and Vicinus highlights the influence of Burns on Waugh and others like him:

Dialect might have remained limited to the comic dialogue and popular song in England but for Robert Burns (1759-96). Combining realism and romanticism he became the single most important influence on nineteenth century English dialect writers. In his public life and works he represented all a self-educated poet might become. The handsome ex-ploughboy's literary and social success was also handy evidence for the well-to-do that the talented poor would be recognised. (85)

Towards the end of Waugh's creative period, Spencer J. Hall, a middle-class

philanthropist and antiquarian from Burnley, wrote to him:

You and your confreres (have) done for Lancashire what Burns and Hogg (have) done for the Lowlands of Scotland - you (have) immortalised a dialect and made it classical.(86)

In Milner's introduction to Waugh's Lancashire Sketches, he compares Waugh with other dialect writers including Tannahill, Burns and William Barnes, the Dorset poet:

In speaking of Waugh it is natural to think of Burns and ask in what relation they stand to each other... Burns, by his fiery passion and wide sympathies both with man and the brute creatures, compelled, not Scotland only, but all English-speaking people to accept his Doric verses as their own. Waugh, of course, has neither accomplished nor attempted anything so ambitious; but he has made himself the poet of Lancashire, and, consequently, of no small or unimportant section of England.(87)

Waugh left little evidence of his early literary tastes. Milner quotes from a reminiscence of Waugh called "An Old Man's Memories" in which he mentions some of the books his father bequeathed him - Bunyan, Wesley, Foxe's Book of Martyrs and several other religious works, but no mention of Burns. Milner adds that Anderson's Cumberland Ballads were a further major influence, and also that he "knew well his Shakespeare and his Milton, the Border Ballads, and Robert Burns".

Ben Brierley records his early debt to Burns in his Home Memories:

I had begun to take solitary walks on summer evenings in company with Burns, and Lord Byron. I could recite all the choice passages in "Childe Harold" and repeat all the more popular songs of the gifted ploughman.(88)

However, the most revealing testimony of Burns' influence on Lancashire working class culture, particularly in the first half of the nineteenth century, is in Bamford's writing. In Early Days he records his first encounter with Burns, as a young warehouseman working in Manchester:

Well now, the poems, and an account of the manner in which this gifted man wore out his life, were before me. And did I not sit down, beside my quiet desk, under the skylight, and read, or rather compress to my very soul, every word of that precious book?

Bamford felt a spiritual comradeship with the Scots poet, who had expressed in poetry what Bamford had been feeling, and urged him on to write:

If these expressed sensations of the noble poet peasant constituted his imperishable wreath, what could these next pressed but somewhat identical feelings of mine be, save poetry without form - a spirit without the body. What then, methought, if I tried to throw them into form? What if I dared an essay to give them utterance in verse? Burns theet looked kindly - or so I dreamed - and with a sweet strong voice said encouragingly, "Try mon, and fear not." (89)

Not only did Bamford attempt to emulate Burns' poetry, he also took on his life style as well, later remarking that he made 'a too faint distinction between his genius and his failings'!

Some of Bamford's first attempts at poetry were written in dialect, and he describes the reception meted out to one of his early productions, describing a trip to Oldham. The last stanza clearly shows the influence of Burns:

An' neaw yon meawntune hee and far,
Curtain'd the god o' day;
Gone to the west his feyery car,
As sunk his blazin ray,
Wi evening mild, we tripp'd the plain,
An' merrily hied us whom again.(90)

It was presented to the editor of The Manchester Gazette, who was less than enthusiastic. Bamford pleads with the editor for at least a hint of encouragement, an opinion 'as to its merits'. The only reply was that it had not merits, and at that, the interview terminated. The young poet returned home disconsolate, blaming the editor for being "no Solomon after all" and for being "testy and out of humour". Further justification he gives for his rejection was that the poem was "written in a rude

dialect". From then on, as we have seen, little of Bamford's poetry is written in dialect. A reaction to this early chastisement?

Clearly Burns is an important figure in the origins of dialect literature - for his use of dialect in a 'serious' way, and also because of his class background. However, Bamford's qualified use of dialect under Burns' influence apart, there is a very long gap between Burns' death and the emergence of Lancashire dialect literature. As such the influence of Burns and others like him, including Tannahill and Hogg, and Barnes to a lesser degree, should not be underestimated. Equally important, if not more so, was the indigenous tradition of broadsheet songs, the dialect work of John Collier and the standard English poetry of John Critchley Prince. The subject of the next chapter will be how these influences combined at a specific period - the 1850s - to produce a popular Lancashire dialect literature.

Conclusion

This period in which Lancashire dialect literature originated, between 1746 and 1850, was a time of enormous social, industrial, and political change. Dialect was used as a representation of a rural form of speech in danger, at least so it was perceived, of disappearing. It is used to represent the opinions of the 'ordinary' Lancashire man, represented usually in the shape of the hand-loom weaver. It is used in occasional pamphlets, humorous poetry (or doggerel), and in broadside ballads. It lacks acceptance as a suitable form for literature, despite growing interest in the work of Burns. The universalist, democratic message of radical political movements such as Chartism has little room for the usually less-than-serious, localised dialect poetry which was current at the time. It is notable that Samuel Bamford, one of the leading radical figures in early nineteenth century Lancashire radicalism, used standard English for his 'serious', political, poetry, but resorted to dialect for his more flippant, or satirical pieces. John Critchley Prince, perhaps Lancashire's most acclaimed working class poet in this

period, avoided use of dialect altogether - reflecting his desire for acceptance as a 'serious' poet. This highly qualified use of dialect, in which its writers saw it as inappropriate for 'serious' subjects, remained a feature throughout much of the century, as we shall see in later chapters.

The role of John Collier in this period is important for the future development of dialect: the fact he was 'first' being crucial. He provided a bench-mark for future writers, many of whom rejected both his form of dialect, which was largely unreadable, and also his 'vulgar' use of dialect. For all that, it was 'Tim Bobbin' who inspired the creation of the Lancashire Authors' Association in 1909, when all the major figures in dialect literature met in Rochdale to honour his bi-centenary. He is constantly referred in dialect literature throughout the nineteenth century.

The ballad tradition was at its height during this period, and some dialect ballads were produced, and have survived in collections in Lancashire and further afield. However, it should be said that dialect was not the most common form used: standard English was the norm. There were still no established conventions of dialect orthography, and a dialect ballad from Oldham may well have been unreadable to people in neighbouring towns, as well as among some local inhabitants. It should be remembered throughout this work that people wrote to be read, and usually to make some form of living out of it. It follows that ballad-writers and poets would not have deliberately gone out of their way to restrict their audience. A mass audience for dialect writing only really takes off in the 1850s, and an important outlet for the dialect writer was through 'penny broadsheets'.

If we should be careful about making too big a claim for the importance of dialect in this period, it is important to note the number of imitators of Tim Bobbin, and the often very radical nature of their work. Writers like 'Tim Bobbin 2nd' were already using dialect in a political way: as representing the 'authentic' voice of the

Lancashire working man. In this case, the politics were Jacobin; in later years dialect would be used to support politics from right-wing conservatism to left-wing socialism, and feminism. What they all had in common was an attempt to give local legitimacy to the expressed views, in contrast to the 'outsider' speaking standard English.

This early period saw the development of informal networks of writers, notably the 'Poets' Corner' group at Manchester's Sun Inn. These networks helped to give working class writers confidence in their ability, and provided mutual support. However, we already see the beginnings of middle class patronage emerging through the Manchester group, with a substantial number of 'literary gentlemen' in its membership. At this stage, the subject matter of dialect remained very loose, with a range of subject themes addressed. As the dialect movement developed in the 1850s these themes narrowed considerably, and a more precise dialect orthography emerged, based on the work of Edwin Waugh, Ben Brierley, and Samuel Laycock. The next chapter considers their work in some detail, and addresses the issues raised by middle class sponsorship.

Notes

1. See Chapter 1 pp 10-15.
2. Edwin Waugh Collected Works, 11 volumes, Manchester 1881; Thomas Newbigging Sketches and Tales, chapter on "The Larks of Dean" London 1883 pp 88-98.
3. Samuel Compston "The Deighn Layrocks" Rossendale Free Press and quoted in Roger Elbourne Music and Tradition in Early Nineteenth Century Lancashire Woodbridge 1980.
4. James Higson Historical and Descriptive Notes of Droylsden, Droylsden 1859. pp.65-6.
5. J. Harland and T. T. Wilkinson Ballads and Songs of Lancashire London 1875 p.148.
6. Harland and Wilkinson, op.cit. p.147 The earliest recorded piece of dialect writing is the anonymous "Warikin Fair" written in the late sixteenth century.
7. Samuel Bamford Walks in South Lancashire, Blackley 1844 p.13.
8. Bamford op. cit p.169.
9. There is a considerable literature on ballads - see Martha Vincinus The Industrial Muse London 1974; A. L. Lloyd Folk Song in England London 1967. For a late nineteenth century view, W. Tomlinson's "A Bunch of Street Ballads" in Manchester Quarterly Vol V 1886 is of interest. Patrick Joyce Visions of the People, Cambridge 1991, also has a useful chapter on ballads, although he tends to over-estimate of amount of dialect ballads produced.
10. Lloyd op.cit., Panther edition, 1969, pp.41-2.
11. Re-published many times, eg Harland and Wilkinson op. cit p.188
12. Harland and Wilkinson op.cit p.193. Sung by Harry Boardman on Deep Lancashire Topic Records, London 1968.
13. ibid p.162.
14. ibid pp.169.
15. Martha Vicinus The Industrial Muse London 1974 p.51.
16. Harland and Wilkinson op. cit. p.174.
17. Herbert Kirtlan "Literary Gleanings" in The Record September 1953 p.7.
18. John Collier ('Tim Bobbin') View of the Lancashire Dialect. References are to the 1818 (London) edition of The Miscellaneous Works of Tim Bobbin edited by Richard Townley. For recent biographical information on John Collier, see Jean and Peter Bond, Tim Bobbin Lives!, Milnrow, 1986, and catalogue to exhibition of Collier's paintings and cartoons, Rochdale 1980.
19. Elijah Ridings The Works of Tim Bobbin Manchester 1862.

20. Samuel Bamford Bamford's Tim Bobbin Manchester 1850 p. xvii. Solomon Partington, who spent many years in Middleton as a journalist on the Middleton Guardian, adds supportive comments to Bamford's views in Romance of the Dialect Middleton 1920.
21. See the anonymous "Tim Bobbin's Grave" in May Yates (ed.) A Lancashire Anthology Liverpool 1923 p.10. Yates quotes the poem from Samuel Hill's Old Lancashire Songs and their Singers Stalybridge 1906.
22. In G. H. Whittaker A Lancashire Garland of Dialect Prose and Verse Stalybridge 1936 p.14.
23. Ben Brierley Spring Blossoms and Autumn Leaves Manchester 1893 p.118.
24. In Whittaker op.cit pp.193-4.
25. Edwin Waugh Lancashire Sketches Vol. 1 no date - c.1892 Manchester First published in 1857.
26. Waugh op. cit. pp.44-5.
27. This version is taken from Bamford's Tim Bobbin op.cit. p.v.
28. Respectively published in Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Annual1911 and as a pamphlet, Blackpool 1911.
29. Robert Walker ('Tim Bobbin 2nd') Plebeian Politics Chester 1801.
30. Walker, op.cit. preface.
31. Solomon Partington published Romance of the Dialect in 1920 and The Future of Old English Words in 1917, both in Middleton.
32. Another 'Bobbin' was 'Paul Bobbin', James Butterworth, writing slightly later in the 1820s.
33. Samuel Bamford Passages in the Life of a Radical was first published in weekly instalments between 1839 and 1841. His Early Days was published later, in 1849; later the two works were published together, including the Dunckley edition (London 1893). For recent biographical information see Morris Garratt Samuel Bamford: Portrait of a Radical Littleborough 1992, and Martin Hewitt "Radicalism and the Victorian Working Class: The Case of Samuel Bamford" in Historical Journal Volume 34 No.4 1991.
34. Samuel Bamford Homely Rhymes, Poems and Reminiscences Manchester 1864 pp.195-6.
35. *ibid* p.181. Sung by Harry Boardman on Owdham Edge Topic Records, London 1970.
36. *ibid* p.147.
37. *ibid* p.216.
38. *ibid* p.241.

39. Garratt op.cit p.37.
40. in Yates (ed.) op.cit pp.34-6.
41. John Harland "Local Descriptive Songs", in Manchester Guardian January 25 1840. Later published in in Harland (ed.) Songs the Wilsons London 1866.
42. In Harland (ed) 1866 op.cit p.12.
43. ibid p.21.
44. Samuel Hill Old Lancashire Songs and Their Singers Stalybridge 1906 p.10.
45. Harland ed. op.cit p.26.
46. ibid. p.35.
47. ibid. p.43.
48. Hill op. cit. p.13.
49. Harland ed. op.cit p.50.
50. Waugh op.cit. pp.63-4.
51. Thomas Brierley The Countrified Pieces of Thomas Brierley Oldham 1894.
52. Samuel Bamford Early Days in 1893 edition p. 108. Volume 1.
53. Harland (ed.) op.cit p.61. Sung by Harry Boardman on Steam Ballads, Broadside Records, Wolverhampton 1977.
54. See R.A.D. Lithgow The Life of John Critchley Prince Manchester 1880, and Edmund Frow Elijah Ridings: Weaver, Radical and Poet Eccles 1976.
55. Elijah Ridings The Village Muse; the 1844 Preface was reprinted in the 1850 edition, from which the quote is taken, p.9.
56. Quoted in R.W. Procter Memorials of Bygone Manchester Manchester 1880 pp.179-180.
57. Lithgow op.cit p.125.
58. The Festive Wreath W. Reid (ed), Manchester 1842.
59. ibid, reproduced in Harland (ed.) op.cit p.68.
60. Elijah Ridings The Village Muse 3rd ed. Macclesfield 1850 p.414; Sung by Mike Harding on Deep Lancashire op.cit.
61. Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly May 23 1901 and Hill op.cit. p.39.
62. Brian Maidment and Stewart Crehan John Critchley Prince and the Death of the Factory Child Manchester 1981.
63. ibid. p.7.
64. Lithgow op.cit p.114.

65. Maidment and Crehan op.cit. p.8.
66. Quoted in Vicinus op.cit p.172.
67. ibid. p.132.
68. ibid. p.8.
69. Maidment and Crehan op.cit p.9.
70. ibid p.9.
71. R.A.D. Lithgow The Poems of John Critchley Prince Manchester 1880 Volume 1 p.58.
72. ibid p.19.
73. ibid p.16.
74. ibid p.47.
75. ibid p.49.
76. ibid p.60.
77. ibid p.61
78. Lithgow (Biography) op.cit p.271.
79. Hill op.cit p.39.
80. Lithgow (Biography) op.cit p. 271
81. Ben Brierley Home Memories and Recollections of a Life Manchester no date, c 1886, p.72.
82. Samuel Laycock Warblins' Fro' An' Owd Songster, Oldham 1893 p.271
83. James Leigh Gleams of Sunshine Hyde 1904 p.167.
84. Samuel Hill Foirewood - Splinters An' Shavins' Fro' a Carpenter's Bench Stalybridge 1902 p.236.
85. Vicinus op.cit p.189.
86. In Edwin Waugh's Commonplace Book, Manchester Reference Library.
87. George Milner "Introduction" to Waugh's Lancashire Sketches op.cit Vol. 1, p. xvii-xviii.
88. Brierley op. cit. p.31.
89. Bamford Early Days 1893 edition op. cit p.236.
90. ibid. p.244.

Chapter 3: The Classic Generation of Dialect Writers

The period between the mid-1850s and the 1890s saw the emergence of a group of dialect writers which established the 'classic tradition' to which later generations looked back on with varying degrees of reverence. The 'Big Three' writers of this period were Edwin Waugh, Ben Brierley, and Samuel Laycock. The work of each will be examined in some detail, together with other writers from the same period.

The 1850s mark a watershed in the history of dialect literature, when several key developments take place. Firstly, dialect writing became immensely popular: the 1850s were the years when dialect writing really 'took off' as a popular form. From the mid-1850s several publishers in Manchester and the surrounding cotton towns were producing dialect sketches and poetry, and several newspapers and journals of radically differing character were including dialect. The second point is that this 'take off' was only possible through energetic middle class sponsorship, which had been absent from earlier writers. The only possible exception among early writers was John Critchley Prince, though the patronage he received was half-hearted at best. The third observation to be made is the marked change of subject matter. Dialect writers became much more concerned with 'Victorian values' such as the virtues of family life, temperance, thrift, and love of nature and the countryside. Contentious issues such as poverty, bad housing and poor working conditions seldom appear in the work of 'popular' dialect poets, though some writers less acclaimed by the middle class did take up such 'difficult' issues. The fourth point is that the orthography of dialect becomes standardised, largely through Waugh's work. In regard to both subject matter and form, Waugh built up a dialect literary tradition between the early 1850s and the late 1880s. While this thesis is not primarily concerned with linguistic matters, Waugh's standardisation of dialect literary form was an important development and should be contrasted with previous 'phonetic' renderings of dialect speech. This was an important precondition for using dialect in literary form, although it should be said that there was

never a total acceptance of the relative standardisation Waugh and his friends introduced; differences tended to reflect the genuine variations in dialect within different parts of Lancashire.

In this chapter I will look at these aspects of dialect literature during the period from the 1850s to approximately 1890. The work of key writers in this period, such as Waugh, Brierley, Laycock, Ramsbottom and Staton will be examined to bring out the central themes of dialect literature at the time of its early popularity, and aspects of middle class support will be examined. Some of the questions posed in the chapter include: Why did dialect literature find a mass readership from the mid-1850s, and who was it appealing to? What were the consequences of middle class patronage? What light does the work of these writers shed on debates over mid-Victorian reformism and working class 'respectability'?

The Take-Off Period of Dialect Literature

Edwin Waugh stands out as the central figure in this period, and his success as a dialect writer marks the beginning of the whole dialect literary movement of the 1850s and 1860s. Waugh had written dialect poetry back in the 1840s but it attracted little attention from middle class readers and publishers. Brian Hollingworth has argued(1) that this was largely because of the political content of the poems which would have offended the political and moral sensibilities of the bourgeois reader. The poem which established him as a 'safe' dialect poet was his "Come Whoam To Thi Childer An' Me", published in the Spectator on 17th June 1856. The poem is examined later in this chapter, but essentially it is an invocation by 'the good wife' to her husband to get himself out of the pub and back home, where the joys of domesticity await him. According to Vicinus (2) a publisher produced the poem as a penny card and sold over 20,000 copies within a few days. An undated advertisement makes the telling point: "Every employer in Lancashire should give his work-people the poem "Come Whoam

To Thi Childer An' Me".(3) The following year Edwin Slater made Waugh an offer to publish his Poems and Lancashire Songs, which appeared in 1859; by then he had established himself as 'the laureate of Lancashire'. Miss Angela Burdett-Coutts, the mid-nineteenth century philanthropist, ordered 'some ten or twenty thousand for gratuitous distribution' according to George Milner(4). It was also produced as a broadsheet.

The previous indifference of publishers towards dialect literature changed to eagerness for anything they could get their hands on, and gave other aspiring working class writers like Ben Brierley the opportunity they wanted. Brierley records(5) writing his first successful work - A Day Out; Or A Summer Ramble in Daisy Nook in 1856, during the holiday celebrations over the fall of Sebastopol marking the end of the Crimean War. It was published in Abel Heywood's Manchester Examiner and then reprinted by David Kelly the enterprising Manchester publisher who had previously brought out Waugh's "Come Whoam" on a penny card. Brierley began writing regular sketches for the Manchester Weekly Times(6), and Waugh contributed to the Manchester Examiner.(7) From the early success of Waugh and Brierley in the late 1850s, they were published at frequent intervals in the next three decades.(8) In addition to hard-bound volumes, both writers had their work published in cheap, easily accessible pamphlets by publishers such as John Heywood, and Abel Heywood.(9)

The third central figure in Lancashire dialect writing for this period is Samuel Laycock. He began writing during the Cotton Famine (1861-5) and his first collection, Lancashire Rhymes was published in 1864. Lancashire Songs appeared two years later in 1866, reflecting the success of the previous publication. These were re-issued in 1875 and 1880.

Other writers found that the crisis during the Lancashire Cotton Famine created a market in 'suitable' verse by working class writers. Joseph Ramsbottom brought out

his Phases of Distress: Lancashire Rhymes in 1864 published by John Heywood. His only other published poetry would seem to be the pieces which appeared in the short-lived journal Country Words in 1866/7. William Billington published several broadsheets about the sufferings of cotton workers during the Famine, which were only published in book form in 1883,(10) though they were immensely popular in sheet form in the 1860s. These are examined in detail in Chapter 8.

Richard Rome Bealey brought out his After-Business Jottings in 1865, and became an important, though secondary, member of the literary circle of Lancashire dialect writers which we will examine later.

There is one writer during this period of Lancashire dialect literature who does not fit into the mould of Waugh, Brierley and Laycock. This is James Taylor Staton of Bolton. Staton had been editing and publishing his Bowtun Luminary since 1852. It was a weekly light-hearted review of local events and politics, written entirely in a heavy Bolton dialect. The paper ran until 1862 when it folded due to the effects of the Cotton Famine; he attempted to carry it on as the Lankishire Loominary, published by John Heywood, but this proved a failure within little more than a year. However, many of the dialect sketches which Staton first published in the Bowtun Luminary were re-published as penny sketches by John Heywood.(11) Similar to Staton's Bowtun Luminary was the Rochda Kronikul un Wurkin Man's Lanterun which enjoyed a brief existence during 1852. (See Appendices 5 and 6)

Middle Class Sponsorship

It should be clear from the above that it was a certain type of dialect writing which succeeded. The homely moralizing of Waugh, Brierley and Laycock was acceptable - and even welcomed - by a middle class anxious to 'improve' the working class, or at

least a part of it. Staton's much more radical dialect work was never published on a large scale, though John Heywood was sufficiently attuned to the working class market to publish cheap editions of Staton's work. Similarly, Billington conspicuously failed in his attempts to become a professional writer during the Cotton Famine and again, as we shall see later, his work is much sharper politically than, let us say, Laycock's at this time.

Waugh was adopted, and lionized, by a section of the literary middle class of Manchester, such as the members of the Milton Club and the Shandean(12) who later re-formed as the Manchester Literary Club in 1861. George Milner was probably Waugh's most useful ally and he quotes the following account of Waugh's social circle in Manchester in his introduction to Waugh's Collected Writings, written by John H. Nodal, another middle class member of the group:

The Shandean never numbered more than twelve, among whom were Francis Espinasse, then editor of the Manchester Weekly Advertiser; Edwin Waugh, 'our aboriginal genius'; as Espinasse used to call him; John Stores Smith, author of Mirabeau and Social Aspects; James Cannan, Frank Jesbury, brother of Mrs. Fletcher and Miss Geraldine E. Jewsbury, the novelist; John H. Nodal.. Theophilus Pattison, secretary of the Cobden Testimonial Fund; and Thomas, always called Tom, Henderson... an artist....(13)

The Manchester Literary Club included figures such as Nodal and Espinasse, but broadened out to include some working class writers like Brierley and the ageing Bamford. Unlike the Lancashire Literary Association and the denizens of the Sun Inn of a previous generation, the balance was overwhelmingly middle class. Participants included antiquaries such as Charles Hardwick (editor of Country Words), John Harland and T.T. Wilkinson (joint editors of Ballads and Songs of Lancashire), Charles Swain the poet, and professional writers including Joseph Chatwood and John Page. Dialect writer Richard Rome Bealey was a member, as was W.E.A. Axon who wrote occasionally in dialect. From these beginnings, the club attracted a number of business people who were not themselves writers but liked to be seen 'supporting the arts'.

Dues were 10s a year and membership averaged between fifty and seventy five over the next thirty years.(14) The club's objectives were:

1. To encourage the pursuit of Literature and Art; to promote research in the several departments of intellectual work; to protect the interests of the authors of Lancashire.
2. To publish from time to time works illustrating or elucidating the literature and history of the county.
3. To provide a place for meeting where persons interested in the furtherance of these objects can associate together.(15)

Some of the members, such as John Nodal, were active members of the English Dialect Society and Waugh was later invited to join its ruling Board. However, Waugh remained 'the aboriginal genius' playing up to an idealised self-image of the home-spun working class countryman, wearing his thick tweeds and carrying a heavy, gnarled walking stick.(16)

Waugh became Vice President of the Club in 1876. In the same year a committee of the Club took over the copyright of his writings and effectively made Waugh an employee, on a fixed annual income.(17) At his seventieth birthday celebration on 29th January 1887, most of the notables of Manchester attended the dinner in his honour, marking, in Vicinus' words, the culmination of his career. Certainly, it was the culmination of his acceptance as a 'safe' representative figure of an idealised working class. As George Milner wrote:

Through all his passages of boisterous humour there is never found either immoral taint or sinister suggestion. His books, like his bodily presence and his better self, are conspicuously clean and healthy. (18)

The reference to Waugh's 'better self' suggests that Milner knew a good bit of Waugh's personal failings, which would not have endeared him to some of his admirers! Ben Brierley was a less prominent member of the club, but at a testimonial dinner in 1884, he was eulogised in the following terms:

The poor for whom he has written and striven have received from his life and his writings many a lesson of honesty and frugality and unaffected simplicity which only come with force from Mr. Brierley and such as he... (20)

The social circle in which Waugh and Brierley moved gave them access to publishers, ready to cash in on 'the dialect boom' of the 1860s and 1870s. John Heywood of Manchester was probably the largest publisher of dialect literature in the nineteenth century; Abel Heywood also published a good deal throughout the century including Brierley's works. Alexander Ireland figured to a lesser extent as a publisher of Manchester Literary Club material.

Later in the nineteenth century publishers in the larger Lancashire towns began to bring out dialect works, including W. E. Clegg of Oldham, the Aldine Press in Rochdale, Whittaker in Stalybridge, Pendlebury's in Bolton and Toulmin's in Blackburn. However, for this early period dialect publishing was very largely the monopoly of Manchester.

Manchester thus occupied a distinct position within dialect literature, providing the original base for printing and publishing, as well as a meeting-point for writers. However, Manchester's role is very much that of 'the metropolis'. Very few dialect writers at any time in the nineteenth century actually came from Manchester, or that matter wrote very much about it. When it is written about, it is usually from the perspective of a countryman visiting the big city. It was the 'liberal' middle class of Manchester which helped dialect to 'take off' as a popular form, by giving writers artistic support, and access to publishers. Later, the city's role becomes less crucial, as local publishers in towns like Oldham and Rochdale (above), start to promote dialect. The role of the middle class patrons also becomes less pronounced by the 1890s, although it remains present to a greater or lesser extent well into the twentieth century.

The Subject Matter of the 'Classic' Dialect Writers

Edwin Waugh

Martha Vicinus, in her biography of Waugh, makes the point that Waugh's greatest accomplishment was in:

...widening the range of acceptable subject matter for dialect writing...largely through the influence of Edwin Waugh and Ben Brierley dialect literature was expanded to include almost every common occurrence and event. (21)

Vicinus notes that most dialect writing before Waugh was limited to comedy or satire, which was largely true - though the contribution of the Wilson family, outlined in the previous chapter, should not be ignored. I would certainly agree that dialect writing after Waugh was taken more seriously, and became 'acceptable' to the middle class whereas it had not been previously. Waugh could write 'serious' pieces, such as "Come Whoam To Thi Childer An' Me" using dialect in a non-ironical manner, although he was satirised by other dialect writers for it! (eg Brierley's "Go Tak' Thi Ragged Childer An' Flit" as a take-off of "Come Whoam"). The claim that Waugh and Brierley 'expanded' the range of subject matter has to be treated very carefully though. As far as dialect writing goes this is true; as far as working class writing as a whole is concerned, definitely not. In fact they considerably narrowed the subject matter of working class writing, if one thinks of the range of Prince's work, the Wilsons, Bamford and even the anonymous balladeers. Arguably, they could have been 'responding to the market', though again the question should be asked, which market? Most likely, the price of middle class sponsorship was to take out any elements deemed 'coarse'. Issues such as working conditions, political radicalism, and sex other than the most harmless and innocent allusions, were rigorously excluded from their writing. It should be emphasised that Waugh and Brierley were establishing conventions of both style and subject matter in their writings in the 1860s and the message to other aspiring writers was to tread the same narrow furrow as the big names had. This would lead to middle class support and patronage, providing the writer's message was suitably

moralistic and uncontroversial. Writers who did not follow this course, notably Staton and Billington, never got recognition from the middle class literati despite the literary quality of their work, and their local popularity in Bolton and Blackburn respectively.

Waugh's 'literary world' was that of an artificial rural utopia, set on the moors above Rochdale, populated by independent farmers and handloom-weavers, some time just before the industrial revolution. Vicinus' comment that he portrayed "the Lancashire working man, albeit idealised"(22) seems wide of the mark. He portrayed an idealised figure from the past; the Lancashire industrial worker of the 1860s almost never appears in Waugh's writing. Brian Hollingworth has noted that some of the dialect poetry written by Waugh in the 1840s does deal with factory conditions in a critical way. This is one verse of a poem from Waugh's diary:

Fro' weekend to weekend, fro' mornin to net,
Aw bin rivin un' tearin for clooas an wheyt,
From th'factory to bed, un fro' bed back to work,
My yed's gettin' addle't, my limbs are ur stark
 Ur a poker; bi'th'mon,
 Thea my shap ur to con,
But aw mun hae a bit of a spree (23)

Waugh retreated from this attempt at dealing with contemporary working class life, where the harshness of factory work is only compensated by the occasional 'spree', to an idyllic existence in which factories did not yet exist. Waugh *did* write of one serious contemporary problem, as we shall see: the Lancashire Cotton Famine. However, the the Famine was seen as a temporary aberration, life would get back to normal when the American war was over. The poverty is seen to be caused by an outside agency and it raises no awkward political problems within Lancashire itself.

Vicinus herself identifies one of the central figures in Waugh's writings, who is hardly typical of 'the Lancashire working man' of the 1860s:

Waugh's greatest success was "Besom Ben", a series of stories about a besom

(broom) maker making living on the moors of north Lancashire. Ben's simple life is recounted with loving detail. His one weakness is the ale-house, but a love of "Our Betty", his wife, keeps him out of the way of temptation.(24)

In "Besom Ben And His Donkey", Waugh describes Ben as a typical countryman of Lancashire, working for no master, but making and selling his besoms for the weavers and farmers of the moorland communities. He describes him driving his cart away from a local ale-house with a cheerful expression upon his tanned face that told a pleasant tale of good health and a contented mind.(25)

The other characters in the "Besom Ben Sketches" are ale-house keepers, hand-loom weavers, (who, admittedly, work in a small mill on the moors weaving woollens) and small farmers. Waugh hated the city life of Manchester - "a complete hell of soot and stench" and "the most infernal cluster of inhuman habitations on earth." In a letter dated 10th September 1847 he wrote:

My heart saddened as I saw the moors and fells of Blackstone edge recede and the clangour and corruption of this great sooty city advance upon us. (26)

This sentiment found frequent poetic expression, particularly in "I've Worn My Bits o'Shoon Away":

It's what care I for cities grand -
We never shall agree;
I'd rayther live where th'layrock sings -
A country teawn for me!
A country teawn, where one can meet
Wi friends an' neighbours known;
Where one can lounge i'th'market place,
An' see the meadows mown.

The poem ends with the writer looking out towards the countryside from the edge of the city, resolving to return to his native home :

Last neet I laft the city thrung,
An' climbed yon hillock green;
An' turned my face to th'moorlan' hills,
Wi th'wayter wellin' i' mi e'en;
I'll bundle up an' go,

An' I'll live an' dee i' mi own countrie,
Where the moorlan' breezes blow! (27)

In the Poems and Songs the characters are similar to those found in "Besom Ben": the country joiner, 'Dody o'Joseph's' in "The Grindlestone", the hand-loom weaver in "Tommy Pobs" and in "Jamie's Frolic", the milk-maid of "Yesterneet" and farmer of "My Grondfather Willie". Only two of the poems have any direct bearing on the modern-day Lancashire in which Waugh was living - "The Little Doffer" and "Hard Weather". "Hard Weather" is a comment on the Winter of 1878-79 the time of the big cotton strike. It is written from the standpoint of someone who stands outside major class conflicts and sees ruin coming from the activities of both trade unions and capitalism:

Sich strikes an' rows an' breakages,
There never wur yet known;
Sich frettin' an' sich chettin', an'
Sich bitter starvin' moan;
These knavish pranks i'trusted banks
Are spreadin' ruin round;
An' every hour, the tradin' ranks
Are crashin' to the ground. (28)

His poem "The Little Doffer" is a much more light-hearted piece which became very popular as a song. It is the story of a factory lad going to another mill to get a job after being sacked from his last one. The overlooker questions him about character references before taking him on:

Thou's brought thi character, I guess?"
Says th'lad "Yo're wrang, I doubt:"
Says th'overlooker to th'lad "How's this?"
Says th'lad, "I'm better bowt!"

Said th'overlooker, "I never see
Sich a whelp sin I wur born!
But I'll try what I can to make o'thee;
Come to thi wark to-morn!" (29)

A pleasant, humorous song which showed one aspect of child labour in the mills. Yet Waugh never spoke of the other side - bullying, injuries and deaths, and exploitation. This poem is considered in further detail in Chapter 7, on "Work and Factory Life", in the section on 'child labour'.

Alongside his character sketches of moorland hill-folk are several love poems, none of which would be out of place at a Sunday-School soiree. Poems like "The Dule's I' This Bonnet o'Mine" suggest a pure, innocent sexuality, acceptable to middle class literary tastes; the young girl is trying to get 'dressed up' before meeting 'Jamie' but cannot get her bonnet straight. She speaks to her brother, Mally:

When he took my two honds into his,
Good lord, heaw they trembled between;
An' aw durstn't look up in his face,
Becose on him seein' my e'en;
My cheek went as red as a rose;
There's never a mortal can tell
Heaw happy aw felt; for, tha knows,
Aw couldn't ha' axed him mysel'. (30)

Waugh succeeded in establishing dialect as a 'respectable' form of literature in Lancashire. The middle class saw it as 'morally instructive' and a safe nostalgic form of antiquarianism. Working class people may well have found different messages in his work: an affirmation of regional pride expressed through the characters, however stereotyped and at times anachronistic. It was part of the world of working class 'respectability' alongside the co-op, trade union, friendly society, and burial club. Waugh's writing also provided a sense of continuity from the pre-industrial days of hand-loom weavers to present day life in the factories. A few years after his death, James Haslam, writing in Allen Clarke's Northern Weekly, observed the irony of Waugh's literary work, in a comparative study of Brierley and Waugh:

There is one feature, or lack of feature rather, in these two champions of song and humour. Neither of them did much - Waugh did a little - to help

redress the industrial wrongs which so thickly surrounded them in their day and generation. And neither Waugh nor Brierley is much known beyond the factory walls of Lancashire. (31)

Ben Brierley

Brierley followed directly in the wake of Waugh's success as we have seen, though he is a different writer in a number of respects. He is much more town-based in his subject matter, though his artificial world of 'Treadlepin fold' is a very insular, almost semi-rural world which had not changed for decades. Brierley describes it:

Treadlepin Fold belongs more to the past than the present. Its glories were of the era preceding gas lamps and steam looms; when men groped their way to a livelihood through the smoke of a halfpenny dip; when stories were told round the turf fire; when 'hush' was brewed and whisky distilled in the same cellar... (32)

Many of his tales are light and humorous, possessing little of Waugh's pastoral longings. Haslam noted that 'he was to be found in the gossip taproom of the alehouse, the weaver's kitchen or public street' and would 'pass by rural haunts' in his pursuit of 'Manchester mobs, London crowds and Yankee masses'.

Brierley served for several years as councillor for Harpurhey ward on Manchester City Council, so he had a direct experience of day-to-day politics. He was a classic working class Liberal.

Much of his early writings are based around his youthful experiences in the Failsworth area - then a small handloom weaving village, but the scene of considerable Chartist activity. His father was an active Chartist, and Ben Brierley spent many of his youthful hours on the blacksmith's grind-stone, sharpening the pikes of local Chartists. By his own account, he played a leading role in the 'Big Strike' of 1842 though managing to keep out of the hands of the constabulary.(33) Brierley uses this experience in several stories - "The Battle of Langley Heights", "Race For Liberty" and

"A Strike Adventure", subtitled "Or, the Revolution of Daisy Nook".(34) In each case Chartism is treated as a movement led by demagogues, and supported by well-intentioned but deluded simpletons. In "A Strike Adventure" the local weavers band together and put on a show of mock bravery as they march to meet their comrades:

Scribbit swore "He shouldn't be surprised if Ash'n wur brokkn out i'oppen rebellion, as Stephens wur at th'yead of a new Gover'ment." Owd Siah waved his 'holly twig' as he termed a thick, knotty, 'meet-me-by-moonlight' sort of cudgel that served as a walking stick, or anything else when it was needed; and wondered "what those white livert foo's at Rauf Green ud say when they yerd th'news." Dick Samson was full of 'green flags waving o'er us' marchings of armed processions in victory, and bands playing 'See the Conquering Feargus Comes'. (35)

As in "The Battle of Langley Heights" the insurrection ends in a shambles, and the weavers are soon back at their looms pondering on more peaceable methods of reform. (36)

Although Chartism had been dead less than twenty years when Brierley was writing these stories, there is a feeling that these events all took place long ago and that things had changed and times were much different - and of course, he was correct. By the late 1860s hand-loom weaving had disappeared apart from a few isolated, specialist pockets. Chartism had been replaced by working class Toryism and a Liberalism which occasionally attempted to don the mantle of Chartism, though at pains to disassociate itself from 'physical force'. In his Home Memories, written in the mid-1880s when he was a Liberal councillor, Brierley was at pains to point out that his Chartist father "did not encourage these 'physical forcist' ideas". (37)

In Brierley's work many of the major themes of working class respectability emerge with particular force. In his poem "A Cot O'Yo'r Own" it's an invocation to work hard and save up so that you will have the freedom and independence of owning your own home:

Come lads, lend yo'r ears, an I'll sing you a song
That isno' o'battle an' strife,
But peace an' goodwill between mon an' his kind -
A bond between husband an' wife.
It's be yo'r own mester an' landlord beside,
Feight shy o'bum bailiff an' dun;
Plant yo' vine an' yo'r figtree afore it's too late,
An' live in a cot o' yo'r own. (38)

Brierley's poem should not be taken as an example of 'embourgeoisement' of the working class: the values of "A Cot of Yo'r Own" are very much those of the working class itself, anxious to avoid grasping landlords and money-lenders, and, in the days before old-age pensions, to have money 'put by' for retirement:

Then here's to a mon ut'll strive for the best,
And lay up for owd age while he con,
An' ut ne'er shuts his dur on a shelterless friend,
While he lives in a cot of his own. (39)

Even while the respectable working man is striving to build up a decent home for his family, the suggestion at the end of the poem is that these achievements should have an element of communality about them - "An' ne'er shuts his dur on a shelterless friend"; the suggestion here is not one of 'charity' helping an unknown mass, but supporting friends within the community.

Probably his best known poem was "The Weaver of Welbrook" - a poem which describes a hand-loom weaver but expresses more of Brierley's respectable working class values of the third quarter of the last century:

Yo gentlemen o' wi' yo'r hounds an' yo'r parks,
Yo may gamble an' sport tillyo' dee;
But a quiet heause hook, a good wife, an' a book,
Are more to the likin's o'me. (40)

A distaste for aristocratic pretension combines with a celebration of home, family, hard work and intellectual stimulation. Use of the dialect gives the sentiments an added down-to-earth feeling and pride in a simple working class way of life:

I care no' for titles, nor heauses, nor land,
Owd Jone's a name fittin' for me; (41)

Brierley's paper - Ben Brierley's Journal - ran from 1869 to 1891, and was aimed at a Lancashire working class audience. The paper was sub-titled "A Journal of Literature and Art" and sought to combine dialect writing with 'high culture' to improve the working class. Brierley was elected as councillor for Harpurhey Ward in 1875 and attempted to make the public library service more accessible to working class readers. He succeeded in winning the sort of middle-class recognition which Waugh had achieved earlier. The values Brierley had espoused naturally found favour with a middle class intent on 'educating' the working classes, and at a testimonial dinner held in Manchester, in 1884, he was congratulated in the following terms:

The poor for whom he has written and striven have received from his life and his writings many a lesson in honesty and frugality and unaffected simplicity which only come with force from Mr. Brierley and such as he... (42)

A dialect writer of the following generation, James Haslam, writing in Allen Clarke's Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly, poured scorn on the Manchester middle class at the unveiling of the monument to Brierley in Queen's Park, in 1898:

There were many graceful apologies made for having this trophy erected in praise of the name and the work of lowly Ben. Had he been a self-made manufacturer of fickle fabrics and deluded the people by endless bumptious prate and prattle they would perhaps have graced his great conscientious memory with a sumptuous marble monument.

Haslam suggests that Brierley wrote for working class people, and never found the financial reward that other, less popular, writers had got. Whilst the middle class could laud the moralistic sentiment they were not prepared to support Brierley in his attempts at making a living. On the other hand, the people for whom and of whom he wrote, were not in a financial position to buy expensive gilt-edged editions, but had to make do with penny pamphlets:

Perhaps it is because Brierley devoted his abilities to the comforting of the poor that the big people of the north accompany their praises of him with excuses. But then it is not their place to glorify him. They have no right to claim him. Ben Brierley lived for the poor people, laboured for the poor people, and it's the poor people who should crown his career with the diadem of renown.

Haslam criticised Brierley for only focussing on one side of working class experience, and ignoring bad working conditions, poverty and hunger:

Whilst Brierley and his contemporaries were soothing the people with dialect, song and wit manufacturers were making them into slaves. And we cannot now sing them out of slavery into which they have so carelessly slipped.(43)

This interesting article by Haslam suggests a strong awareness by a section of dialect writers in the 1890s that the 'classic' generation had their faults, and a new breed of Lancashire writer was required who could show both sides of working class experience and help in the fight for socialism. This will be examined in the following chapter. Here, it is useful to note that Brierley did serve as a lesson for later writers both in terms of subject matter and in the dangers of middle class patronage. (44)

Samuel Laycock

Laycock wrote less than either Brierley or Waugh, but it is common to take the three together as the 'classic triumvirate' of Lancashire dialect writing. Legend has it that he wrote his first poetry at the age of eleven, whilst working in Leech's mill, Stalybridge. The poems were written down on a cop ticket. Like Brierley, he had been deeply influenced by Waugh's "Come Whoam" and expressed his appreciation in an appropriate form:

Well, for mitch 'at aw've done, Waugh, aw have to thank thee;
When aw first saw "Come Whoam To Thi Childer An' Me",
Id worked on mi mind like a charm or a spell,
Th'result wor, aw started scribblin' misel. (45)

His Lancashire Rhymes were published in 1864 towards the end of the Cotton

Famine.(46) Some of the 'Cotton Famine' poems such as "Welcome Bonny Brid" were published as broadsheets during the Famine period. Samuel Hill commented that many of his poems appeared in the local newspapers around Stalybridge:

The poems were also printed in sheet form, and sold well. Thousands upon thousands of these sheets were disposed of, and the poet ultimately decided to publish them in book form. (47)

Laycock's poetry of the Cotton Famine is examined in detail in Chapter 8. However, his work during this period has marked similarities to that of Waugh and Brierley. Despite the starvation during the famine, there is little anger in his poems and nothing which would frighten off any potential middle class patron. One such admirer was William Trevor, a member of Manchester's Liberal middle class and a city councillor, who wrote:

It is however, as a teacher of sound morals, and the delineator of homely Lancashire folks and ways, that Laycock will be remembered. He appeals to us in 'our own tongue' and he reaches the heart(48)

Clearly, for Trevor, "our tongue" crosses class lines and unites Lancastrians within a bond of respectability and 'sound morals'.

He continues:

...in his own way he has taught us the value of human sympathy and the power of humble goodness, and through his many a blessing has fallen upon Lancashire hearthstones, and wholesome laughter has brightened many a fireside. (49)

Like Waugh and Brierley, Laycock was elected an honorary member of the Manchester Literary Club, as well as the similarly middle-class Burnley Literary and Philosophical Society. Unlike his two contemporaries though, Laycock's poetry is virtually all set in contemporary Lancashire, and not in some more-or-less romanticised past.

Leaving to one side the Cotton Famine poems, it is worth looking at some of his most popular poems to get an indication of their appeal. His "Bowtun's Yard" is one of the most frequently quoted of all his writings, and is a poetic description of a typical working class street in a Lancashire town. It has little of the starry-eyed nostalgia found in dialect verse from Laycock's time to the present day. It describes in a real, though light-hearted way, some of the hardships of working people's lives:

At number four Jack Blunderick lives; he goes to th'mill an' wayves;
An' then, at th'weekend, when he's time he pows a bit an' shaves;
He's badly off, is Jack, poor lad, he's rayther lawm, they sen,
An' his childer keep him deawn a bit - aw think they'n nine or ten.

The narrator himself is not a 'respectable' outside observer, indeed far from it:

An number five aw live mysel', wi' owd Susannah Grimes,
But dunno loike so very weel - hoo turns me eawt sometimes;
An' when aw'm in there's ne'er no leet, aw have to ceawer i'th'dar;
Aw conno pay mi lodgin' brass, becose awm eawt o'wark. (49)

The appeal of the poem is very much within the working class of Lancashire who can identify with many of the characters in the poem. There is no 'moral lesson' in the poem, other than the narrator's comment that he is the only one in the street not to drink 'Joe Stuggins' ale' on account of it having already 'ruined mony a bard'! Elsewhere, he writes strongly on the evils of drink, the title of one poem - "Teetotal? Of Course Awm Teetotal!" being indicative. His "Homely Advice to th'Unemployed" may have been written with the Stalybridge Riots, during the Cotton famine, in mind. However, it is not a specifically 'famine' poem. It is a warning from someone within the working class against the dangers of political extremism:

While th'wealthy are feastin' we're starvin',
An' for this lads, there must be a cause;
Aw know pratin' Tom will put this deawn
To injustice an' th'badness o'th' laws.
Well, there may be some truth i'what Tom says,
But aw know what real cause is aw think,
For while Tom's wife an' childer are starvin'
He's spendin' his earnings o'drink.

Yo may prate o'er yore wrongs until doomsday,
An' blame what are called th'upper class;

But ole yore complaints will be useless,
Will yo'n th' sense to tak' care o'yore brass.
Turn o'er a new leaf, fellow toilers,
An' let common sense be yore guide;
If there's one happy spot under heaven,
Let that spot be yore own fireside. (50)

Figures like 'Pratin' Tom' were of course common in middle class literature of industrial life; the stereotype is less common in working class writing and would clearly have met with the full approval of the Liberal middle class members of the Manchester Literary Club. The combination of political moderation, temperance, thrift and family life come together with unusual directness in the above poem. It could be asked whether it is almost too direct. Is Laycock indulging in satire? Certainly, he was an accomplished satirist in his later writings, discussed in Chapter 9 on War and Imperialism, and below. Yet Laycock took temperance seriously, and his criticism of Tom spending his earnings on drink ring straight. However, it would be wrong to dismiss Laycock as a political reactionary. He sympathised with aspects of Chartism and wrote an elegy, in standard English, on the death of Ernest Jones. His poetry became increasingly radical in a political, as opposed to industrial, sense during his lifetime. His "Th'Peers An' Th' People" was written in the 1880s when radical Liberalism was attempting to curb the power of the House of Lords:

Must these preawd peers tak' possession o'th'helm,
An' quietly say whoa's to govern this realm?
Are th'Bees to eat th'lean, an' th'drones to eat th'fat
For ever an' ever? we'll see abeawt that!

Comrades an' friends, shall we give up for nowt
That freedom for which eawr brave fore-fathers fowt?
Nay, never, so lung as these feet are well shod,
We'll oather win th'battle, or dee upo' th'clod! (51)

Laycock was a convinced anti-imperialist, and two of his poems, "Ireland's Vice-Royalty Underpaid" and "Cheer Up, Poor Irish Brothers" were a condemnation of British policy in Ireland. "John Bull An' His Tricks" is one of the strongest attacks on British imperialism written before the socialist period:

Oh, forshame on thee, John! forshame on thee, John!
The murderin' owd thief 'at theaw art:
Tha'art a burnin' disgrace to humanity, mon,
Tho' that thinks thisel' clever an' smart.
Tha'rt a beggar for sendin' eawt Bibles an' beer,
An' caaling it 'Civilization',
While thee an' thi dear Christian countrymen here,
Are chettin' an' lyin' like station. (52)

His song "John Bull" was written in a similar vein.(53) This radical poetry should be taken alongside effusive tributes to Hugh Mason, the Liberal cotton baron of Ashton, and John Bright. "Jubilee Song" is a tribute by Laycock to "England's Queen and India's Empress"(54) Despite Laycock's own experience as a cotton worker, there is nothing in any of his published writings about mill conditions. He is prepared to support popular Liberal causes - such as the postmen's campaign in the 1880s in "Eawr Postman"(55) for better pay. However, he cannot accept workers taking strike action. In "Th'Stricken Stokers"(56) he bewails 'this settin' o' class against class' and although he suggests there is wrong on both sides, clearly he thinks there should be some sort of compromise which avoids strikes. For all his political radicalism, Laycock was firmly within the Liberal orbit. The central conflicts within society are not between workers and capitalists, but between 'the peers and the people', or, the landed aristocracy, versus the 'productive classes' which include the working class and the bourgeoisie. It was to be left to his son, Arthur, to develop his father's dialect writing along socialist rather than liberal lines.

Secondary Writers of the Classic Generation

William Billington

The success of Waugh, Brierley and Laycock inspired many other working men to write dialect poetry. Joseph Ramsbottom, above all a poet of the Cotton Famine, is treated in detail in Chapter 8 on the Cotton Famine. William Billington won some fame, though little money, from his dialect poetry of the Cotton Famine but also wrote

on a wider range of themes, both in dialect and standard English. His first published collection of poems, Sheen and Shade, consists entirely of poems in standard English, and the titles are suggestive of earlier Chartist writing, for instance: "The Cottage of Discontent" "They Crush Because We Cringe" and "The Golden God", an indictment of greed and commercialism.(58) Billington's literary influences were noted by his biographer, William Abram.(59) They included Shelley, Byron, Keats and Burns; all of whom he could quote at length; he was also well-versed in the works of Milton, Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Dryden, Pope, Coleridge and Wordsworth. More locally, Billington was personally encouraged by Richard Dugdale, "The Bard of Ribblesdale" who shared his love of Burns. Billington's indebtedness to Dugdale is remarked in his "Eulogistic Verses on Richard Dugdale, Poet".(60) It is not known when he began to write in dialect, though some of his most popular work was written during the Cotton Famine. The expensively produced Sheen and Shade found few buyers in Lancashire, but his "Th'Surat Weyver's Song" sold fourteen thousand copies as a broadsheet in Blackburn alone.(61) Billington's Cotton Famine poems are more critical and radical than Laycock's or Ramsbottom's as we discuss elsewhere. Other dialect poems are equally pointed attacking the rich and municipal corruption. Unlike most of the songs of Waugh and Laycock, his "Goo In To Win" would be an unlikely choice for middle class sponsors to print copies in thousands for their mill workers:

We're spinnin sooa fast, an' sooa mich opo' t'spec
Till one's fretened ut t'world ull be breighkin id neck,
An' we's o go to smash at some unlucky strooak
Iv t'Mon up aboon doesn't put in a spooak;
Wi't'rich geddin richer an' t'poor grooin poorer,
Wal th'army ov idlers keeps still grooin moor,
Goo in for a win, sell yo'r soul for a place,
Oather do or be done, it's a neck an'neck race. (62)

Billington never received support from local philanthropists - he sided with local trades unionists in disputes with the mill owners, and made clear his dislike of the middle classes in songs and poems such as "Goo In To Win". He never won the recognition of other contemporary dialect poets, who attempted to appeal to middle

class philanthropic sentiment.

His poem, "Bad Times" published in Lancashire Songs shortly before his death, but dated 1879, is an attack on industrial capitalism and the two established political parties. It suggests that working people should seize the land, which would then provide food and work for all -

Iv t'poor fooak want owt doin' it's
Thersels ull ha' to do't!
Owd England neaw no longer con
Depend on t'Cotton Trade,
Eawr land's lockt up, an' we're forbid
To ply booath Plough an' Spade,
Whal Russia, Prussia, Flanders, France,
Boast '*freedom of the soil*',
England's an' ARISTOCRACY -
Id mecks one's marrow boil!

Yet his hatred of 'tories an' rads', and the English aristocracy did not stop him being an imperialist, and "Tel-El-Kebir" celebrates the British army's victory over the arabs in 1882 and attacks the liberal pacifism of Bright:

Foak thowt us nobud foos an' fops,
Ut Peeos an' Plenty'd stuffed eawr crops,
Tell Bright hed tord us to milksops,
An'Time hed ta'en away eawr props -
Bud look at Tel-elKebir! (63)

This attitude marks him off from Laycock who opposed imperialist adventures, as we have seen, and reflects the important cultural differences between the two. Although both were 'radical' this radicalism had quite different directions. Whereas Laycock was teetotal, Billington ran a pub in a poor part of Blackburn. Laycock was anti-imperialist, whilst Billington could cheerfully applaud British army victories over the 'foreign foe'. Laycock's social villains were the landed aristocracy - the peers; whereas Billington mistrusted the factory masters as much as the landed aristocracy. Billington looked to the working class winning the vote, and gaining parliamentary

seats:

The workman legislator,
Is next upon the cards (64)

It would be a simplification to say that Billington was part of a 'Tory radical' tradition with Laycock representing Radical Liberalism, yet Blackburn always had a particularly strong streak of populist Toryism which may have rubbed off on Billington. He died at the moment socialism became a living force in Blackburn in 1884, with the formation of a branch of the Social Democratic Federation (S.D.F.). For many members of the S.D.F., at both local and national level, a Marxist outlook was not incompatible with a belief in empire.

Richard Rome Bealey

Bealey is best known for his clever poem "My Piece Is O Bu'Woven Eawt" - the reflections of a hand-loom weaver coming to the end of his days. As a weaver would take his 'piece' to the merchant at the end of the week and be told whether the work is up to scratch, so shall we all have to answer to 'th' Mester' for our work on this earth. It was immensely popular during the 1860s, and made Bealey's reputation as a dialect writer. He was not, however, a hand-loom weaver. He was a draper, running his own business, and played a leading role amongst middle class dialect enthusiasts as secretary of the Manchester Literary Club when it was formed in 1862. He wrote considerably in standard English: love poems, travel writing, and moralistic works. He was politically radical, in a Liberal sense. His "Lines to Mr. Samuel Bamford", written in standard English, relates how recognition of Bamford will come when all the world is free - Hungary and Poland, the blacks of America, the Russian serfs. His dialect poetry is mostly conventional, though "Eawr Bessy", about the death of a young child, is notable in its use of dialect for serious subject matter, at least at the time it was written in the mid-1860s. His "Warch While Yo' Con" is a fairly standard attempt at

moralising on the themes of working class respectability:

There's nowt like to doin' full duty,
An' honestly payin' one's way; (66)

A couple of his poems stand out as strongly political, but utilising many of the themes of dialect nostalgia - old age, lost traditions and folk-lore, and memories of loved ones. In "Owd David At Major's", reprinted in full in Appendix 15, Bealey describes an old man looking back on his youth. He conjures up images of pace-egging, courting with his sweetheart down a country lane, while he gazes into the fire. The nub of the poem comes when he reflects that the country lane, from 'Hugh's i'th'Wood' has been closed by the landowner:

Noan ever tried to stop us then,
That path wur allus free,
An' every single inch of it
Is sacred greawnd to me. (67)

Bealey is writing a propagandistic piece about a real event - the Pilkington footpath dispute of 1866. The landowner was the Earl of Derby, probably the most powerful man in Lancashire, who closed the path which Bealey and many other Radcliffe and Bury people used. A major struggle ensued which resulted in a much publicised court case, and Bealey was directly involved as a defendant. The case went in favour of the footpath campaigners. "Owd David" was produced as a broadsheet at the time of the dispute. Bealey threw out a threat to the Earl:

An', Derby, let me tell yo this,
That path aw co my own;
Aw've made it mine, so stond aside,
An' let my path alone;
Aw've gotten th'Writin's i'my heart,
Love's finger wrote 'em there;
You've got o'th'fields, so be content,
An' dunnot touch my share. (68)

The poem succeeds in using human pathos - the old man looking back on his youth,

thinking of his now-deceased sweetheart - to appeal to the inalienable rights of the common working man. The poem is doubly interesting for being used as a weapon in a specific struggle, as Allen Clarke was to do with "Will Yo' Come O' Sunday Mornin'?" in a rights-of-way battle thirty years later. Bealey's "John and Meg" is written in a similar vein. An old couple reflect on the thousands of acres of land possessed by the rich, and their attempts to steal yet more from the poor. The poet suggests they should live the lives of the oppressed for a while:

Shawm on sich mean an' shabby folk:
Aw wish their greed theresels ud choke,
Of if they tuthree months wur sent
To worch i'th'mill, awd rest content,
An when they went to walk abroad
They fun at th'owd footpaths "No road"
Aw'll bet just fifty bob ter one
Ut when they'd back to th'mansion gone,
Afore they'd bin there mony days
They'd oppen out o'th'narrow ways,
An advertise i'th'pappers too
Ut they intended t'make some new. (69)

Richard Rome Bealey, the respectable draper of Manchester, succeeded well in his attempt to don the persona of an elderly working man, and speak up on his behalf. Unlike some dialect poets of his period Bealey avoided the worst excesses of sentimentalism by linking nostalgia about the past with the realities of present day contemporary life.

James Taylor Staton

Staton was born in Bolton in 1817. He was an orphan, and was educated at Chetham's College, Manchester. He is a particularly interesting figure in this early period of dialect literature. He does not fit into any of the conventions of the genre, indeed he sticks out like a sore thumb. He wrote no poetry, at least that I can trace. He sought no sponsorship from the middle class, and spent much of his time attacking them. He edited, single-handedly a radical local paper written almost entirely in dialect

and combining satire with local news and stories. He was not 'respectable' in the manner of Laycock and Waugh. He would write about beer-shops, music halls and many of the 'seamier' things that the well-known dialect writers wouldn't touch. Although he was never one of the better known dialect writers, socialists like Allen Clarke and R.H. Brodie drew attention to his writings in the period of radical dialect literature. Brodie, writing under his pseudonym 'Billy Button' wrote of him in Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Annual in 1923 thus:

My object i'writin' is to draw attention to th'fact that there's nowt to remind folk that there were once a champion dialect writer cawd Jim Staton, an' that fro his printin' place i'Exchange Street, issued "Th' Bowton Loominary".

Allen Clarke also wrote about him in a series of articles for the Liverpool Weekly Post, on "Lancashire Literature".(70) Clarke describes the popularity of his paper, which became the Lankishire Loominary before it died in 1864. Staton made 'Tum Fowt' famous as the archetypal Lancashire village, the home of his comic heroes 'Billy Bobbin' and his wife 'Sayroh'. Clarke carried on Staton's work in his spectacularly successful Tum Fowt Sketches which sold well over a million copies. Though Clarke did not know Staton personally, some of his earliest recollections were of his father reading "Paddy An Th'Colliers" by Staton, and he also used to play billiards with Staton's son in Bolton's Coffee Tavern.(71) These details are of interest in that they help us to establish a sense of tradition and continuity in dialect literature.

Staton's background was that of a strongly political Bolton family; his father having been active in the Bolton Political Union. Staton was well aware of the struggles of the local handloom weavers, and wrote a lengthy serial article, "Luddites un Blackfaces" describing the events in Westhoughton of 1826, when a mill was burnt down and six local people were executed. During the election of 1853 Staton wrote a poem in the Bowtun Luminary attacking the Tories for their role in 1826 -

Remember now Westhoughton mill

How many there you stooped to kill
Think of that infant voice so shrill
That at Lancaster you hung. (72)

He also drew attention to bad conditions in the Bolton bleach works and supported the bleachers' fight against tommy-shops and low pay. His earliest piece of writing that is known, was published by the Bolton Tract Society in 1839 and is entitled What Must We Do To Be Saved? Staton, then 22 years old, was arguing a materialist case for how people's characters are formed:

Let your foundation stone be the fact that: "The character of every man, woman, and child is formed by the peculiarity of their original organization, and the action and reaction of external circumstances upon it." (73)

This seems surprisingly philosophical stuff for the editor of the Bowtun Luminary but Staton had two sides to his character - the rationalist and philosophical side which involved itself in the burial-club movement and educational provision for working class people, and the lighter, humorous side which produced "Paddy an th'Colliers", "Owd Shunt" and "A Wonderful Pig", amongst many others. As important contributions to Lancashire dialect literature, it is the latter side which needs some examination.

All of Staton's prose sketches were first published in his Luminary (later Loominary), and some of the most popular ones were re-published in Rays Fro' Th'Loominary, sub-titled, "A Selection of Comic Lancashire Tales, Adapted for Public Reading and Recitation".(74) Staton's stories are in a heavier dialect than that used by his contemporaries, Waugh, Laycock and Brierley. Many of the stories would tend to appeal to a more local readership; there are numerous references to parts of Bolton, particular streets and shops, and local landmarks. Staton's tales are set in the present, though he occasionally uses historical references to create a background, such as the following in "Sally Briggs Un Hur Pigs"; when he describes Chorley in 1790:

I'those days th'generality o foak didn't set mich value up uv a weel furnisht knowledge box. They thowt mooar abeawt church, king an stummack. They war aw good Tories welly i'those days, un Radikals wur a poor, despoised, persecuted lot. If a lad wur tow't to honour th'King, an weel as his fayther un mother, to obey aw his commandments, to reverence th'church un aw th'church peawsons, to place confidence i'aw his superiors (that is, men wi mooarmetal than him insoide their breeches pocket)... he wur considert to ha eddikashun grand un large enoof to make him a good Christian, a loyal subject, un a worthy member o society. (75)

Staton's gift for political satire was also used to good effect in his attacks on the bleach-works owners during the union's campaign in 1853 for better conditions (which Dickens also wrote about). However in his stories politics is incidental to the tale, and Staton never moralises about life in the way Waugh was frequently given to. They are humorous stories of working class life with a subversive thrust. They do not romanticise working class life. Staton was developing the strand of dialect satire which Clarke took over in his Tum Fowt Sketches. Staton's stories are written by someone from within the working class, for a working class readership. There is no nostalgia for the past; the characters are all situated in the present day, and do such jobs as coal-miner, spinner, weaver, farmer and a few hand-loom weavers. The hand-loom weaving characters are not historical figures, set in the past, but are based on the remaining weavers who worked on fine goods, well into the 1880s in the Bolton area. In "Th'Cherms o'Music" Staton describes Sam, "a lad ut lived at Ringley Brow" as:

...one ut wur browt up to sniggin timber, or in plain English, wot used to be cawd a poverty knocker, or hond loom weighvur. (76)

Even in the 1870s Staton was using a surviving hand-loom weaver as his main character, 'Bobby Shuttle'. In Bobby Shuttle Wi' Th'Demonstrationists, a story of "Th'Lond-Tillers Lock-Eawt" Staton describes the huge trade union procession supporting the agricultural workers, in Manchester on June 20th 1874. Bobby Shuttle travels into Manchester and arrives at the union offices which are organising the event, and enquires if any other handloom weavers are taking part:

A chap ut seemed to be th'cheearmon informt me that th'hondloom wayvers wur not takkin any part ith procession; un another sed he thowt hond-loom wayving had bin snuft eawt sometime sin. I assured him that he wur mistaen, for he'd a specimen oth craft before him. (77)

Staton's own position as a writer was put in jeopardy by the Cotton Famine, which drastically reduced the readership of his Loominary. A rescue operation was mounted by the publisher John Heywood, who revived the paper in 1863 with Staton remaining as editor, but broadening the circulation to all Lancashire, and hence re-naming it The Lankishire Loominary Un Wickly Lookin Glass. The specifically local flavour of the old paper suffered on account of trying to reach a more general geographical area, and it ended its life the following year. Heywood continued to publish Staton's stories as cheap pamphlets, and Staton himself found work as sub-editor on the Bolton Evening News, and as editor of the Farnworth Observer.

The Bowtun Luminary was a considerable achievement, running for almost twelve years. It established a form of dialect literature which did not pander to its betters, focused on local events and characters rather than playing on nostalgia for a partly mythical past, and provided a platform for local aspiring writers. Its importance in influencing the work of later writers such as Allen Clarke should not be underestimated.

Other Writers of the 'Classic Period'

The success of the 'Big Three', Waugh, Laycock, Brierley, produced dozens of working class writers in the dialect. Some were taken up by publishers such as John Heywood, Abel Heywood, Clegg and others. Many more had the occasional piece published in their local paper and it would be a long job to list even a fraction of these. George Hull in his Poets and Poetry of Blackburn published in 1902, lists fifty-six poets, many of whom wrote in dialect, and the reader is reminded in Joseph Baron's introduction "how very many of them were, or are, factory hands".(78) Samuel Hill in

Old Lancashire Songs and Their Singers records dialect poets from the Ashton Under Lyne area, many of whom wrote of local places and characters.

Margaret Rebecca Lahee, the Rochdale poet whose work was much admired by Waugh, is important for this period and is studied in detail in Chapter 10 on Women. She is the earliest female dialect writer I have been able to trace and her sketch Neddy Fitton's Visit To Th' Earl o'Derby was highly popular in the Bury/Rochdale area. It was first published in the Bury Times in 1859, and reproduced many times in pamphlet form. As we shall see, her novels, particularly Sybil West and her biography of Tom Livsey, give her an important place in the history of Lancashire working class literature.

Conclusion

Waugh, Laycock and Brierley dominate this period of dialect literature, both in their choice of subject matter and in their forms of dialect expression. Their writings were widely available in both very cheap, and expensive editions as well as being printed in local newspapers. Their success inspired many other working class people to attempt to write in dialect, and publishers seem to have become increasingly keen to take on dialect material in the 1860s. The common themes of these writings were the home and its pleasures, the countryside, an idealisation of the 'respectable' working man, frequent use of nostalgia, a sanitised treatment of sex and an emphasis on temperance. Martha Vicinus was led to comment:

Dialect writing did not develop or regress during the period 1850-1914, but it probably declined in terms of the sheer quantity of verse written after about 1885. The same themes were written over and over, following the paths laid out by Thomas Wilson, Waugh and Brierley. In many ways dialect writers became victims of the popularity they so desired. Money and respectability could be gained by writing a great deal about uncontroversial commonplaces; most writers found the temptation of a mass readership irresistible. (79)

This statement is only partly true. As we shall see in the following chapter,

dialect writing made important developments after 1885, in the work of Allen Clarke and his circle. Clarke does not get a mention in Vicinus' book at all, a surprising omission considering his vast contribution both in terms of quantity and quality. She refers in a note to 'Teddy Ashton, a local dialect writer' forming the Lancashire Author's Association in 1909, obviously under the impression that 'Teddy Ashton' is a real person, and not Clarke's pseudonym. The statement that dialect writing declined 'in terms of sheer quantity' needs some sort of quantification. This was the period in which Waugh and Brierley were having their 'Collected Works' re-printed, when most local papers in Lancashire carried some dialect writing, and when younger writers like Trafford Clegg, Joseph Burgess, William Baron and Samuel Hill were beginning to get published widely. On the other hand, her remarks about the prevailing subject matter, and the almost irresistible temptation to stick to 'safe' issues is true to a great extent. In all likelihood, it was what the readers - both the members of 'respectable' working class families, and sections of the Lancashire middle class - wanted.

There were exceptions to this rule, and Staton is the most notable. He avoided both the form and content of the mainstream of dialect writing, using prose rather than poetry and dealing with specific, localised characters and incidents. William Billington is another popularly-read exception to the above. Billington stands more in the tradition of the self-educated working class intellectual who moralised to his fellow workers about ideals of freedom and justice, but made clear his resentment at not achieving the commercial success of Waugh et al.

Even within the mainstream, there were rivulets of political radicalism: above all, Laycock's anti-imperialism, albeit in a form which would not have offended the sensibilities of radical Liberals such as John Bright. Waugh, Laycock and Brierley were all politically aware and what united them was a Liberalism which saw 'the peers' as the enemy and 'the people' as the force for progress. This 'people' could include everyone from the factory worker to the factory owner, and in none of any of their

writings will be found criticism of factory conditions.

Why did dialect literature 'take-off' in such a big way during this period? A number of different explanations have been offered. Brian Hollingworth suggests that the growth of working class literacy played a major part, with dialect writers 'cashing in' on the transition from an oral to a written dialect tradition:

Poets like Waugh and Laycock inherited the long-established oral tradition at just the time when increasing literacy among ordinary people was making popular written poetry a more feasible proposition. (80)

Hollingworth goes on to suggest that the poets' combination of language and subject matter related to the sentiments of the Lancashire working class, but "increasingly, higher standards of education threatened this harmony".(81) Yet his argument is based on a suggestion of a short-lived popularity of dialect literature, which is factually incorrect. It is perhaps true that the three main poets had burnt themselves out by the 1880s, but dialect writing went on to enjoy a renewed burst of popularity in the 1890s, which lasted through to the First World War and after. Furthermore, his suggestion that the earlier dialect poets like Waugh expressed in literary terms the life of Lancashire workers is incorrect. Waugh and Brierley were nostalgic sentimentalists who wrote of a bygone age of 'fowts', hand-loom weavers and independent artisans. It was only the later works of Allen Clarke, Joseph Burgess, Sam Fitton and others of their generation which related dialect to day-to-day Lancashire working class life.

Martha Vicinus adopts a more sophisticated position in her chapter on dialect, "An Appropriate Voice", in The Industrial Muse. She suggests that dialect literature succeeded when it did due partly to changing geographical and cultural patterns :

Writers fashioned a language that grafted the new vocabulary of the city streets, factories and mines to the older rural vernacular. The large numbers of country people who came pouring into the industrial cities formed a link with the country, and in turn they found their customers still living in the works of such writers as Waugh, Brierley and Hartley. (82)

The subject matter of dialect - set in the home or the 'friendly' village pub formed a welcome alternative to the reality of life in the mill and weaving shed, "partially because working people did not relish the monotonous and regimented life of the factory." She goes on to argue that a more important reason was "the increased acceptance of values and customs favoured by the middle class". As bourgeois values became codified into a canon of mid-Victorian taste and respectability, a literature appeared to confirm and reinforce these values. This was true of writers like Eliza Cook and Mrs Hemans, as much as dialect writers. The latter however were "saved from the worst excesses because regionalism gave point and purpose to their commonplaces". (83)

Vicinus' argument that a combination of major social upheaval in the transition from a rural to an urban society, the consequent need for a nostalgic reassuring literature, combined with "the increased acceptance of values and customs favoured by the middle class" in a dialect literature which was strongly regional, has the value of bringing the debate onto a higher level of analysis in which social and cultural elements are introduced. It still begs a number of questions, and she clearly accepts the conventional argument that the middle class imposed their values onto an increasingly receptive working class, or at any rate the more skilled sections of it. Vicinus does not draw any clear distinctions between labour aristocracy and the 'mass' of workers, though she refers, confusingly, to "a popular indigenous literature that spoke to and for the prosperous working class of the industrial north." (84) Since large sections of the working class were anything but prosperous, I assume she is referring to the skilled, better-off sections of the working class, rather than a generally affluent working class. This, presumably, is that section of the working class which accepted 'the values and customs of the middle class'.

There were racial divisions within the working class, with Irish people seen as

the 'outsiders'. Occasionally, such as during the Preston Strike of 1853/4, Irish strike-breakers were shipped in by the employers. Anti-Irish feeling was used to divide working class political campaigns, including Chartism, and became particularly pronounced during the 1860s. (85) Other divisions were based around gender, and attitudes towards women working in the mills were often contradictory. The male spinners fought hard to keep women out of the spinning rooms when the less physically arduous self-actor mules were introduced in the 1840s and 1850s, but women formed the majority of weavers, carders, warpers, and winders. (86)

It is my view that the themes of 'respectability' expressed in the writings of Waugh, Laycock, Brierley and others were largely generated from within the working class experience of mid-nineteenth century Lancashire. As has been argued by Tholfsen, Gray, Walton, Crossick, and Kirk the meanings of terms such as 'respectability' had differing interpretations between middle class and working class ideologues. The ideals expressed by the earlier dialect writers were very much those of a working class struggling to 'better itself', though not necessarily to aspire to middle class, or even 'aristocratic' status. Foster's image of a 'mass' of workers which were indisciplined, lazy drunkards who spoke an impenetrable dialect to ward off suspected labour aristocrats strikes seems patronising. Most of the organisations which Foster cites as 'buying off' the labour aristocrat into bourgeois ways, were in fact collectivist in nature - co-ops, skilled unions, religious organisations, mechanics institutes and so on. Crossick, in his study of Kentish London artisans brings out the strong themes of indigenous working class respectability which owed little to middle class ideas of individualism: rather it reflected a sense of collective pride in craft and community. I would argue a similar case for the Lancashire hand-loom weavers in the period 1780 to 1810, when they were at the height of their influence. Some of that culture was passed on, modified and re-worked, to their sons in the spinning and weaving sheds, and a new working class identity steadily emerged in the 1850s and

1860s which upheld values such as family life, a fair day's work for a fair day's wage, thrift and, to a degree, temperance. In a specifically Lancashire context this culture was formed around the cotton industry and was assertively regional. The dialect poetry of Waugh, Brierley and Laycock was the final cultural seal on this way of life.

However, since terms like 'respectability' were so easily given to differing interpretations, it is not difficult to see how middle class propagandists saw evidence that the working class had finally come round to their way of looking at things. However a working class culture remained a collective, communitarian form of respectability, not an individual attempt to ape, or even join, their 'betters'. Usually, such people who did aspire to 'middle class' status gained the unreserved contempt of their fellow workers and neighbours. This is hinted at in Staton's sketch quoted earlier. True, some of the more skilled workers did join the ranks of the bourgeoisie as small cotton manufacturers and espouse classically 'individualistic' ideas. These were the exceptions to the general rule and were not the people whom dialect literature addressed.

In studying the earlier dialect writers, a further complication does set in. Waugh, Brierley and Laycock were not simply literary mouthpieces of a 'pure' working class culture. Each had his own class position, ideology and aspirations which mediated his expression of working class values. Waugh was undoubtedly the most 'aspiring' of the dialect writers, eagerly seeking middle class approval, and writing very much what suited his patrons. However, there was a limit to how far Waugh could go without losing his working class readers. Even in "Come Whoam" the poem's end still permits 'a crack o'er a glass' and 'a bit of a spree'. His middle class publishers and admirers in the Manchester Literary Club undoubtedly felt that their ideas were being transmitted to the lower orders through Waugh's homilies. I would argue that Waugh's readers in the working class took something else from them: a sense of pride in their own culture: their speech, their locality, their traditions, and also

a support for their own aspirations towards a decent life and a sense of stability and 'being settled'.

Finally, to return to a consideration of why dialect 'took off' when it did. In my account of the 'classic' generation of dialect writers I stressed the importance of middle class backing to get their work established and into a wide readership. Firstly, why should middle class people push dialect at all, and secondly why should working class people read it? I would suggest that the mid- 1850s saw the coming together of a number of issues which led to the dialect explosion. Within the middle class there was a genuine fear of the working class and a felt need to respond to the 'horrors' of Chartism by some form of ideological offensive. Here I would go along with Foster's 'liberalization' schemes of the bourgeoisie, though I have more reservations about the results. As far as dialect writing goes, most of the ideas expressed by Waugh fitted into the middle class' idea of the sort of sound moral values the workers ought to have. The point about dialect is of interest: there was an important strand of opinion within the Lancashire middle class, exemplified by John Harland, William Axon and George Milner, which was genuinely interested in folk traditions and customs, and the writings of people like 'Tim Bobbin' as expressive of the old Lancashire before the days of steam mills. Again, Waugh's somewhat unreal idealization of Lancashire just before the industrial revolution fits well into their antiquarianism. So long as Waugh and his friends kept to 'safe' contemporary subjects like the home and the countryside, or wrote about the past, they were assured of their support. The non-recognition afforded good writers like Staton and Billington who didn't stick to what the middle class would tolerate, is indicative.

The middle class then, had good reason to sponsor a sanitised dialect literature at the time they did. Equally, working class people were receptive to it for the reasons I have outlined. Hollingworth's point about increasing literacy is a relevant subsidiary factor, so too is his observation of the 1860s as a point of transition from an oral to a

literary, reading, culture. We can follow Vicinus and see Waugh's subject matter as appealing to a newly urbanised working class, with nostalgic memories of the countryside and rural life and the accompanying sense of loss. They did not want to be reminded of what life was like in the factories, they did not want stirring up to revolution - the hopes and ideals of Chartism had just come to an inglorious end. A literature which could exalt their own way of life, in a modest, day to day sense which was reassuring and comforting, rather than challenging, fitted the needs of many 'respectable' working class people in the 1850s. It was for later writers to develop the tradition which Waugh and his friends created and relate the pressures of working class life at work and home, as well as the pleasures, into a literary form.

Notes

1. B. Hollingworth "Two Unpublished Poems of Edwin Waugh" Journal of the Lancashire Dialect Society 1985.
2. Martha Vicinus Edwin Waugh: The Ambiguities of Self-Help Littleborough 1984 p.25.
3. *ibid* p.26.
4. G. Milner Introduction to Edwin Waugh Lancashire Sketches Vol.1 Manchester no date c 1892 p.xxix.
5. Ben Brierley Home Memories and Recollections of a Life n.d Manchester c 1886 p.55. There is a short biography of Brierley, and a selection of his work, in Poems of Ben Brierley Manchester n.d. c 1886. Brierley, Waugh, Lahee and other dialect writers were celebrated in monuments; see P. Salveson The People's Monuments Manchester 1987. Brierley's stood in Queens Park, Harpurhey, until it was vandalised beyond repair. A Moston pub is named after him.
6. *ibid* p. 60.
7. Vicinus op.cit p.26.
8. Edwin Waugh Collected Works (11 vols.) were published between 1881-87, followed by a second edition, in eight volumes, edited by George Milner, from 1892.
9. Advertisements in back of Laycock's Lancashire Songs n.d. c 1867 for various Waugh and Brierley writings of 3d each; song sheets were advertised at 1d each.
10. William Billington Lancashire Songs with other Poems and Sketches Blackburn 1883. See also Michael Watson William Billington, The Blackburn Poet Blackburn n.d. c 1987 for brief biographical details, also P. Salveson (1987) op. cit p.21.
11. See advertisements in back of Laycock's Lancashire Songs Manchester n.d. c 1867. Staton has had very little research devoted to him. Robert Poole Popular Leisure and Music Hall in 19th Century Bolton Lancaster 1982 has some brief details and excerpts from his work, eg p.60. See also R.H. Brodie's (as 'Billy Button') short piece on Staton "Th'Bowton Loominary And Its Author" in Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Annual Blackpool 1923, re-printed as Appendix 8.
12. Vicinus op. cit p.33.
13. G. Milner op.cit p.xxx.
14. Martha Vicinus The Industrial Muse London 1974 p.205.
15. Proceedings of the Manchester Literary Club 1875-74 p.xii.
16. Vicinus (1974) op.cit. p.xxxviii.

17. Milner op.cit p.xxxii.
18. ibid. p.xii.
19. "Come Whoam" is supposedly based on his own experience in a pub. It was written on a scrap of paper in a Manchester hotel, according to G.H. Whittaker A Lancashire Garland of Prose and Verse Stalybridge 1936.
20. Manchester Guardian March 3 1884
21. Vicinus (1984) op.cit p.45.
22. ibid. p.45.
23. quoted in Vicinus (1974) op.cit p.51.
24. ibid p.39.
25. Edwin Waugh "Besom Ben and His Donkey" in Besom Ben Sketches Manchester n.d c 1894 pp 3-4
26. Correspondence in Manchester Central Reference Library, Edwin waugh Collection.
27. Edwin Waugh Poems and Songs 3rd series Manchester n.d c 1892 pp.67-68.
28. ibid. pp.106-107.
29. ibid p.107.
30. ibid p. 108.
31. 'The Second Gravedigger' "Ben Brierley and Edwin Waugh" Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly July 23 1898
32. Ben Brierley "Treadlepin Fold" in Tales and Sketches of Lancashire Life Manchester 1884.
33. Ben Brierley Home Memories Manchester n.d c. 1886 pp.23-24.
34. "The Battle of Langley Heights" in Chronicles of Waverlow Manchester 1885.
35. "A Strike Adventure" in Daisy Nook Sketches (2nd Series) Manchester 1882 .
36. "The Battle of Langley Heights" p.50.
37. Home Memories p.24.
38. Ben Brierley Spring Blossoms and Autumn Leaves Manchester 1893 p.83.
39. ibid p.84.
40. ibid p.128.
41. ibid p. 128.
42. Manchester Guardian March 26 1884

43. James Haslam 'The Second Gravedigger' "Big Ben Brierley" Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly (hereafter TANW) May 14 1898
44. Allen Clarke's early piece of dialect journalism, "Ben Brierley Interviewed by Teddy Ashton" in the Bolton Trotter, October 21 1892, shows the debt he owed to Brierley, despite their political differences.
45. G. H. Whittaker (ed.) op.cit p.197.
46. J. R. Swann Lancashire Authors St Annes 1924 p.149.
47. Samuel Hill Old Lancashire Songs and their Singers Stalybridge 1906 p.55.
48. W. Trevor, quoted by "C.W." in Introduction to Collected Writings of Samuel Laycock Oldham 1900 p.xii.
49. *ibid* p.xiii.
50. *ibid* pp. 65-6.
51. *ibid* p.66.
52. Samuel Laycock Warblins' Fro' An' Owd Songster Oldham 1893 p.174.
53. *ibid* p.164.
54. *ibid* p.243.
55. *ibid* p.367.
56. *ibid* p.197.
57. *ibid* p.209.
58. William Billington Sheen and Shade and Other Lyrical Poems Blackburn 1861.
59. William Abram Blackburn Characters of a Past Generation Blackburn 1878, and M Watson William Billington, the Blackburn Poet Blackburn 1982.
60. In George Hull (ed.) The Poets and Poetry of Blackburn Blackburn 1902 p.30.
61. See W.W. Skeat and John H. Nodal Bibliographical List: English Dialect Society London 1873.
62. William Billington Lancashire Songs with other Poems and Sketches Blackburn 1883 p.18.
63. *ibid* p.30.
64. *ibid* p.130.
65. Richard Rome Bealey Poems London n.d c1880 p.92.
66. *ibid* p.196.
67. *ibid* p.215.

68. ibid p.216.
69. ibid p.224. For Clarke's literary contribution to the Winter Hill rights of way struggle in 1896, see Paul Salveson Will yo' come o' Sunday mornin': The 1896 Battle for Winter Hill Bolton 1982.
70. 'Billy Button' (R. H. Brodie) op.cit.
71. see Clarke's "Amongst the Agitators" serialised in TANW May and June 1905. Clarke's claim of a sale of over a million copies of Tum Fowt Sketches was made in Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Annual, Blackpool 1935.
72. Bowtun Luminary January 29 1853
73. J. T. Staton What Must We Do To Be Saved?, Bolton 1839.
74. The publication date is uncertain, but is most probably in the late 1860s, by John Heywood, Manchester. Vicinus op.cit p.334, gives it as 1866.
75. ibid p.48.
76. ibid p.127.
77. J.T. Staton Billy Banks Wi'Th'Demonstrationists Manchester 1874.
78. George Hull op.cit. p. xiii.
79. Vicinus (1974) op.cit p.228. Thomas Wilson was a Tyneside writer.
80. Brian Hollingworth Songs of the People Manchester 1977 p.4.
81. ibid p.5.
82. Vicinus (1974) op. cit p.190. John Hartley was a well-known Yorkshire dialect writer.
83. ibid p.191.
84. ibid p.185.
85. see W.J. Lowe The Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire: The Shaping of a Working Class Community New York 1989.

Chapter 4: The New Generation of Lancashire Dialect Writers

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that Lancashire dialect literature underwent significant developments in the later years of the nineteenth century. A new generation of dialect writers emerged, as Waugh, Brierley and Laycock ceased writing through old age; All three were dead by the mid-1890s. The themes which differentiate the new generation from the old are i) the general lack of middle class sponsorship and cultivation; ii) a subject matter which was rooted in a contemporary industrial setting; iii) an under-current of political radicalism amongst some of the writers; iv) their use of 'alternative' publishing outlets as well as established publishers; v) the use of a wider range of literary forms, particularly the novel and to a lesser extent drama; and vi) the strong sense of being part of a continuing dialect literary tradition.

Within these themes, there are clearly transitional elements; writers who owed much to Waugh and his rural romanticism, others who looked up to middle class benefactors, and a few who looked back to a 'golden age' of pre- industrial society. However, by 1900 all these tendencies had become muted, and a frequently radical and innovative dialect literature was being read in penny pamphlets such as the Tum Fowl Sketches, and in mass circulation papers like The Cotton Factory Times and its Yorkshire counterpart, Yorkshire Factory Times, Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly, as well as local labour newspapers and in the provincial press generally. This new lease of life for dialect literature came from a fusing of the new socialist and trade union movement of the 1880s with the tradition of dialect literature established by Waugh and his circle in the preceding 30 years. In the 1890s it became almost second nature for Lancashire working class writers to use dialect rather than standard English if they were writing a poem or short story. Some, like Allen Clarke, had a more calculated use of dialect as a vehicle for political propaganda.

Transitional Writers:

John Trafford Clegg: 'Th'Owd Weighver'

Clegg died young, and only appears to have written dialect between 1890 and his death in 1895. However, he established a considerable reputation amongst dialect writers, including Ben Brierley and Allen Clarke.(1) His Sketches and Rhymes in the Rochdale Dialect(2) occupy two large volumes, and in addition he wrote a novel, David's Loom(3) and sketches entitled Reaund Bi'Th'Derby.(4)

Despite his pseudonym, 'Th'Owd Weighver', Clegg was the son of a fairly well-to-do grocer and his working life was spent as a printer, in his brother's firm in Rochdale. In "Memoir of the Author", which precedes the contents of Volume 1 of Sketches and Rhymes, the anonymous commentator (probably his brother) mentions that Trafford Clegg had written a few unexceptional pieces in standard English for Chambers' Journal and the Manchester Weekly Times, as well as other journals. However, his interest in writing in dialect was apparently kindled when he was setting the type for the Fishwick's History of the Parish of Rochdale.(5) The commentator elsewhere notes that Clegg worked briefly in a Glossop cotton mill, owned for a short time by his father, and this experience gave him a sympathy for the industrial workers. The combination of these experiences led him to write of working class people in the Rochdale area realistically:

...his characters pass before us absolutely true to life, expressing their thoughts and feelings in the only language by which they could be adequately conveyed, and whose niceties and subtleties it were impossible to translate into "standard English."(6)

Trafford Clegg writes from a class position which is on the fringes of the working class, and whilst sympathetic to them, he is not of them in the way that Brierley and Laycock were. The creation of an artificial image of an 'owd weighver' is suggestive of the contradictory position he found himself in. He was a purist in his use of dialect,

taking the view that it was dying out rapidly and that there was little that could be done to save it. Clegg made his name as a dialect writer through a controversy over the teaching of dialect in schools, fought out in the columns of the Rochdale Observer during 1890. It was suggested by a local schools inspector, J.H. Wylie, that dialect ought to be taught in schools to preserve valuable local traditions. Perhaps surprisingly, Clegg argued against the suggestion. In the first letter of March 15th, he writes:

Keep th'owd Lanky eawt o'th'schoo's Mesther Wylie, for aw want my childer to talk smart when they grown up.(7)

Clegg, and probably many other 'aspiring' Rochdaliens, saw dialect as a handicap to career prospects. Clegg also rejected on artistic grounds any attempt to 'systematize' dialect:

...if yo'r begun to thrim it deawn to rules an' teychin' systematically, yo'll find yo just get a tuthrie roughseandin' words an' sayins', an' yo'll find 'at o'the flavour an' beauty an' power's flown away.(8)

Clegg's resistance to the teaching of dialect in schools clearly has some justification on the artistic grounds he speaks of. However, the argument was taking place in a context of determined attempts by educational authorities to stamp out the use of the vernacular by children, and concern amongst the lower middle class that their children should 'talk proper'.

Clegg was well-versed in both classic and contemporary literature, and it is clear that his use of dialect is a conscious literary decision. The influence of Waugh, and his literary success, combined with the 'respectability' of Burns in the canon of 'English' literature gave him ground for writing in dialect. In his foreword to Reaund Bi'Th'Derby he quotes Burns, and adds his own 'apology':

Here I, a lagging gleaner in the field
Of thought, have gathered up a little sheaf,
Left by the mighty reapers who did wield

Their shining sickles on the golden leaf
In days gone past; and, in the dear belief
That all my hoardings are not chaff and straw,
Beneath the critic's flail I lay the chief
Of my scant store.....(9)

In his sketch, Reaund Bi'Th'Derby, the central character and narrator, is a cotton worker who goes for a day's walk on the moors and meets various local characters on the way. Interspersed with his thinking aloud in dialect, he quotes Smollett, and Shakespeare. The central action takes place in 'The Derby', a moorland pub, where the narrator meets a young, intellectual, 'weel favvoured fellah'. The discussion between the two becomes a sort of literary contest, with dialect and standard English recitals coming from the two men. This device permits Clegg to introduce poems completely out of context - "The Weighver's Song", and "Two Marriages". The first is one of Clegg's most well known pieces and records a weaver's pride in the job:

Clattherin loom an' whirlin' wheel,
Flyin' shuttle an' steady reed,
This is wark to mek a mon feel
There's wur jobs nor weighvin i'time o'need.(10)

The poem which follows, "Two Marriages" picks up a popular theme of Clegg's - the contrast between town and country, rural idyll and urban squalor. The first part of the poem is about the healthy countryman, coming home from the fields after a hard day's work to his cottage, kept clean and well-kept by his loving wife: "with quiet happiness their simple home is blest".

The second part is set in "a miserable street full of squalid cots, deep in the foul heart of a busy town":

In one mean dwelling an uncertain light
From a few glittering embers faintly shines;
Across a window in the darkening night,

A subtle spider plaits his cunning lines;
Of poverty and sorrow here he signs,
To move the heart and draw a pitying tear:
Rough wooden chairs, a table, whereon twines,

Strange sight! a flowering plant; the walls are bare -
But hark! is that a sound of weeping that we hear? (11)

The wife is weeping for her husband, who is slowly dying amid the abject poverty of their surroundings. They are not to blame for their tragedy - they are victims of the modern urban age. The flower symbolizes nature as the force of good, flowering amidst evil, as well as being emblematic of the couple's vestigial 'respectability'. The similarities with the much earlier work of John Critchley Prince are remarkable. By his use of the two characters, Clegg can express himself as the 'owd weighver', using dialect in both the narrative and the examples of poems he gives, and also in standard English in the words of the 'young gent'.

Despite Clegg's position as an outsider pretending he is 'an owd weighver', he never gets tempted to preach homely moralistic sermons to his readers on how working people should behave in their lives. In the long poem "Deawn I'Th'Shade" (shed, ie weaving shed), Clegg catalogues the various middle class remedies made to improve the health of working people - keep fit, exercise, good reading - etc, and proceeds to satirise them:

It's plain enough 'at when we're off this greawnd
We're noane forever whuzzin dumbells areaund,
Climbin' up pows an' usin th'swingin bar,
Or we met happen change fro what we are
Iv we'd beaunce up i'th mornin soon an' bowd
To pop o'er th'yead wi wayther cleynd an' cowl,
Walk oft i'th counthry in a thoughtful way,
Say th'catechism once or twice a day,
An' calm wi porritch eaur excited blood,
Wise neighbours tell us that'd do us good;
But whether these philosophers could jump
Fro bed at five to scutther off to th'pump,
Or, after bein' stewed ten heurs a day
Start strugglin wi their muscles aw cawnt say.
We shouldn't smooke, nor dhrink, nor ware mich brass,
But go t'lecthur reawm or th'science class;
But there! It's no use talkin! We're so numb,
We s'slutther on th'owd road whol kingdom come.

The poem is a long, sympathetic description of the occupants of a weaving shed, often sad:

Look next at Martha Pillin' - hoo's a face
As honsome yet as ony i'this place,
Though moor nor forty year th'good woman's bin,
Wi noane too mich ov happiness cobbed in.
Some twenty year back Martha's sweetheart dee'd,
Just when they hoped together to be teed;
He fell deawn th'hoist, hurtin hissel so bad
There weren't a bit o'chance o'savin th'lad.(13)

The poem does not shy away from commenting on collective remedies for some of the weavers' wrongs, though his comments about striking have an element of hopeless bitterness about them, and contempt for the moralising of the middle class:

Sometimes, to make some extra sport i'th'cage,
We striken for less wark or bigger wage;
Takkin a holiday wi nowt to spend,
Determin't this time, 'at we'll dee or mend;
Practisin' deein for a while, some fain
At last to crawl to th'fathry once again,
Wi o th'fawse craythers yappin at eaur heels
'At never knew heaw hard wark or clemmin feels,
Yet could ha towd us aw fro't'very start,
For sich-like wickedness eaur backs mun smart.(14)

Clegg's countryside verse, for which he is better known, is covered in more detail elsewhere. It is worth noting here however that, in this verse, the positive aspects of the country are stressed against the unhealthy, disease and poverty-ridden town. These contrast with the message of his novel, David's Loom, an historical romance about a handloom weaver who invents a revolutionary new loom which vastly improves the efficiency of early power looms. He is attacked by local Luddites, and ends up being wrongly executed for murder. David's loom is taken over by the manufacturers and it transforms the weaving trade. At the end of the story, the Luddites like Big George are working, apparently happily, in the steam driven factories, and the only sour note is over the employment of children:

Power machinery, once held by them to be a rank invention of Satan, already dazzles their half-understanding vision with flashes of celestial brightness; even Big George, type of unreasoning strength and prejudice, not only labours in a steam-driven factory himself, but compels his youngest children to pass some fourteen hours a day there also, selfishly oblivious of their health and

mental development, in the blind pursuit of his own welfare.(15)

In David's Loom Clegg assumes the eventual inevitability of factory work, and is even to a degree positive about it - though aware that factory life is no bed of roses, particularly for children.

Clegg is a slightly unusual figure in dialect literature; he does not appear to have had any links with either the local middle class elite, or with the young labour movement of Rochdale. His writings, and indeed his pseudonym ('Th'Owd Weighver') suggest he was much older than he really was. He died in Bournemouth in 1895, at the age of 38 He was forced to leave Rochdale because of his failing health, but his illness was too far advanced for the changeto have much effect. While some of his work was radical, he clearly saw himself as part of the established tradition of dialect literature, assuming the mantle of an 'owd weighver' to express his feelings in dialect.

William Baron: 'Bill o'Jack's'

William Baron, or 'Bill o'Jack's', published his work over a twenty-two year period, from 1888 onwards. Unlike Clegg, he was a cotton worker, starting work at the age of twelve. Some of his writing reflects his factory experience, such as "Hawf Past Five At Neet":

For foak at's slaves to t'factory bell,
Life's noan so breet or gay;
For every morn they start at six,
An wark like foo's o't'day.
But when id gets tort stoppin' time,
Ther sinkin' hearts grow leet;
An' sich a change comes o'er 'em o',
At hawf past five at neet.(16)

However, Baron was no radical - his poem celebrating the end of the cotton strike of 1910, "On Th'Cotton Peace", shows little sympathy for collective action to improve conditions:

Industrial warfare, whenever it's waged,
Brings misery an' want in its train;
For when Capital and Labour's fiercely engaged,
It's poorest 'at suffer, that's plain!(17)

He was a regular contributor to the Tory Blackburn Standard, a point referred to by Samuel Laycock in his 'address' to Baron - see Appendix 16.

Although Baron writes about contemporary life and events, in Blackburn and later in Rochdale, the themes coming across in his work are very much those of the earlier generation of dialect writers, and can be summarised in the titles of some of his poems: "A Ramble i't'Country", "Mi Gronfeyther's Cooat", "Be Jannock" and "Th'Owd Garden Gate". In what was perhaps his most critical poem, "The Sweater's Den", about the evils of sweated labour, the poet's solution is individual, rather than collective:

Shun every tradesman 'at doesno pay a fair day's wage
for a fair day's wark.(18)

Baron's standpoint is that of a sympathetic observer, though without the broad internationalism of Laycock and even Waugh. His standard English poem, "How Trooper Baxter Died" is a hymn of praise to imperial heroism, with the British soldier attacked by the African horde, "like the fiends of a thousand hells".(19) Though Baron had none of Laycock's internationalism, he greatly admired 'the laureate of the cotton famine' and wrote an effusive "In Memoriam" when the old poet died. Arguably, Baron's imperialism could reflect a change within working class attitudes towards the end of the nineteenth century, and the patriotic frenzy of the Boer War - the poem appeared in collected form in 1902, when the war was coming to an end. There were opposing ideas within dialect literature by this time, as argued in more depth in Chapter 9, and Baron's work was attacked in the columns of Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly for its lack of social criticism and "oversentimental" style.(20)

Though Baron's writing had a degree of popularity, his work never attracted the interest of a commercial publisher and his Bill o'Jack's Weekly, which ran from 1909 - 1911, was a pale reflection of Clarke's Northern Weekly which ceased publication in 1908.

John T. Baron: 'Jack o'Ann's'

John T. Baron was the older brother of William Baron, and there are many similarities in their work. He worked for most of his life at Henry Livesey's Greenbank Foundry in Blackburn, and was given time, one evening a week, to write his regular contribution to the Blackburn Times. These appeared without a break from October 30th, 1886, to July 5th 1919 - well over 1700 poems, a remarkable achievement. He was actively involved in the labour movement and was secretary of his branch of the engineer's union. Most of his poems are apolitical - his most well-known titles include "A Sope O'Good Strong Tay", "A Comfortable Smook", and "Th'Hooam Fireside". His image of a cheerful, take-life-as-it-comes working chap which comes over constantly in his poems, was belied by his own life. In the words of May Yates:

He had toiled hard at the foundry for close on half a century - he had gone through many years of the most agonising domestic misery - he had had much more than his fair share of sickness - all these things undoubtedly helped to shorten his life.(21)

Yet none of this finds an echo in his poetry, and we are given such profound philosophy as:

It's th'true philosophy o'life to tek things as they come;
Ah; if yo have a gradely wife an'childer reet at home,
Yo needn't cry o'er t'past, nor try to peer i'Future's book,
Use th'Present weel, an'calmly tek a comfortable smook.(22)

Joseph Baron: 'Tum o'Dick o'Bob's"

Joseph Baron was the nephew of John Baron (not to be confused with J. T. Baron), an earlier Blackburn poet, and used the title of "Tum-o'-Dick-o'-Bob's" as a pseudonym. His literary interests were both in dialect and standard English, and he wrote a considerable amount of local histories. Unlike his name-sakes John Thomas and William, he was from a middle class background and made a career in journalism. His funeral "Tennyson's Death" written in the idiom of classical Augustan verse contrasts oddly with his dialect material, which is light, superficial and popular in tone. "He Olez Dud His 'Nook'" (roughly translated as "he always did his bit") is typical of his dialect poetry in its expression of homely moralism:

An' when th'Recordin' Angel teks
Eawr items in his Book,
Heaw grand when he this entry meks:
He olez dud his nook.(23)

Like other Blackburn poets, including J.T. and William Baron, Joseph Baron was fond of paying tributes to 'great statesmen', but representing them as basically down-to-earth chaps. His "Dedication of Blackburn Dickshonary to John Morley" is typical:

But oh, tha'll olez be to us -
So what tha's done, so what tha does -
Just "Honest John" as one time walked
Eawr streets an't'good owd lingo talked-
Th'owd lingo talked bi gradely fooak-
Th'owd lingo as eawr faythers spooak-
Th'owd lingo as we hooap'll leaven
Th'whul lot of 'Babel tongues i'Heaven!(24)

Joseph Baron represents the voice of Blackburn working class Liberalism, which isn't always heard quite as strongly as that of popular Toryism. His later work became increasingly radical, and he wrote a number of poems which appeared in Allen Clarke's

Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly in 1907, when the paper was going through its most ultra-left phase. (25)

Other Dialect Celebratory Verse

It is common throughout the period from the 1850s through to the First World War for working men poets, including others trying to appear as such, to make appeals to local or even national establishment figures. Frequently, their published works may be dedicated to such figures. James Leigh dedicates his Gleams of Sunshine to Alderman Walter Ingram Sherry, Mayor of Hyde 1902-4; Henry Yates dedicated his Songs of the Twilight and Dawn to Henry Harrison, President of Blackburn Chamber of Commerce, in 1904. Tributary verse to admired figures is even more common in dialect writing, and becomes more frequent towards the end of the century. Even the radical weaver David Lawton finds space for commemorative poems on Victoria, Gladstone, Mrs. Gladstone and several local notables in his Webs From Fancy's Loom. William Cryer, writing in the same period includes tributes to John Bright, Thomas Barnes (a Farnworth mill owner) and his brother Alfred, as well as Gladstone and Victoria in his Lays after Labour.

Since the days of financial sponsorship of 'working men' poets by the local middle class had passed, one wonders why there were so many effusive tributes in the work of poets who were, in many other respects, quite radical. Poets such as James Leigh and Henry Yates were very much local writers with little appeal outside their own towns; their tributes to local personages help give their work a specifically 'Hyde' or 'Blackburn' character which may appeal to a local readership. The celebration of national figures is less straightforward. If one drew up a list of who were the most celebrated figures we would find Gladstone vying with Queen Victoria. James Leigh's "Lines Suggested by the Jubilee of Queen Victoria" in 1887 emphasises the drastic changes which have taken place in England since Victoria came to the throne but the

queen has given stability and continuity amidst all that, whilst nations abroad have had civil war and revolution:

Bur Queen Victoria's throne
Has stood'n the brunt ov each shock;
An it's stonidin' today, a believe,
As firm as an adamant rock;
It's pillars are mighty an' strong.,
An' would bear it though high as a steeple;
It cannot and never will, fall
While it rests on the love of the people.(25)

Most working class writers who used dialect also wrote in standard English - usually for what they considered more 'elevated' subjects. The tributes to Gladstone are mostly in this medium, such as William Cryer's "William Ewart Gladstone", published in 1902. Gladstone is held up as the embodiment of the British democratic heritage; standing above the crudities of party politics:

Above all party creed is rife,
The wondrous unity of life,
And purpose just!
The heritage our fathers won
Inviolate from sire to son
We hold in trust! (26)

Lawton's poem on Gladstone expresses a similar sense of patriotism, a commitment to justice and democracy and sympathy for the working class when the rest of the establishment are disdainful:

Though oft maligned and scorned, misunderstood
By smaller souls too mean his worth to feel,
He lived and toiled to serve the common weal.(27)

The Importance of Locality

A further aspect of the 'transitional' writers, already alluded to, is their localism. The classic writers, Waugh, Brierley and Laycock, never identified particularly strongly with their own locality. Brierley used his area as the basis for a fictional setting, Waugh used the moorland country above Rochdale as 'typical'

Lancashire scenery. Yet in the writings of the John T. Baron and Joseph Baron (Blackburn), William Baron (Blackburn and Rochdale), David Leigh (Hyde), David Lawton (Greenfield), William Cryer (Farnworth), Henry Nutter and George Hindle (Burnley) and Fawcett Skelton (Bolton), their own localities assume a major importance in their work.

This had ideological as well as literary implications. It could be argued, perhaps rightly, that most of these were minor poets who would not get the level of literary recognition that Waugh and his circle had won. By appealing to a local readership, conscious of their limitations as national or even regional poets they could make up for some of these feelings. This is done through celebration of football victories over local rivals in Leigh's writing. Technological innovation is celebrated in Henry Nutter's "On the Introduction of Steam Trams Into Burnley". David Lawton marks local tragedy in his poem "On the Delph Wesleyan Chapel Fire". "The Bolton New Town Hall" was celebrated by John Fawcett Skelton at the time of its opening.

As well as the 'commercial' need to attract local readers, some of these poets were also expressing a sense of local pride and community feeling. They were regarded by the community in which they lived as 'their' poet, and working class readers would look forward to reading dialect poetry about their town in the columns of the local paper, or at a social event. 'The reading' became a popular institution from Waugh's time onwards, and showed little sign of going out of existence well into the twentieth century. If anything the number of 'penny readings' seems to increase in the 1880s and 1890s. Local co-operative societies, trades unions, workingmen's clubs and other social institutions began organising 'soirees' and tea-parties to which local dialect writers would come along for a couple of shillings to recite his work. Dialect was the glue which helped bind these activities and institutions together.

The 'transitional' dialect writer, occupying a position which derives from the

'classic' dialect writers (Waugh et al), would obviously employ many of the themes and forms of his predecessor: homely, sentimental moralising; a love of the countryside - though increasingly from the standpoint of the townsman; and a Gladstonian Liberalism which sees society divided primarily between the 'peers' and the 'people'. The differences lie in their contemporary subject matter - the amount of material relating to industrial life, in a non-controversial sense, increased dramatically. There is little support for these writers from middle class patrons. Many had their work published privately, or more commonly, in subscribers' in which local supporters subscribed enough funds to make a printing of a particular book feasible: names of subscribers were listed at the rear of the publication. Sometimes, an organisation such as a literary and philosophical society (as in the case of Hindle's Tales of the Brun) would publish their works. Commercial publishers such as John Heywood, James Clegg, and other firms continued to support some of the better known writers. Local newspapers become increasingly important as outlets for working class dialect verse, and most of the Lancashire papers carried some dialect. This local press, which was only in its infancy when Waugh was at his literary height, helped to re-inforce the localism of many of the writers. More specialised journals, such as Ben Brierley's Journal (up to 1895), and also the Cotton Factory Times, were available to aspiring writers as well.

The above writers were 'transitional' in the sense that they incorporated much of the previous 'classic' generation's motifs. In the next section I will suggest that they point towards some aspects of the overtly socialist, working class writing of Allen Clarke and his circle, and many of them were of course contemporary to Clarke and his friends. In other respects they were in transition from a played-out, ossified form of writing which dwelt on the nostalgia of the past, continuing to plough the furrow of Waugh and his contemporaries in the 1860s. From the 1920s, as I shall argue later, this becomes the predominant pattern of dialect writing with only the work of Ammon Wrigley showing any sign of originality.

The Radical Use of Dialect

Many of the previous writers who have been referred to were 'radical' in some sense of the word: 'Tim Bobbin's' satire of the local gentry, Bamford's democratic populism, the radical Liberalism of Waugh, Brierley and Laycock. However, it is a radicalism firmly situated within a middle class framework. Only J.T. Staton and William Billington, in their different ways, express an overtly working class message, independent of the middle class and their patronage.

However, working class writers began to emerge with the socialist upsurge of the 1880s who expressed a new, independent working class slant but nonetheless remained as an identifiable part of the Lancashire dialect literary tradition. They shared a common lack of middle class sponsorship, and tended to use the emerging socialist and trade union press to get their work published. Many of them advanced from writing only poetry and short sketches, to producing full-length novels, for serial publication. Despite their radical, often socialist, politics they strongly identified with the 'classic tradition' established by Waugh, Brierley, and Laycock - and frequently paid homage to their achievements (see Appendix 18, where Brierley is interviewed by a young Allen Clarke). Allen Clarke is the central figure in the entire development of the new generation of dialect writers, though he was not the first socialist to use dialect to express his views; for this, the credit must go to Joseph Burgess, of Failsworth.

Joseph Burgess: 'Socialist Joe of Failsworth'

Joseph Burgess was the originator of a socialist literature in dialect form, in his poem "Ten Heawrs A Day" (printed in full in Appendix 20). It has remarkable similarities to Prince's "The Factory Child", but ends on a propagandistic note. Burgess describes an individual tragedy: the death of a young child whose mother was forced to work ten hours a day in the mill, as her husband died of consumption

(compare also with Trafford Clegg's "Two Marriages"). The solution Burgess argues for is working class representation in parliament: an important step from putting faith in sympathetic Liberals to supporting independent working class candidates:

Choose members to draw up yo'r laws
'At feel an interest in yo' cause,
An then they'll have a chance to ma'e
An Act agen ten heawrs a day.(28)

Burgess quotes the poem in his autobiography A Potential Poet? "as proof that as far back as 1874 my mind was working along the lines on which ultimately the I.L.P. was founded." His most well known poem, "Ther's Nowt Loike Spinnin' Shoddy" was written slightly after "Ten Heawrs A Day" and reflects his personal experience in the mills around Droylsden. The poem is less didactic - no suggestion of electing Labour MPs - but it remains one of the most successful attacks on 'the factory system' written by a Lancashire poet and was reprinted throughout this period up to the First World War. It picks up the common theme of factory slavery 'in freedom's native isle' and taking short cuts in quality to bolster profits. These are the first few lines; it is printed in full in Appendix 19:

Shoddy, shoddy, shoddy, that's the soart to spin,
Ther's nowt loike spinnin' shoddy i yo' want to mak yo'r tin.
Ne'er moind heaw had yo' work-un yo'r honds for little wage,
Ther's nowt loike spinnin' shoddy i'this spekilatin'age;(29)

Burgess began to submit poems to the Oldham Chronicle and had some, in standard English, published. He records the initial encouragement to write in dialect came from James Butterworth, a comedian who impersonated women. Burgess records that his standard English 'moralisings' were "providentially interrupted by the demand that I should write dialect verse." "An Owd Maid's Lament" and "My Owd Bonnet" were the result, though Butterworth never used them. Instead, they were published in the Oldham Chronicle and, interestingly, as broadsheets. Both are about women growing old and pitiful, never managing to make their 'catch' of a good husband.(30) His poem, "Neaw Aw'm a Married Mon", written on November 28th 1874, expresses a

more unusual theme:

As hoo's a factory lass,
An' aw'm a factory lad,
We've noather on us brass -
Aw nobbo weesh we had.
So awst ha' to do heawse work
For yo couldno caw it fair
If aw 'weshin' up should shirk,
An' didno do mi share.(31)

Tragically, his wife died in less than two months and Burgess wrote little more poetry of any interest in dialect. He left the mill to become a journalist, and edited the Oldham Operative, Workman's Times, and then sub-edited the Cotton Factory Times, before going to work for a variety of newspapers. His later poetry tends to be doggerel verse on ILP election victories.

Allen Clarke and the Tum Fowt Sketches

If Burgess' potential as a dialect poet never went beyond two exceptionally good pieces, quoted above, Lancashire's cotton mills were to produce a writer who could use dialect well, and bring together the best of the classic tradition and the political radicalism of the growing socialist movement. This was Allen Clarke, son of a spinner and a winder, born in Bolton in 1863, at the height of the Cotton Famine. As with most working class writers, his earliest attempts at writing were in standard English. However, he was aware of the work of J. T. Staton at an earlier age, through his father's interest in dialect literature. Clarke also records reading Brierley "ever sin I were a lad"(32) Much of Clarke's early reading was classical - Shakespeare, Byron, Moore - as well as political history: of Chartism, the Luddites and the work of Cobbett.(33)

His first substantial piece of writing, the novel The Lass of the Man and Scythe, was written in the late 1880s. It was a historical romance of the English civil war, set

in Bolton. It incorporated many of the themes which became characteristic of his novels, which are discussed elsewhere: a radical political backdrop to a story of love, jealousy and ultimate victory, with frequent use of dialect in the dialogue. However, his most notable early success was the creation of the Tum Fowt Sketches, and the characters Bill and Bet Spriggs. Tum Fowt (Tonge Fold) was a small, semi-rural community, east of Bolton town centre. The sketch first appeared in March 1890, in the first edition of Clarke's the Labour Light, which was mainly a labour news-sheet for the Bolton area. In a series of autobiographical articles written in 1905, Clarke describes their origin and purpose:

In this "Labour Light" began the series of humorous Lancashire sketches which have made 'Teddy Ashton's' name a household word, as critics say, in the north. The first "Tum Fowt Debatin' Menociation" sketch (introducing Bill and Bet Spriggs) addressed to the editor of "Th'Laybour Leet", appeared in the first issue of the paper, dated March 14th 1890; and was followed by half a dozen more. I suspect that the funny sketches helped to sell the paper more than the serious articles - though I daresay "Teddy Ashton's" droll sketches have done more to help reforms than far more pretentious and direct articles. For "Teddy" even in his comic sketches, pokes sly fun and undermining sarcasm at the industrial iniquities and social injustices of the day.(34)

This statement is a key reference for the radical use of dialect in the period 1890-1920. However, the clearly thought-out radical use of the Tum Fowt Sketches, only developed fairly gradually. It is worth looking at the early sketches to see what their origins and components were.

As noted earlier, Tum Fowt had already been used by J. T. Staton - whose work Clarke was familiar with - for his own 'Billy Bobbin' sketches, which also had some political aspects (see Billy Bobbin Wi'Th'Demonstrationists for example). By using Tum Fowt as the location for his sketches, Clarke was working on an already familiar theme, and within the Lancashire dialect tradition. However, according to an editorial published in Teddy Ashton's Journal in 1896, Clarke admits that it was his printer who suggested using some dialect, to lighten the 'heavy' political articles. (35) Clarke acceded, but never had a very high opinion of them as literature and recalls feeling

"rather disappointed and disgusted that people should be so greedy after frivolity, and neglect the reading of helpful and instructive articles."(36) In fact, the 'frivolous' sketches proved so popular that they had sold, as penny pamphlets, over 100,000 by 1896 and over a million by the time of his death.(37)

The central characters in the sketches are Bill, and his wife Bet, Spriggs. Bill is a ne'er do well husband, fond of his pint in the "Dug an' Kennel", but less fond of a day's work. His wife Bet is the only force capable of keeping him in check, and is clearly 'the gaffer' in the family. The worthies of the "Dug an' Kennel" decide to form a debating club in the interests of 'mutual instructshun and discushun o'important subjects'. The first sketch, "Heaw T'Menociation Were Formed" is a satire on 'respectable artisans' and the selfless pursuit of knowledge, ridiculed earlier by Staton. Instead of calling themselves an 'ass- ociation' they decide on something more worthy of their position:

Well then, ostid o'cawin eawr sosiety after t'beasts o't'field, as perishes, which is scripter, let's caw it after earwsels, which is the noblest work o'creation. Let's nayther have hoss, ass, dug, cat nor anny other insect i'natural history. Let's caw it - an here he waved his hond as indicatin a vast sweep o' o'erwhelmin eloquence - Let's caw it t'Tum Fowt Men-ociation, Men-ociation.(38)

The success of the sketches lay in identifiable, though obviously exaggerated, comic characters with a highly localised setting. Everyone in Bolton knew where "Tum Fowt" was. Many of the sketches related to other parts of Bolton - "Sammy Snokes' Donkey An Th'Express Train" takes the reader from Tum Fowt, via Tonge Moor Road to Bromley Cross railway station - where the donkey has an argument with an express train on the level crossing.

The characters remained virtually the same throughout the period they were being written - from 1890 to 1930. The character of Bet Spriggs has similarities to Andy Capp's wife - complete with rolling pin, waiting for the drunken husband to come home

from the pub. Through the character of Bet, Clarke later introduced the theme of women's rights and feminism - though in a knock-about way. Other main characters include Joe Lung, Ben Roke, Cock-Eye and slightly later Patsy Filligan, the laughable but sharp-witted Irishman.

The sketches did not save the Labour Light from extinction - it had a life of little over six months. However, it had whetted Clarke's enthusiasm for his blend of working class politics, dialect sketches, and journalism. He took what was most popular from Labour Light - the dialect sketches and local satirical pieces - and started the Bolton Trotter on January 9th, 1891. Many of the first sketches published in the Labour Light were re-printed, and new ones added, usually reflecting current topics of the day - new year and Easter celebrations, the 1891 census, elections and fads like 'mesmerism'. During 1891 there was a legal case involving a Mrs. Jackson of Clitheroe, who successfully had her husband turned out of the house because of his atrocious behaviour. In "Bet Spriggs Imitates Mrs. Jackson, an Bill Spriggs Gets Turnt Eaut!", Clarke uses a real contemporary issue to good comic effect, satirising men's alleged superiority. Acting on Mrs. Jackson's example, Bet throws her husband out into the street. The men of the Debatin Menociation get together and send a deputation, led by Ben Roke, to argue the claims of the male species. They are met at the door by Bet herself:

"What do you want?!" axed Bet, fiercely. "Come, be clearin off, or I'll help yo!"

"Well, Betsy," began Ben Roke, pompously, "We're a deppytashun o'three intelligent sober men, drunk as new-born babies, bless their pratty faces; an we're sent t'thee to prove, by logick, fair an square, an oblong too-" "What are ta meit erin abeaut?" interrupted Bet.

"Wait, a bit, theau'll see. Neaw, when th'Almighty made mon, well he made him aw reet; he didn't make him eaut o'some other animal did he?"

"Neow, neow!" said Sammy Snokes. "I think not, but not beein theer at t'time I cornt swear to it."

"Well, resoomed Ben, wavin his hands abeaut like an orator, "but when th'almighty made woman he made her eaut o'Adam's rib. That were fer't'show as hoo were a part o't'chap an belungs to him, an should love, honour an obey him in that station-"

"Howd on, what station?" cried Sammy. "Is it Moses Gate or Lostock Junction?"

Ben's speech continues with further interruptions, and suggestions of Bet's brutality to her husband. Ben drones on, whilst Bet turns her back and goes indoors:

"Madam," Ben were beginnin; but he geet no further. He geet th'mop dabbed into his meauth; an then afore he could stir hoo clipped bucket full o'dirty wayter reet o'er his yed, an theer it stuck like a hat. Nearly choked, he tumbled t'greand, an were rollin abeaut an cussin awful, an gashin t'silence o't'neet by cuttin an blasphemous oaths.(39)

The sketches came out weekly in the Trotter, and from 1892 went on sale as penny pamphlets, published by the Trotter, but using Abel Heywood and John Heywood of Manchester for a wider distribution. Sales of the Trotter increased remarkably - and reached 25,000 within six months. Clarke decided to alter the paper to take in a wider geographical readership to further increase sales and on July 14th 1893 he re-vamped the paper as the Bolton Observer and Trotter and started a new paper (in June 1893) called The Bellman, which aimed at a regional circulation. Though The Bellman was reported as doing well on July 21st, the last issue came on September 15th 1893, only a couple of months after its optimistic beginning.

The Tum Fowt Sketches, which had been continued in The Bellman, were transferred to the Cotton Factory Times, along with their writer. Working as an employee of the mass circulation paper of the Lancashire cotton operatives, Clarke now had access to the broader readership he had failed to reach with The Bellman. Its sister paper, the Yorkshire Factory Times, also carried most of Clarke's contributions - including the Tum Fowt Sketches and other dialect pieces. His novel The Knobstick was serialised in both papers during 1893.

In the "Factory Times" papers, Clarke developed a new aspect of the Tum Fowt Sketches, based on industrial life. In his first few months on the paper he produced a series of often-reprinted sketches of mill life "Bill Spriggs Goes Mindin" (reproduced in

Appendix 21), "Bill Spriggs Has a Try At Tacklin", and "Bill Spriggs As A Bobbin Carrier". (41) The mill sketches were republished as penny pamphlets, and also in latter editions of Clarke's newspapers and his Lancashire Annual, reflecting their tremendous popularity.(42) While they give workers a sense of their importance, and the dangers of the work they are engaged in, there is no direct political comment. A year previously, in 1892 at the eve of the Cotton Lock-Out, Clarke had written "Bill Spriggs o't'Cotton Crisis" which carefully avoids the issue of politics in industrial disputes, at a time when the employers were trying to blame 'socialists' as the root of the problem:

"Lord deliver us fro' them socialists!" exclaimed Tim Bullfowt, "an fro' everyone else as wants for t'divide what isn't theirs. When I've geet a penny for a gill, mun I divide it wi everybody else? ...Not me. I supports t'Queen, an t'Constitution, an t'Church, an them's what I believe in."

"That's nowt to do wi what we're talking abeawt" said Bill Spriggs "th'subject of eaur discussion is t'cotton trade, what's in a very bad way just neaw... Th'factory-mesturs is takin abeaut reducin wages everywheer, an t'spinners say they'll have no reduction; they'll do beawt fust.(43)

Clarke left the Cotton Factory Times in 1896, following an argument with the editor. (44) Almost immediately, he started his Teddy Ashton's Journal, which became Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly, for most of its life until demise in 1908. (45) The Tum Fowt Sketches continued each week, though Clarke now had the complete editorial freedom to use the sketches for political purposes, as mentioned in the autobiographical articles referred to earlier. In an early issue of the new journal, he clarifies his use of dialect forms:

I compromise by writing a diluted and conglomerated dialect that may be read in any part of Lancashire or Yorkshire.(46)

His attempt to appeal to broad readership led him to combine the occasional political input into the sketches, with his traditional tomfoolery associated with Bill Spriggs. The first overtly political sketch which appeared in the new Teddy Ashton's Journal was "Bill Spriggs An Patsy Filligan O'er Winter Hill - Likewise Bet", on September 26th and October 3rd 1896. This sketch related to the Winter Hill

trespasses which were then being organised by the SDF and their local allies, to claim a right of way over land belonging to Colonel Richard Ainsworth. The sketch features Bill, Patsy and the author, Teddy Ashton, making their own 'trespass' over the Hill with telling comments:

"There's nobody abeaut," said Bill, "we han it aw to eaurselfs. It's bonny up here, isn't it? It's a dal shame that anybody should try to keep folk off this pleasant stretch o'moor. Is a mon to have noather freish air nor nice walks because he's poor? What reet's ony mon to aw this, I'd like to know? Owd Ainsworth will have a job to get through t'needle's eye o't'Scripter wi' aw this on his back, weren't he? No one mon owt to have mooar lond than he con look after wi hos own honds.(47)

The sketch ends with a rare display of unanimity between Bill and his wife, as Bet chases the odious Reverend Standen, Ainsworth's chaplain, off the moor with her rolling pin. The next piece of political satire was "Bill Spriggs As A Bobby" - perhaps one of his most timeless pieces of comedy, which was repeated several times over the next ninety years. The target of Clarke's wit is the role of the police and municipal corruption. Bill decides 'to have a dust at bobbyin', and is duly interviewed by the local Watch Committee:

"What's your name?"
"Bill Spriggs."
"Oh - the celebrated Bill Spriggs, eh?"
"Ay, but I cornt help it."
"And you want to be of service to the community?"
"Neow, I want t'serve in t'Police Force."

Bill eventually gets on the beat and has little success in catching villains. He is told to improve, or face the sack, and that the easiest thing is to arrest a few drunks. Bill succeeds in arresting a drunk lying on the Town Hall Steps, who turns out to be Alderman Wigglewag, Chairman of the Watch Committee. Bill has to answer for his blunder the next day:

Th'Chief Constable sent for Bill into his reaum.
"We've decided to dispense with your services." he said.
"What for?" asked Bill.
"Why, you thundering idiot! - what did you do last night?"
"Locked a drunken chap" said Bill.

"It was Alderman Wigglewag, you lunatic."
 "Whoever he were, he were drunk."
 "You ought no to have locked hum up!"
 "What should I ha' done then?"
 "You donkey! You should have called a cab and seen him safely home."
 "An' if I see a poor labourer drunk should I put him in a cab an
 send him whum too?"
 "Certainly not! You are a fool!"
 "It seems true then, that t'law shakes honds wi't'rich but pounces t'poor."(48)

In the original sketch, Bill's adventures as a policeman continued for six weeks, before reverting to more respectable forms of idleness. Later that year Bill Spriggs comments on 'the Engineer's Lock-out' and 'the Cotton Crisis' as well as getting into his usual matrimonial difficulties. As the Boer War intensified Clarke gently satirised the rising jingoism amongst sections of the working class, and editorialised for a peaceful compromise with the Boer settlers. In "Bill Spriggs Goes To Th'Labour Church", Clarke helps to remove some popular misconceptions about socialism, and publicise Bolton Labour Church, of which he was Vice-Chairman. In the following year, he ran a series on "Gradely History of England", based on a talk by 'Teddy Ashton' to the Tum Fowt Debatin Menociation. It's possibly the most unusual piece of working class history ever written, beginning with the Peasant's Revolt of 1381 and continuing through to the Levellers and Diggers. The discussion reaches Wat Tyler and John Ball:

Th'common folk (I went on), th'workin'men an' so forth, were aw i'favour o'Wat Tyler's way an took sides wi him agen th'authorities. Abeaut a hundred theausand folk jeined Wat Tyler an other leaders, an they marched to London, wantin' to see th'King, to ax him what he meant, an what he were beaund to do for t'poor folk that were sufferin under such bad hard times. "Trade wer slackt then, were it?" said Bill Spriggs, "Were th'factories stopped, an th'coal pits?"

The narrator continues the story of how Wat Tyler and his supporters met the King and were promised everything they wanted, and most of the crowd went away, pacified with his reassurances, and cheering the King for his gracious promises:

"An did th'King keep his promises?" axed Joe Lung.
 "Did he hek as like," said Ben Roke. He geet a lot o'souldiers together, copt t'leaders o't'poor folk, an hanged 'em. that's way wi cowardly tyrants. They'll promise folk owt to get them i'their power an then they'll turn reaund an kill'em."
 "But King Dick payed for his lyin." said I. "He geet kilt hisselt later on; an awfully kilt too. His own nobles rose agen him, an he lost his throne an his

life."

"An serve him reet for brekkin his word to th'poor people," said Bill Spriggs.
"Th'folk nobbut wanted their reets."(49)

The series ended in January 1902, but their popularity is suggested by Clarke's decision to republish them as a series of pamphlets. During the next six years of the Northern Weekly's existence, the Tum Fowt Sketches were a constant ingredient of the paper's success, with Clarke combining a humorous comment on current popular fads and events and a political comment on issues of the day. "At Th'Gab Show"(50) is an account of a town council meeting, where his political ally Solomon Partington attempted to carry a motion in favour of women being allowed to stand as town councillors. The anti-women arguments of the Tory councillors are satirised, as Bill Spriggs observes the debate from the public gallery. Some of his most sustained political direct writing was produced during the long strike at Sunnyside Mill, Bolton, over the introduction of American-made patent looms. New technology led to greater productivity and weavers were expected to work on six looms at once. Clarke wrote the story "Th'Patent Automatic Cemetery Looms" on 20th May 1905, reproduced as Appendix 23, to draw attention to the strike. The dispute was still in progress the following January, when a series of letters purporting to come from a "Billy Pickinpeg" appeared in the Northern Weekly (one is reproduced as Appendix 24). The argument for the strikers was strongly put across, and the series continued over several issues. On March 10th 1906 Bill Spriggs himself sent a letter in to the paper, lending his support and commenting on a sign in the window of a local shop which said: "No Knobsticks served here. By order, Bill Spriggs M.P." 'Spriggs' also comments on attacks against the 'knobsticks' and large police presence - scabbing on the rates, in his opinion. His solution is "to get eaur Labour M.P.s to do summat to prevent strikes o'this sort - to see that every mestur pays a fair day's wage for a fair day's wark."(51)

During 1907 Clarke increasingly uses Bill Spriggs as a (humorous) political weapon. "Bill Spriggs In Th'Heause O'Commons"(52) is a thinly veiled attack on the absurdities and shallowness of the parlimamentary system of the day. In "A Split at

Tum Fowt", (53) arguments for and against socialism are brought out against a background of splits in the socialist movement nationally - over parliamentary or anti-parliamentary tactics, syndicalism, and Blatchford's militarism. Even more rarified strands of socialist thought, such as the Rev. R.J. Campbell's New Theology movement get an airing, in "New Theology at Tum Fowt.":

Ben Roke introduced th'New Theology. He said, "I see that th'Rev. R.J. Campbell is stirrin' up brotherly love i'religious circles. He's gooin' in for a bit o'rationalism. He declares that th'virgin birth, an miracles, an a twothree other things is aw my eye an Peggy Martin. Well, it's abeaut time th'parsons begun talkin sense." (54)

The Northern Weekly was crippled by a bitter argument among supporters of the paper, with Clarke being accused of fraud. The re-launched Fellowship struggled hard to regain the popularity of its predecessor, but never succeeded. The last Tum Fowt Sketch was in November 1907, "Heaw Bet Spriggs Went On" - about her candidature for the local council elections. It is perhaps appropriate that it was Bet, rather than her husband, who came to figure the most prominently in the last months of the paper. One gets the impression that Clarke began to tire of the Schweikian character of Bill Spriggs, with his mix of naive innocence, apparent stupidity, and an almost peasant-like wit. He seems to increasingly prefer the more aggressive and assertive female character, Bet Spriggs. In "Bet Spriggs Election Address" she says:

Fellow women, an th'brutes yo're teed to -

At last we'ne geet chance to keep th'men in order an put th'world tidy.
Th'law neaw allows women for t'stand for teawn ceouncils, an I'm puttin up,
an yo mun put me in.
Men's had th'game in their honds lung enoof, an look what a mess they'n made
of it. They haven't even had th'gumption to secure decent wages for theirsels
to keep their wives an bring th'childer up gradely. Men's been in power for I
durnt know heaw many generations, an yet today there's theausands on em eaut
o'wark... (55)

With the final demise of Fellowship on March 1st 1908, Clarke's flexibility in being able to use the Tum Fowt Sketches to comment on current political issues came to a close. His work on the Liverpool Weekly Post, which followed directly, was more

editorially circumscribed, though some new sketches of working class life with a critical edge appeared, such as "Bill Spriggs An' Th'Tubs", (56) about mining conditions. The sketch proved prophetic - the Maypole Disaster in Wigan took place the following week. Even as late as 1925 when he was producing little new material, he produced "Red Mopski at Tum Fowt - Is he a Lancashire Ginger or a Double-Dyed Bolsheviki?", (57) which satirised the current hysteria over Soviet Russia. By the 1920s he had patched up relations with the Cotton Factory Times and began writing regular sketches for the paper.

Clarke still had his own publishing ventures after the demise of his paper. Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Annual had been published each Christmas since 1892, and continued with only one break (in 1914, caused by the war emergency) until December 1935, on the eve of his death. A posthumous edition in 1936 appeared, which he had helped to prepare.

Every issue of the Annual contained a 'Tum Fowt' sketch, although they tend to be less politically radical, perhaps aiming at a more general readership. Invariably, they were reprints from sketches published in the Northern Weekly, or its predecessors. Usually, the sketches have a seasonal ring, such as "Christmas at Tum Fowt", in the 1908 edition and "Bill Spriggs Lets Th'New Year In", in 1925. Other sketches reprinted from his Northern Weekly include "Bill Spriggs As a Bobby" (1919), "Bill Spriggs As A Newsagent" (1925), "Bill Spriggs as a Tackler" (1922), and "Bill Spriggs At Th'Baths" (1923).

Occasionally, in the "Editor's Gossip" of the 'Annual', Clarke alludes to the popularity of Bill and Bet Spriggs in local carnivals. This is from 1919:

Correspondents sent me programmes and newspaper reports about Bill and Bet Spriggs figuring in the comic portion of the processions at peace celebrations - at Chorley, Cowling and many other Lancashire towns and villages. (58)

In his introduction to "Bill Spriggs As A Minder", re-published in Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Readings, he observed that :

Bill an Bet are so popular that they'n' figured in May Queen Festivals an' Rose Creawnins at Leyland, Horwich, Chorley, etc. also in waxwork shows, likewise on ice-cream stall fronts, an bin recited abeaut at dozens o'chep tay parties aw o'er t'wide world an mooar too.(59)

The reprinted pamphlets are generally, like the Annual sketches, less political than some of his writing. There are a couple of possible reasons for this. Firstly, most of Clarke's political sketches relate to current events which lose their interest and topicality with the passage of time, and secondly, Clarke was wary of pushing the sketches in too strongly a political direction for commercial reasons. "Bill Spriggs At Th'Labour Church" may be all very well as part of a large number of other features in the Northern Weekly - but may not be as popular on its own.

Some of his most well-known sketches were broadcast on the radio, shortly before his death, by Jim Fleetwood, the Bolton dialect reciter. In his final "Editor's Gossip" he comments on the broadcasts, which included the 'Minder', 'Tackler', and "Who's T'Gaffer?", remarking on scientific progress and the invention of the wireless - unimaginable when the Tum Fowt Sketches were first written in the 1890s. In an article on them in the Cotton Factory Times Clarke wonders whether the radio will be the saviour of dialect:

I am glad we've got some real old dialect on the wireless at last, because it may do something to arrest its slipping from favour. Lancashire dialect, like other local dialect, is slowly dying though it will be a long time before it is dead. It is inevitable I suppose. There is no room for dialect writers today, and I suppose I am the last of the old ones.(60)

Clarke's Tum Fowt Sketches are Lancashire dialect writings' biggest popular success; although Waugh, Laycock and Brierley were very widely read by working class people, cheap modern printing made Clarke's sketches very accessible. He suggests that a million copies of the sketches had been sold by 1925, writing in his Annual for that year. The characters became part of popular culture - witness Clarke's

comments about the effigies of Bill and Bet Spriggs in carnivals. A further indication of their popularity is the continuing memory of his writing, as 'Teddy Ashton', amongst older people in the Lancashire area.

Why were they so popular? Lancashire people are commonly credited with a capacity to laugh at themselves and not take life too seriously; certainly within the Spriggs characters people may have found recognisable caricatures of neighbours and local characters. Bill and Bet Spriggs are always part of the Bolton community for all their absurdities. Perhaps an element of nostalgia creeps into the setting - Tum Fowt becomes suspiciously like a quasi-rural settlement of old cotton workers. In Staton's day, who first used the location, it was. The sense of community based around the 'Dug and Kennel' pub has echoes of the old hand-loom weaving days; that sort of small, closely-knit society, had not totally disappeared in Clarke's day though it had become less typical. Many of his sketches, particularly the "Minder" and "Tackler" ones, were clearly written to appeal to a specific occupational readership, as well as a class and geographical one. The majority of the working class in a town like Bolton were in some ways linked to the cotton trade; the technicalities of the above sketches would be readily comprehensible to most of his readers. The industrial sketches give a sense of pride and value to work which is often undervalued. Both the skill and the dangers inherent in textile work come out in the sketches.

There is a clear political thread running throughout the sketches, including the less overtly political ones, which are perhaps the more successful on a literary level. The sketches feature mostly working class characters; any other character who comes in from 'outside' is usually only a literary device with little substance as a character. One thinks of the mill manager in the mill sketches, the Chief Constable in the 'Bobby'. Unlike many earlier dialect sketches there is no middle class figure to act as a foil to the down-to-earth wisdom of the Lancashire worker (eg in Trafford Clegg's Reaund Bi' Th'Derby), which would help the writing appeal to a middle class, as well as working

class readership. Clarke was pre-eminently the literary expression of the industrial working class of south-east Lancashire. Within the Tum Fowt Sketches and the serial novels, we see a working class which is geographically circumscribed (within a radius of fifteen miles around Bolton) culturally defined by its use of dialect and 'way of life' generally, and industrially specific - based on cotton.

This culture, taken as a whole, was highly conservative and thrived on stability. As Allen Clarke was well aware, while the textile workers were highly class conscious it was an inward-looking consciousness. Trade unionism, rather than socialism, was the automatic expression of their situation - defensive, rather than progressive or revolutionary. The Labour Party, as the parliamentary expression of trades union conservatism, fitted in well with the working class culture of Lancashire at the turn of the century. Clarke attempted to use this culture against itself, through dialect and recognisable characters to 'make socialists' as well as making people laugh. He certainly made people laugh, but whether he was successful in his wider political ambition is more difficult to establish. The messages in the sketches were open to different readings - at times Spriggs is nothing more than an idiot; on other occasions he is used to make political points. Could the reader conclude that even his 'serious' points are open to ridicule? The obvious literary parallel is Hasek's The Good Soldier Schweik, in which the character's dumbness is a clear disguise for political and social acuteness. In Bill Spriggs this is less obvious at times, and the prevailing impression that could be read into the character is that he is just a buffoon. Similarly, with Bet Spriggs, Clarke is expressing his support for greater freedom and independence for women, using the stereotype of the 'battleaxe' type of female, complete with rolling pin. Yet, in many of the sketches she remains no more than a 'battleaxe', and the issue of women's rights and suffrage becomes in danger of being laughed out of court. Similarly, the Patsy Filligan sketches use the thick-Irishman stereotype and attempt to turn them upside down: the thick Paddy has the last word over the English gent. In sketches like "Down A Coal Pit" and "Patsy and the Prince in India" it works;

elsewhere the old stereotype is simply reinforced.

Allen Clarke's Poetry

Clarke wrote considerably less poetry than prose, and many of his poetic attempts lack the sharpness and wit of his prose writings. Dotted throughout the Trotter and Northern Weekly one comes across poems in dialect, under the name of 'Teddy Ashton'. His "Voice of the Half-Timers" is one of his most successful pieces, drawing attention to the plight of the half-timers and bitterly attacking the system which allows it. "In Praise o'Lancashire" was evidently popular, and was re-printed, with minor alterations, several times. It is unabashed chauvinism:

A song in praise o'Lancashire, O'Lancashire lad an'lass,
A posy rhyme o'roses red, for Lancashire man an' dad,
A song i'praise o'Lancashire, that spite o'speilin smook
Is th'jolliest country yet i'th'world, wherever yo' may look.(61)

His poem "Hard Times" was never re-printed after it appeared in the Northern Weekly during the cotton depression in 1903, yet is less sentimentalised than most of his poetry:

Oh, sad hard times an bitter,
Coud hearth an cubbort bear-
There's meit enoof i'th'kingdom,
Why cornt we have eaur a share?
Oh, tell us, yo that ule us,
Why connot we be fed?
Eaur childer are cryin for butties,
An we hannot any bread!(62)

"The Gradely Prayer" is without doubt his most popular poem, and one of Lancashire dialect's best known poems as a whole which expresses in very 'homely' terms some fairly complex themes - work and leisure, learning, charity, pleasure, comradeship and democracy. An allusion to his own tragic domestic experiences and ensuing 'cosmic' beliefs is hinted at in the lines: An' give us eaur share/O' sorrows's lesson/That we

may prove/Heaw grief's a blessin'.(63) The poem is still widely read at 'Lancashire nights' even today, and often quoted in dialect collections, though the author is not always acknowledged, or incorrectly ascribed.

Allen Clarke's Circle of Dialect Writers

As important as the work of Clarke himself, is the large circle of friends and contributors which grew up around his papers. The central ones are: Fred Plant (Harry o'th'Hills), R. H. Brodie (Billy Button), James Haslam (the Second Gravedigger), Joseph Whittaker (The Salford Innocent), Alfred Pearce (Lord Knowsho), Sam Fitton (various pseudonyms), Elizabeth Eckersall (Busy Bee), J. R. Abbott (Ab'ut' Jack) and Sam Hill. There was also a wider circle of contributors who wrote in dialect, whom we shall look at later, as well as working class writers such as John Tamlyn and Arthur Laycock who wrote mostly in standard English.

Robert Henry Brodie - 'Billy Button'

Brodie wrote many dialect sketches and poems for local newspapers, as well as contributing material in the Northern Weekly. His "Lay o'Lancashire" has already been quoted as an indication of working class regional pride, expressed in such lines as:

There's mony a factory lassie
Wi clogs upon her feet,
If hoo'd nobbut brass behind her,
Could prima donnas beat

There's mony a lad i'th'factory,
Wi breeches made o'cord,
Could lick aw th'gents at College
If he could but afford.(64)

The sense of frustrated potential amongst working class people was a popular

theme in much of Allen Clarke's work also, and writers who had 'made it' against the odds of privilege and opportunity were looked on as almost heroic figures. Brodie (as 'Billy Button') wrote a short account of J.T. Staton in Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Annual 1920,(65 - and Appendix 8) describes him as "a champion dialect writer" and a supporter of working class causes in Bolton. In this article, Brodie also refers to the work of Edwin Waugh, Sam Laycock and others to defend Lancashire dialect against accusations of 'vulgarity'.

Much of his dialect poetry is unexceptional, reflecting the established themes of subject matter of the previous generation. "Eaur Childer" was published both in the Northern Weekly and his Random Rhymes, (66) but hardly goes beyond the banal:

I were comin whoam fro my wark t'other neet
An thinkin a twothree things o'er;
A thout coom across me - what should we do,
If aw th'childer were no more?

His "Better Times" is more rooted in Lancashire workers' experience, about the sense of relief at the mill going back to full production:

Come Sally, lass, come dry thi een
An' let thoose tears no mooar be seen;
For neaw dost yer, lass? this is prime,
Next week we're startin' on full time

The poem tells how hard things have been, and now the family can get new clothes and things for the children. It ends:

Tho' it's bin a lung an dreary spell,
As plenty beside us con aw on 'em tell;
Thank God! we'n getten th'wust on't'o'er,
An' th'clemmin an' starvin'll be no more.(67)

The poem would not be out of place in the work of Waugh, Brierley and any other 'safe' dialect poet of the 1860s. This makes his prose sketch, "Th'Invasion Bogey" all the more fascinating. Published in the Northern Weekly in 1906, the sketch is a highly

political piece of socialist anti-war propaganda, based upon a discussion between the author ('Billy Button') and 'Tommy Harrop', about Lord Roberts' plans for national defence and re-armament. Tommy Harrop exclaims, after the author tells him of 'Lord Bobs' plans to defend 'eaur country':

"Eaur country?" said Tommy, "Why, heaw much on it belongs to thee, or me? He knows that if him an aw th'big men con nobbut get folk takkin interest i'national defence they'll forget aw abeaut th'land laws, th'unemployed, an aw them measures o'reform.

The discussion takes in the issue of working class jingoism and deference, Chartism, the possibility of violent revolution and whether the army would open fire on the workers:

"Suppose they drilled an manipulated their weapons like th'owd Chartists did afore they went to Peterloo. Why mon, if they made up their minds they could soon have a revolution an' be th'masters o'th'situation."
"There's not much fear o'that," I said. "Look at th'trouble i'Russia. Did th'army theer stond up for workin folk? Not they, when they were ordered to fire, they shot their own peaceable an honourable countrymen."(68)

The author suggests that the answer is socialism based on 'rational reform' demonstrated by Blatchford in Merrie England. The sketch is interesting for its use of a common form of Lancashire dialect sketch - a conversation between two down-to-earth Lancashire workers - to put across radical socialist ideas in a quite open and direct way. For all his historical inaccuracies, the sketch reflects the rising awareness of working class struggles in the past, providing lessons for the modern labour movement.

The following year Brodie wrote a standard English piece in the re-named Fellowship about access to the land and the growing trend to prevent working class people's chance of enjoying their countryside. Moving from the particular issue of a footpath closure on Turton Moor, he goes to the general principle that this is purely symbolic of a wider denial of basic rights, the answer to which can only come from working class political representation, in the form of Socialism 'based on the ethical

teachings of the greatest of teachers, "The Carpenter of Nazareth". As a poet of the workers, his concern is to widen the readership of his work but this can only be resolved on a political level:

...the power to give utterance to one's thoughts in rhythmical measure is grand; but the efforts of the Reformers and Agitators are needed if ever the masses of the people are to become thoroughly acquainted with Art and Poetry.

Brodie is convinced that the recent successes of the Labour Party in the general election are an indication that change is on the way, and ends with a quote from Carpenter's "England Arise":

The long, long night is over,
Faint in the east, behold the dawn appear,
Out of your evil dream of toil and sorrow-
Arise O England for the day is here.(69)

Brodie clearly saw himself in the tradition of Lancashire dialect writing, yet on occasions was able to break out of the more conservative aspects of it and use dialect as a political weapon. In a debate on "Are Critics Necessary?" in the Northern Weekly, Brodie expresses his debt to "Tim Bobbin, Ned Waugh, Ben Brierley an other Lancashire Layrocks" though says that Allen Clarke "were th'mon that gan me mooast encouragement", through publishing his work in the Northern Weekly and the Lancashire Annual.

Brodie is not among Lancashire's finest literary dialect writers, but he represents an important part of the dialect writing milieu which developed around Clarke's journalism, and later took organisational shape in the Lancashire Author's Association, of which he became its first treasurer.

Fred Plant - 'Harry o'th'Hills'

Fred Plant was a working class writer from Stockport, and became one of the

town's first Labour councillors. For a while he was employed as a sub-editor on the Northern Weekly and wrote a vast amount of short stories in both standard English and dialect, as well as some novels. His standard English stories tend to be much more political than his short stories, which are largely humorous and lightweight - no political satire emerges from the humour, in the way the Tum Fowt Sketches often did. As 'Harry o'th'Hills' he wrote a series of dialect sketches in the Northern Weekly between 1897 and 1901. "Bob Bowker's Bicycle" is a comment on the bicycle craze which was then sweeping the country and also reflects the comradeship of the dialect literary milieu. He describes Bob Bowker purchasing a heavyweight 'roadster' and deciding to ride over to Bolton, from his Stockport home, via Barton Bridge and Walkden:

When he were just entering Bowtun he ran into another biker.
"Is this Bowtun? asked Bob, when t'other mon had done sayin his prayers.
"It isn't Bowtun tha wants," said th'mon, who wore a black moustache an other things.
"It's a prairie, wheer than con prance abeaut an hurt nobody."
"Yigh, it's Bowtun aw want too. Do you know a writer chap cawed Teddy Ashton?"
T'other mon looked feart.
"What dost want him for? Is it a summons?"
"That's my business" said Bob.
"Well, it's thy business to find him" said th'mon.
"Here," said Bob. "Aw'll tell thee what it is. I've a letter o'Introduction fro' Harry o'th'Hills to Teddy.
"Come on then" said th'mon, who were Teddy hissel, "I've often yerd Harry say they had some champion riders i'Stockport. But if theau's any respect for me that'll pay somebody to wheel that infernal machine some way behind us. Hast not made a mistake an browt a wringing machine ostid of a bike?"
"Aw 'combinations' are like this," said Bob. "It's a new build."(70)

Like other dialect writers Plant used a regular character - Bob Bowker, but more often 'Billy Banks'. Billy's adventures usually relate to current popular issues of the day, such as "Billy Banks An' Th'Pictur Puzzles" and "Billy Banks Diets Hissel". In the former sketch, Billy Banks comments on the latest craze of picture-puzzle newspapers, offering lavish prizes for the winners of their competitions. In "Billy Banks Diets Hissel" the subject of vegetarianism is touched on:

"This is what some folk caw livin th'higher life," he said, "They sen if yo kill nowt for t'sake o'makkin food yo are doin t'reet thing 'at's bin ordained."

"Who says that?" enquired Matty.

"Oh, tons o'folk, amung 'em an owd cobbler named Tolstoy, A Russian. He's a rare good mon too is Tolstoy, for he lives up to what he teaches as fur as they'll let him."

"I dunnot know much abeaut him bein a good mon, but if he lives upo' vegetarian slops an hemp seed, I should think Hungary 'd be a mooar likely place for him to live," said Matty.

"An another thing. If we annot to kill owt to eit, what abeawt aw them microbes we swallow wi every mouthful?"

In the end, Bill's resolve weakens, though not totally:

He kept up wi his dietin an it did hima warld o'good. He's gotten greit faith i'vegetarianism he says, but to show he's noan any ways bigoted he has a beef-steak puddin to his dinner abeawt twice a week.(71)

This sketch is about the nearest Plant comes to a political dialect sketch, making general observations about Tolstoyanism and the need for a healthy diet. This should be compared with his "Lotions An Potions: or, Yab Cronshaw's Doctorin" - an amusing tale of herbal medicine.(72) Yab and Lisha Robin go to see an old friend, Si Butterby, who keeps a herbal medicine shop on Hyde Road, Gorton. Yab and Lisha end up looking after the shop whilst Si goes out, and disaster ensues. There are numerous references to herbal remedies, an important aspect of working class self- help in the nineteenth century, which originated in the handloom-weavers' culture. Herbal medicine, healthy dieting and Tolstoyanism were all related aspects of the broader working class socialist sub-culture culture expressed in the pages of the Northern Weekly.

Fred Plant's standard English sketches, particularly his "Chronicles of Coptown", often have a more industrial setting, and deal with strikes, poverty and victimisation of trades unionists. He frequently uses dialect in the dialogue between characters in the standard English sketches. This is an exchange between the trades unionists of Valley Mill, confronting their employer Warcliff for higher pay:

"You threatened a strike eh?" sneered Warcliff.

"We threatend nowt," replied Crofts, "We're for t'arrange things if we con.

There's nowt gotten wi strikes only bad blood, an a lot of hunger for innocent women an childer".

"Spoken like a sensible fellow, Crofts," said the manager, nodding his head approvingly.

"Neow, we've noan come here to talk abeawt strikes," broke in Elkins, "If owt o'that sort happens it'll come fro t'proper quarter - an at th'last pinch." "You mean it will be your officials that will declare war; the men who live on your hard earnings," sneered Warcliff.

"I'm glad you said 'hard earnings'" broke in Drummond for the first time. Warcliff saw his mistake, and bit his lip. "I'd sooner be what I am than one o'th'officials o't'union. They 'n everybody place 'cept thersels, an I've never known one on 'em make his fortin wi doin it."

"I think we're wandering from the subject," snarled Warcliff. (73)

Here, Plant very successfully uses the dialect speech of the workers to emphasise the class differences between themselves and Warcliff. Warcliff's smooth, upper class speech is the oral expression of his class position and masks the trickery and deviousness of his nature. The dialect speech emphasises the straightforward honesty and basic decency of the workers.

Joseph Whittaker - 'The Salford Innocent'

Whittaker wrote for the Northern Weekly over a number of years, contributing a mixture of dialect and standard English prose and poetry. Eventually he emigrated to New Zealand, from where he sent the occasional sketch. One of his earliest contributions was "Th'Mon's Week" - the life of a working class man:

Th'bed pulls hard o'Monday morn an fain, i'bed yo'd lie,
But if that should be yore marlock, th'wife keeps a wakken eye.
"Ger up Ned, yo're late!" hoo says, "Come on, dost hear me speak?"
So eawt yo tumble, half-asleep an feelin very weak.
Yo get into yore workday cloas, an leave yore Sunday best,
Th'wife 'll see hem put away an brushed without request.
They're thine no more till Saturday; ay chaps, it's widely known
As warkin chaps own little they con call their very own.(74)

His dialect sketch, "Th'Rival Poets" is perhaps his most interesting dialect piece, for its reference back to the time of Waugh, Brierley and Laycock, and a suggestion of the culture of hand-loom weaving days. It has many similarities to James

Swinglehurst's Summer Evenings With Old Weavers (75) for its evocation of a group of old working class radicals, reminiscing about the revolutionary exploits of their youth and telling of their pride in their cultural roots. The central character is Ben Weakly - 'a noted character some thirty yer sin'. Whittaker continues:

His partikler cronies were worn-out factory toilers an th'like, who hadn't o'er much to spend, an fun his yarb-beer an company as beneficial an inspiring as owt to be met wi i'th'drink traffic anywheer. Other folk fun Owd Weakly's a pleasant place o'callan jined i'any gam as were gooin on, or had their fortin's towed. Th'skoomestur had had no hond i'eddicatin Owd Weakly or his cronies, an their rough, homespun speech an reasonin gained in force an truth what it lost i'scholarly finish. They were Radicals o'th'owd type, to a mon, an woe betide the stranger who ventured to raise his voice i'support o'Toryism...(76)

On the occasion described in the sketch, 'th'Salford poet' (probably Whittaker) and one of Weakly's 'cronies', Matt Scribble, have a poetry contest. Unknown to them, one of the visitors is Edwin Waugh. After the competition ends inconclusively, Waugh asks if he could read one of his compositions, but Weakly says "We'n suffered enough" - much to Waugh's consternation. The company departs, and only at the end does Sammy Owen, one of the company, disclose that the famous author of "Come Whoam To Thi Childer An Me" had been amongst them.

Whittaker contributed much more standard English prose sketches than dialect works, which seems a pity. His command of the use of dialect in both poetry and prose is of a high standard. His dialect work clearly brings out the sense of a literary tradition from the days of Waugh, Brierley and Laycock and present day dialect writers' indebtedness to them. However, Whittaker was prepared to take up themes of modern day working class life, exemplified in "Th'Mon's Week".

James Haslam - The 'Second Gravedigger' and 'Buffer Beer'

Haslam shared Clarke's early background as a Bolton 'piecer' in a spinning mill. His earliest work was for the Bolton Trotter. He shared also in Clarke's socialist

politics and both had been involved in the attempt to form a Lancashire Piecer's Union.(77) He worked full-time on Teddy Ashton's Journal and various other local papers including the Blackpool Gazette, before finding a more permanent position on the Liverpool Courier. He had been brought up in an old handloom-weaving family, amongst the last survivors of the craft in Bolton, and the experience formed the basis of his novel, The Handloom Weaver's Daughter, which was first published as "The Mill on the Moor" in Teddy Ashton's Journal. His industrial experience led to stories of factory life, including "A Piecer's Ambition". The story mirrors Haslam's own ambition to leave piecing and 'get on' in the world, though the story is a tragedy, rather than a tale of optimism. In it, Billy Stott's health deteriorates due to the unhealthy conditions inside the mill; Sarah, his sister, a weaver, suffers from the same cause, and the father - a minder - loses his sight and so is unable to work. One night, Billy comes home from the Technical School feeling sick and exhausted:

"Whatever's to do, Billy? Theau'rt not ill, arta? God help us if theau falls ill!"
"I'm aw reet mother. I'm just a bit teighert, that's aw. What's doctor say abeawt eaur Sarah?"

"He's aw but gan her up," said Mrs. Stott, weeping.

"Durnt cry mother. We mun pray to God. He'll happen save eaur Sarah's life an make her better. Happen he's only tryin us. Besides, as't be rich someday. Durnt cry, see yo, I'm aw reet (trying to strengthen himself). "I've browt a fruit pie for eawr Sarah - should I tek it to her?"

Sarah dies, and Billy is involved in a horrific accident. Whilst changing a broken strap which powers the mule, he gets caught and dragged round with the pulley:

"My God! He's caught in the drum!" screeched the minder.

Several other workmen were soon on the spot, two or three of them running to have the engine stopped. In a few more seconds though, Billy's body was thrown over the "Wheel yead" on to the spinning room floor. He was picked up unconscious, one of his arms having been dislocated from the shoulder. "This is a mess!" exclaimed his minder, as he sickened with the sight. Then, to the little piecer, "Harry, wipe this blood off t'wheels while we take Billy to th'watch heause." (78)

Billy survives, with the loss of his left arm. He finds a job as a letter carrier and general factotum round the mill and marries his sweetheart, Polly Yates.

Though a sad tale, Haslam avoids heavy melodrama, and succeeds in reflecting the

reality of life in the cotton industry when he was writing. The use of dialect gives an added sense of realism to the story, which is both pathetic and tragic. "The Plebeian Student" also features an ambitious working class boy as the central character. He is the son of a handloom weaver, but has to go into the mill instead of carrying on his father's occupation, which was virtually extinct. He spends his time 'pouring over the contents of a book, or endeavouring, in his uncouth way, to fathom some fascinating secret of Nature.' Enoch was raised as a Methodist, but is increasingly coming to doubt his faith. His mother calls him for Sunday School and the following ensues:

"Enoch, neaw Enoch, are ta gettin ready? It's near two bi th'clock an th'Sunday Skoo bell's ringin. Are ta comin?"

"Aw reet mother, aw'm comin'. But Enoch's mind was deeply absorbed in Bamford's vivid account of Peterloo, and he afterwards sat thinking of the social and political maltreatment which seemed to have been the lot of the labouring classes - the stock to which he belonged - for ages past. His thoughts held him spellbound until the school was over.(79)

The story is about the awakening of political radicalism amongst working class youth, and the conflict between mother and son. Enoch eventually leaves home after a major row, and joins the army. He intends to leave and become a teacher in a working class school - but dies in a battle at the Khyber Pass. His mother, on her death bed, hears the news and orders her younger son to stop burning Enoch's books, as she had previously told him to do so.

A shorter sketch, entirely written in dialect, is his "Owd Nick, Th'Weighver", based on a character that Haslam may have known in the last days of handloom weaving in Bolton:

He were a free an easy chap. Those folk us reckons to be eddicated would ha cawd him a Bohemian like sort o'chap. But nobody could say as Nick e'er attempted to rob a poor mon. If he did slope anybody, it were some sma tradesmen or other as could afford to be a little bit diddled i'those days, for they used to compensate their losses by diddlin other folk as could weel afford to pay for their stuff.... But Nick's deead neaw, an his generation o'individuals has gone spark eaut.(80)

Many years later, Haslam was involved in a long running debate with members of

the Lancashire Authors' Association over the desirability of 'preserving' Lancashire dialect, which is described in the following chapter. He argued that the dialect was "uncouth, a confounded social disadvantage, a thing that should be kicked out of existence." Perhaps the response led him to moderate his statement slightly. Later he contributed an article for the Record which adopted a more conciliatory tone, and observed that:

One district differs from another. I was cradled in the dialect. My mother was a handloom weaver's wife, and to get on with bobbin making she used to tell me dialect stories till I went to sleep.(81)

He goes on to argue that dialect speech is dwindling, and many of the features of old Lancashire - mill girls in clogs and shawls - have given way to well dressed young women who crowd 'into the gorgeous halls of the town'.

Haslam is an interesting example of a working class Lancashire writer who, ultimately, left his origins for the world of professional journalism. He became the President of the National Union of Journalists and was an active member of the Communist Party for a number of years; by 'leaving his origins' I refer to a cultural distancing, rather than a political one. Whereas Clarke was happy to continue writing for a Lancashire working class readership, and churning out his Tum Fowt Sketches, the more ambitious piecer, James Haslam, followed the path to national journalism and left behind the dialect work of his youth. In 1919 he wrote a short reminiscence of his career, and he ends by describing a meeting with an MP - almost certainly J.R. Clynes, the ex-piecer: Clynes greets him in the office of a national paper:

"Oh," he said, "allow me to congratulate you on being made president of the National Union of Journalists." And he smiled. And as we turned into Fleet Street, the world's biggest newspaper street, he remarked, "Haslam, do you ever think of our old piecer days?"

"I do," I answered.

And we lit our pipes and walked towards the dome of St. Paul's in silence - in silence amid the midnight roar of London's newspaper machinery. It is an interesting old world to be sure.(82)

Haslam is justified in his piece of self congratulatory nostalgia, though one can't help thinking that a precondition for his journalistic success was to cast off much of the cultural baggage which had gained him a foothold in journalism, on the Bolton Trotter. A skilful use of dialect would get him popularity in Lancashire, but could be a handicap in the world of national journalism; so the little piecer and Lancashire dialect writer became the clever London journalist, and could muse with parliamentary friends that the system, for all its faults, had been pretty good to them.

Sam Fitton - 'Peter Pike', 'Sally Butter'oth', 'Billy Blobb', etc.

Fitton was another former little piecer who had enormous literary and artistic talents. He was a highly popular dialect writer, and a skilful caricaturist - making his mark by drawing cartoons of workmates on the spinning room walls. After a time at Oldham Art College he began writing regularly for the Cotton Factory Times and was also in great demand as a dialect reciter. He contributed dialect sketches to the Northern Weekly, as well as illustrating many of Clarke's sketches in the Lancashire Annual and Tum Fowt Sketches - including portraits of Bill and Bet Spriggs. He was one of Lancashire's most popular dialect writers and performers: perhaps more popular than Clarke in some ways (see Appendix). The poet Ammon Wrigley describes him thus:

As a public entertainer, he was for twenty five years the delight of Lancashire audiences. Few singers and reciters are authors, and his concerts were out of the ordinary, as he rarely gave anything but his own work, and he composed the tunes to his songs.(83)

Wrigley, pre-eminently the poet of the Saddleworth moors, forms a stark contrast to Fitton. Though the two men were good friends, their subject matter was totally different. Fitton wrote about the way of life of Lancashire factory people, whereas Wrigley had little time for it. Wrigley spells it out:

He often called me a brother bard, but we were miles apart in what appealed to us and formed the subject matter of our verse. I am not stirred by the town, or its people, but to Sam, they were an unfailing source of inspiration. He loved the terraced houses, the life and bustle of the streets, and the clatter of clogs.(84)

Fitton is closer to Clarke in his love of the factory culture of Lancashire (which both helped to fashion), but he does not attempt to make political propaganda from his dialect sketches of working class life. His descriptions of Oldham factory workers are 'straight'. There is no Bill Spriggs or Patsy Filligan making subtle political points, and his work resembles his description of "Eawr Lancashire Dialect":

It has no vain pretensions, but yo'll find it's gradely made;
It's honest in it's dealin's an co'es a spade a spade. (85)

He expresses the down to earth feelings of 'ordinary people', and it is those people whom he writes for. One of his most popular songs, "Eawr Sarah's Getten A Chap", is about the consternation of a working class family having to cope with their daughter courting a clerk:

He comes a courtin' every neet,
He fills eawr cat wi'dread;
He's sky-blue gaiters on his feet,
An' hair-oil on his yed;
He likes to swank abeawt an' strut,
An talk abeawt his "biz";
He's summat in an office but
I don't know what it is!(86)

Some of his contributions to the Northern Weekly had a topical slant and reflected the broadly socialist views of the editor. At the height of the Boer War, Fitton's "A Christmas Conflagration" was published, which gently satirises the war and its supporters; the scene is the tap room of the Gib and Donkey, on Christmas Eve:

Sam o'Tummy's were sat reet i'front o't'grate, wi his shoon on t'fener an a newspaper i'front of his een. He were quite absorbed wi t'latest war news, for he were very fond o'readin' abeawt t'war, which, by t'way, is a jolly sight yessier nor takkin part in it; it's better to read a bulletin, than have a bullet in, anyway. I'd sooner be hit bi a Reuter's telegram or a lyddite shell.(87)

Fitton is at his best when he is writing about the unpretentious Lancashire factory worker who professes little interest in 'politics' though is not entirely without a sense of principle. In "Lancashire's All Right" the author falls into conversation with a Lancashire worker, sitting opposite in the third class compartment. He is heading for Nearport-on-the-Cheep, with his family. The author attempts to discuss current politics:

I ventured: "What do you think about this fabric glove controversy, and Tariff Reform, and the cotton trade generally?"
He lit a match and smiled. "Eh; I ne'er bother my yed about such things mon. I allus reckon to put trust i'those chaps up theer ut know mooar nor me. I mind who I vote for at election times. I thinks hard, make my mark, then trust to luck. I'm a warkin chap; noan a bloomin' encyclopaedia."

Fitton is tapping into a very strong part of working class culture - the sense of politics being apart from their experience, being conducted at a distance by 'them'. Fitton is putting himself in the position of the inquisitive, perhaps youthful working class intellectual, such as Clarke: he is faced with a solid, non-political wall of 'live and let live' philosophy:

I resumed: "The human race is a queer assembly, and don't you think-"
"Nawe, I don't think at o - at least when on my holidays. Never mind t'human race owd mon. What's bown to win t'big race next week? Let's talk abeawt gradely gamblin'. We con happen win an odd bob ortwo. I'm bown to let th'human race look after itsel' for a week or two, an' if tha wants to be exercisin thi political exunberance while I'm away, try to drop th'price o'beef an' bacon; an' if tha's ony time left, set abeawt th'House o' Lords. I'm on my holidays."
I gave it up. But, bet on me, Lancashire's all right.(89)

Fitton is clearly sympathetic to the down-to-earth character, and satirises himself, as the questioner fussing about 'tariff reform', the 'fabric glove controversy' and other issues which the 'politically-minded' might think important at the time. Clearly, his enthusiasm wasn't shared by this 'typical' Lancashire worker - and just as well too, Fitton is saying. As long as there are these independent-minded no-nonsense characters, Lancashire will be 'all right'.

Fitton isn't advocating or sympathising with the idea that people should sit back and take whatever comes to them; he has a sense of right and wrong, and there are definite limits to how far working class people will be pushed before they hit back, though it's a defensive response to a situation in which 'they' have overall control. In "Feight Fair" he writes in support of militant action against worsening conditions in the mills, though he advises his readers to temper militancy with a sense of fairness:

An' if we grunt or mak' a fuss,
They nobbut seem to scoff it;
They dunno care a fig for us
If they con make their profit.
They think it wisdom to deride,
An' sweat their humble neighbour;
They'd ha' no profits to divide
If they could get no labour.

But should they bring contention nigh,
Through greed and aggravation,
We'll win wi'th' "union" battle cry,
An' th'swort o' combination.
A fig for strife, an' hungry seets!
Be hanged to stormy weather!
But if we han to force eawr reets,
Feight fair, an' keep together.(90)

This poem perhaps more than any other shows the distance travelled by popular Lancashire dialect writers since the time of Waugh. The idea of referring to the cotton masters as 'them' would be unimaginable to Waugh, or Brierley and Laycock. The notion of combining together in a union, and taking strike action would be unthinkable, however fair the fight. This is the reverse side of Fitton's work: whilst most of his writing centres on the life of the cotton workers, the employers never feature as characters, only as an alien, repugnant force. In "Cotton Fowd" Fitton uses the idea behind Laycock's "Bowton's Yard" to describe the inhabitants of a small textile community - his description of the 'gentleman' who lives on the hill is worth quoting:

I'that big heawse at top o'th'hill,
There lives a millionaire.
He's o his loaves an' muffins baked,
His mind is free o'care.
There's some think he's an angel, an'
He looks it, yo' con bet.
He happen wears a halo but
I haveno fun it yet.

He wears tay-party whiskers an'
They hang deawn on his chest.
They say he's quite a gentlemen,
I reckon he knows best.
He never looks at sich as me,
He's one o'th'upper class.
I dunno like his whiskers, but
I weesh I had his brass.(91)

Clearly, Fitton is not looking for any middle class patronage or support. He is writing for a working class readership - whether on the Cotton Factory Times, Oldham Chronicle, Northern Weekly or his own short-lived Crompton Chanticlear. Although much of his writing is light, humorous and homely this isn't to tailor it to middle class standards of 'respectability' - it appears to be what his readers and listeners amongst the working class wanted. Like 'Teddy Ashton' Fitton was far more of an enigma than much of his work might suggest - he was an accomplished musician, artist as well as writer and was well read on political matters. His obituary in the LAA Record describes him as "thoroughly Bohemian in manner" and caring "little for self-advancement or for worldly gettin-on". Indeed, his work was never published in book form during his life-time, and it was only by the prompting of Ammon Wrigley that Gradely Lancashire appeared in 1929, partly as a means of supporting his widow who had fallen on hard times. (92)

Sam Hill: 'The Stalybridge Bard'

Hill has many similarities to Fitton. As Fitton was very much a part of Oldham working class life, and Sam Hill was a Stalybridge institution. Much of Hill's work appeared initially in the local press, before a selection appeared entitled Foirewood - Splinters An Shavin's Fro' A Carpenter's Bench. Hill was a blacksmith who later became a carpenter and stage manager for a touring theatre. Hill's work presents certain problems which are by no means confined to this writer alone; in particular, how representative was his published work of his output as a whole? Just as we have

seen earlier, where John Critchley Prince wrote some fairly obscure radical poems which were not reprinted in his collected writings, one must speculate whether the writings of Hill, and others including Fitton, did not suffer a similar fate. At a celebration of his work in Stalybridge, in 1957, R. H. Isherwood of the Lancashire Authors' Association made this comment:

He had no rancour or bitterness in his make-up; it was not for him to curse or rail against the hardships and settings and crudities of his time; his concern always was with the dauntless folks who with such courage faced and grappled with them.(93)

This quote in a sense expresses the contradictions of some Lancashire working class writers. Many found it difficult to portray working class people without an element of what seems like condescension. Yet the impression one gets from Hill's work, overall, is of a genial, homely character who wrote of simple everyday themes. Was he a victim of his own self-image? It is worth firstly having a look at some of the poems he was best known for. "Owd Anvil", the tale of an old blacksmith, his father's occupation, was often reprinted. This is an excerpt:

Ther'd use't be a blacksmith 'ut liv't deawn i'th'teawn,
His anvil's o'reawsty, his hearth's tumble't deawn;
But, tho' his wark's finished an'carted away,
There's mony a one tawks o'owd Anvil to-day.
Derry deawn, derry deawn day.

He ne'er aped his betters, content wi' his own;
A happier mortal aw'm sure wur ne'er known;

Th'mates ov his skoo-days wur pals up to th'end
An' he'd fasten hissel if it loosened a friend.(94)

In "Owd Anvil" we see the 'typical' Lancashire worker so beloved of middle class respectability - always ready to do a good turn, content with his lot, and always a smile on his face. In "Rich and Fettered - Poor But free", the themes of Brierley's "Weaver of Wellbrook" re-emerge, of the poor worker, satisfied with the life he leads and the spiritual riches that money cannot buy. Even so, the idyll still seems beyond the reach of many:

Aw'm but a toilin' worker here,
Aw've nowt i'th'shape o'wealth,
Nor do aw yearn for luxury:
Gie me mi strength an'health.
A white-washed cot, wi' sonded floor;
A spring well, clear and sweet,
An' tothry bonny childer too,
Wi faces clean an'breet,
A rood or two o'garden greawnd,
A cote for t'keep some hens,
A spot for t'grow a bacon plant,
An'tothry chicken pens.(95)

Hill always wrote of working people - the class he was born into, and lived among. His treatment of them verges on the sentimental, and appears to avoid any critical comment on society. However, within his writings there is an underlying sense of pride in his class and his community. At times, he is not afraid of expressing social criticism, such as that found in "Moor To Be Pitied Than Blamed":

Ther's monny a chap sufferin' today,
Un' bearin' o'th'troubles 'ut com',
Bitin' th'lip, an' smartin' for th'sake
O'th'woife an'some childer a whoam.
Th'tyrant 'ut's o'er him grips him keen,
When he does reet it seems to be wrong;
Black looks, short time, ay, an'th'sack,
If he retaliates wi his tongue.(96)

The poem ends with a tongue-in-cheek attack on poets - "they prate abeawt beautiful things", amid a reality of poverty and death:

For poets are poverty's pals,
Tho' grand language pictures they'n framed
(Un' they don't do mich harm, after o') -
Ther moor to be pitied than blamed!(97)

Although Hill never worked in the cotton industry, his work clearly shows an understanding of the cotton workers' lives - the job itself, and the culture of the mill. His best known poem on cotton work is probably "Doffin' Toime" - or "Th'Owd Spinner's Lament". Clearly based on Bealey's poem, "My Piece is O' Bu' Woven Eawt" which he quotes at the beginning of the poem, the poem uses spinning imagery

to describe a workers feeling that his death is near:

Prepare thiself' owd lad, for t'goo
Wheer they spin nowt but superfine;
Aw'm ready, quite, when th'summons comes,
Aw'm ready neaw for th' "Doffin' Toime".(98)

Yet in "'Bridge Wakes Tuesday" the sentimentality of "Doffin' Toime" gives way to a much sharper attack on mill work, which satirises nostalgia for 'the good old days' of life in the mills. Tom, an old spinner, meets a friend and they get talking about their lives. Tom agrees to sing "Aw'm a Poor Owd Spinner" to his friend:

When aw wur six yer owd and yo' known,
To th'factory aw wur sent;
An monny a hundert happy heawrs
I'th'jenny reawm aw've spent;
Aw've bin knocked an' punced abeawt
Loike a footbo', left an' reet,
Till aw didn't know whether aw're piecin'
Wi mi honds or wi mi feet.

The song tells of the piecer being robbed by the spinner of his earnings, though eventually he gets his 'set of mules' and treats his own piecers little differently).

Aw'd lay me deawn at th'back o'th creel
Whoile mi piecer did mi wark.(99)

All that's left for the spinner now is to go into the workhouse 'wheer o'th' good spinners go".

Hill had a great interest in local history, and his book Bygone Stalybridge, published locally in 1907, is a detailed and knowledgeable account of a town's history with a stress on the local characters and notable people. Chartism was strong in Stalybridge, and despite his reliance on orthodox histories of Chartism Hill writes sympathetically of the local movement, referring to the humorous local ballad, "The Parson and the Pike". A local reactionary parson tries to 'set up' a Chartist blacksmith by ordering a pike. The blacksmith delivers his request, well-wrapped up. The parson

promptly takes his trophy to the militia, but when the parcel is opened, "a stale, stinking pike fish was discovered." (100)

Hill wrote a poem called "Owd Bill" which was published in Fellowship - the successor to the Northern Weekly - on 15th June 1907, describing an old Chartist and commenting on the movement's leaders, in the idiom of traditional dialect sentimentality:

He'll tell abeawt th'Chartists, an' says, if aw like,
Some day when aw co' he'll show me a pike
'Ut wur made by a comrade an' carried wi pride,
By a pair o'true honds that are neaw lain aside.

He loves for't'spin yarns, when ceawrd in his cot
O'Feargus O'Connor an' Oastler, an' th'lot -
An' Stephens 'ut fowt for t'factory folks good,
Whose wark an' whose worth isn't yet understood(101)

This is a revealing poem, commenting on 'physical force' Chartism in a favourable way, and published in a paper which was, by 1907, adopting a fairly uncompromising socialist position. At the same time, Hill was giving his services to Fellowship free of charge, in the form of a touring lantern-slide lecture on Lancashire dialect Writers. Hill also appeared at 'benefit' concerts for the Northern Weekly and Fellowship, giving recitals of his work. The impression which comes over, is that of a dialect writer, strongly conscious of being part of a dialect tradition. His Old Lancashire Songs and Their Singers was an important early history of dialect literature (102). Yet in a sense his work was trapped within it. Many of his poems are heavily influenced by both the form and content of Waugh, Brierley and Laycock, and even "Owd Bill" reflects the form, if not content, of an earlier generation's poetry. His poems undoubtedly show working class life as honest, proud and virtuous, and only occasionally does the poverty and degradation which often accompanied it come through. Hill's own political beliefs are clearly radical, though whether he was organisationally affiliated to the I.L.P. or something like it, is not known. He is an example of how dialect, despite the political views of the author, was drawn into a particular mould of form and subject matter

which was increasingly conservative.

John Tyrer: 'Jack Fro' Th'Lone Eend'

Tyrer became a major figure in the circle of dialect writers around Allen Clarke, though he belongs to a slightly later period than the above mentioned writers. He began writing for Clarke's Lancashire Annual in 1909, one year after the demise of the Northern Weekly, and continued with his dialect contributions each year until 1934. Tyrer is unusual in being an 'outsider' geographically speaking. Instead of being from one of the cotton towns he spent all his life in rural Ormskirk. Like many other writers of Clarke's circle, Tyrer comments on current issues through conversations in dialect, often through the medium of his favourite character, Dick Tubb. Usually, his sketches are rural-based, rather than being about factory workers and the large cotton towns. An early sketch, satirising the war through a conversation between two country women, appeared in Teddy Ashton's War Journal. Entitled "Does Feightin Settle Disputes - A Countryside Confab". Betty and Liza are discussing war profiteering:

"Awm like thee," said Betty, "aw'm nooan mich for feightin', an it makes my blood beil when aw think o'th'way human bein's hev bin kilt an' heaped up i'great rucks to be brunt to save buryin' 'em, even if they are nobbut Jarmons. It's a bonny specticle for th'twentieth cent'ry state o'civilisation, isno it, thinks ta?"(103)

Tyrer was a Methodist, and a pacifist; in the above sketch he succeeds in putting over an anti-war message using dialect as a means of validation for the argument: these are not two cowardly cranks - they are just two down-to-earth Lancashire women talking about the war. The horror of mass death is underlined by the almost matter-of- fact comment about 'greyt rucks' of bodies being burnt, to save the expense of a burial.

In "Owd Men Made Young For th'New World", published in the Lancashire Annual just after the end of the war, he comments on the new 'fads' which were

current at the time: the main character is Reuben Tubb, beginning to feel his age:

One day he leet upo' Jemmy Solem, th'village cobbler, who towd him as he had bin readin' i'th'newspaper abeaut a frenchmon as could mek owd men into young 'uns an' that thee were another mon goin' to mak a new world as would be a deeol better for folk to live in than th'owd un had bin; an he thowt they were capital ideas, at leas as far as readin' went, but heaw they'd wark eawt i'practice were another matter awtogether.

Reuben is full of the tale when he gets home to his wife, Peggy, who is less easy to convince. As in "A Countryside Confab" it is the women, as opposed to the men, who are the ones with any sense -

Newspapers don't allus tell th'truth. Who'a goin' to believe as they con make an owd mon into a young 'un again? As for makkin a new world, aw should like to know how it's to be done. It'll tak aboon six days th'next time if some o'those big chaps fro' Lunnon get at it, for they're nobbut a slow lot at an urgent job. A new wold for sure! If they'e not satisfied wi'this, why don't they get eawt of it? It's noan a new world as we want, nor even th'owd un reconstructin', it's fooak as is in it, mon, as are at faut." "Well, don't aw tell tha as they're goin' to reconstruct th'fooak bi makkin' owd men into young uns, for they'll want aw th'yung men they con get for th'new world." retorted Reuben. "An' what abeawt t'women?" axed Peggy. "Eh, aw don't think he mentioned women. Aw dar say th'fella's bin so henpecked he wouldn't want to be tormented wi 'em aboon th'allotted spoon," suggested Reuben.(104)

Not surprisingly, descriptions of industrial life are non-existent in Tyrer's writing, though many of the evils of country life, shared by workers in the towns, are treated. In "Dicky Tubb's Flittin'" the subject is another character treated half- humorously, but with an underlying serious message. Dicky Tubb is evicted and forced to find a new home:

"What terrible times we're livin' in," said Dicky Tubb t'other neet when aw met him hurryin' along wi' a brid cage in his reet hond an' a black cat under t'other. "It's a lung while sin aw seed thi Jack," he went on, "but aw've bin putten through it sin t'last time we met. Talk abeaut this bein' a country fit for heroes to live in, why mon, aw'm fiar sick o'bein knocked abeaut, an' those as talks like that owt to see to it as th'heroes has shelters o'er their yeds when they're i'th'country. Here awm doin' a flittin, after aw at aw've done to th'property while aw've bin livin' i'yon heause, through another mon buyin' t'shelter o'er my yed; no doubt t'graspin' landlords had a good bid for th'heause an' he's gone an' sowd it, an'th'chap as bowt it gie mi notice to quit, an' that what awm doin neaw, tha sees."

Underneath Dick's breathless outpouring lies the stuff of real working class tragedy: tenants being evicted after the sale of their house by the landlord. Following Dicky's explanation of why he was 'flittin' the story settles down to a comedy of errors when he moves into his new house - which he explains he's been lucky to find - with ensuing disasters with the white-wash bucket. The ending brings the story back to the original political issue:

He towd Peggy if they'd mony moor flittin's he'd be wantin' to flit off th'earth awtogether, an' if ony moor o'thooose Parliament chaps coom chasin' for his vote he'd want a gradely understandin' abeaut th'heausin question befoore he'd promise owt to anyo of 'em.(105)

These writings of Tyrer again belie the image which has been passed down to us as a rural Ben Brierley, with his "Seets o'Ormskirk" describing in light- hearted vein his local community. He features in the collection of both Whittaker and Swann, but both are content to reproduce the same poem - "Ormes'(Kirke) Church" which has a claim to architectural fame as having both a tower and a steeple:

For they put up a buildin', for th'good o'aw people
I'th shape o' a church, wi a teawer an' a steeple.(106)

There is no doubt that the respectable figure who became Vice-President of the Lancashire Authors' Association and a pillar of local Methodism had a strong element of radicalism in his writings.

Other Writers for Clarke's Newspapers and Magazines

The main dialect writers who featured in Clarke's periodicals have been covered in the fore-going section. However, it is far from being complete. A great number of other dialect writers contributed occasional verse or prose sketches which it would be difficult to cover comprehensively. I have written on the literary contribution, and its political context, of writers such as Arthur Laycock, Fred Plant, and John Tamlyn in greater detail in elsewhere. (107)

In Clarke's earliest successful paper, the Trotter, J. Hilton contributed several dialect sketches. Generally, these are straight-forward humorous sketches about working class life, such as "Cawve Feet Jelly", which appeared in 1891. "Dinah Might I' Nob Fowt", also published in 1891 is a humorous reference to the time of the Fenian scare in Lancashire - about a November 5th celebration which went a bit too far.(108)

James Birchall contributed several sketches including "Billy Bump's Shopkeepin'". (109) John Fawcett Skelton, a dialect poet who was a contemporary of Waugh and Brierley, contributed five poems during 1891 including "The Thros'l" and "Lock'd Up in the Bolton Borough Jail". J. R. Abbott, or 'Ab' Ut' Jack' of Fleetwood contributed irregularly throughout the existence of the Trotter and Northern Weekly. The Northern Weekly provided an ideal medium for working class people to contribute occasional pieces of verse, or a dialect sketch. Mrs Shutt, a socialist member of Pendleton Board of Guardians, contributed a two part dialect poem "The Courtship of Tommy Knocker-Up" in the Northern Weekly during 1903, part one being 'his letter to her' and part two, her reply: the poem is a straight- forward piece of light love poetry:

An if we poo th'same road, my lass,
We're beaund to have good luck -
then let me know heaw soon theau'll wed
thy Tommy Knocker-up.(110)

Another story of 'knocker-up romance' was "The Knocker-Up's Fall" a dialect sketch by George Edgar, which appeared in the Northern Weekly in October 1903. (111) A couple of poems appeared in the Northern Weekly early in 1907 under the name of firstly, 'Dick o'Tum o'Bobs', followed by 'Tum o'Dick o'Bobs'. (111) They are obviously the same people, but are they the 'Tum o'Dick o'Bob's' who was Joseph Baron, the Blackburn dialect poet mentioned in an earlier chapter? The dialect is of the Blackburn area - the use of 'iv' for 'if' and 'hed' for 'had'. If so, the poems area a further indication of the 'hidden repertoire' of Lancashire dialect writers. The work of

Joseph Baron quoted earlier is non-controversial. The two poems which appeared in Clarke's paper are radical in tone. The first one was called "There's One Law For Rich An' Another For Poor":

When a chap has position an' wealth at his back
He con do tooathri things as are shameful an black -
Sich as feightin i'public, an' swearin' i'th'street,
An' assaultin defenceless young wimmen at neet
Ay, an' th'wastrel may float a sham company or two
An' his cheque-book an' 'torney 'll see him safe thro.
But a chap dressed i'fustian an' clogs, an beawt brass,
Mun walk streyt wi his drink, an Morn'd look at a lass
an he morn'd steyl a mowfin to keep him fro clammin,
nor - so heaw mich provooakt - do some innocent d - in.
If he does he'll be chuct into prison for sure,
For there's one law for rich an' another for poor.

The poem ends on a religious note - that we are all equal before God, and:

Tha greit thowt 'at we's find when we reich heaven's door,
There's not one law for rich an another for poor.(112)

The second poem was called "Things Wouldn'd Ha' Bin No Woss" and reflects a similar mix of radicalism and religion. The last two verses:

Hed Roman, Saxon, Dane an Jute,
An Norman left this isle alone -
Hed English Kings but followed suit
An ne'er to forrun lands ha' gooan -
Hed they thowt moor o'peace an reight,
An less o'war, an pomp, an sway -
Well, come, aw think yo'll own up straight
Things wouldn't ha'bin no wuss today.

Sun, moon, an stars - this dancin sphere,
Ocean an river, vale an hill,
Sweet fleawers an songbirds everywheere,
An teemin meads for mon to till -
No slothful rich, no clammin poor,
One God to whom to sing and pray.
Iv fooak he ne'er ha' wanted moor
Things wouldn't ha bin no wuss today.(113)

Peter Lee ('Th'Milk Lad'), the Rochdale socialist member of the Board of Guardians, was another occasional contributor to the Northern Weekly. He wrote more

often for the local I.L.P. paper (later to become a joint production with S.D.F.), the Rochdale Labour News. "Owd Moneybags" was published in July 1898 issue, part of which reads:

Owd Moneybags bragged o'er his brass,
Among his pals i'drink;
An' put hissen i'yh'upper class -
With shoddy chaps aw think.

Aw thowt him one o'th biggest foos
Aw'd se'n i'o'my days,
So aw'm noane beawn to mak a 'scuse,
For givin him no praise.(115)

The character 'Owd Moneybags' is a fairly common stereotype amongst socialist dialect writers - an immoral, false human being, obsessed with riches and a hypocrite in religion: "To th'church he went an' sung an' prayed". Lee contributed dialect to the Rochdale Labour News as 'Th'Milk Lad'. He serialised a story called "Owd Ale - A Rollickin' Tale Abeawt A Lucky Landlort An Some Ov His Pals" from March to September 1897, during the same period in which Clarke was contributing regular short stories such as "The Bully of Burlow's Shed". In October 1897 'Th'Milk Lad' contributed a poem on the controversy surrounding proposals to build a monument to Rochdale's dialect writers - including Waugh himself. The response from Rochdale's middle class was lukewarm, so the socialist movement took the issue up. The result was 'Th'Milk Lad's' "Ned Waugh's Ghost An' Th'Moniment", in which Waugh returns to haunt the townspeople of Rochdale:

Then tell me Ned, as theaw's had thine,
What's made thee come back here?
Why mix eternity wi toime?
Why fill wick foak wi fear?
He said: It's yon monument
They're gooin' to put i'th'park -
aw want no maudlin sentiment,
But some gradely mak o'wark.
Neaw lad, he says, it's windy
An goblins come i'th'neet,
Four names mun go on th'moniment,
Ormrod and Mrs Lahee
John Trafford Clegg, wi hope weel spent,
an th'last belongs to me.

Just one work mooar, an then awm beawnd
For th'place o'ash an dust
We'll come an poo the damned thing deawn
If yo put it up on trust.(116)

Lee's most substantial work using dialect was Th'Mystery O'Sunny Fowt, examined in "Allen Clarke and the Lancashire School of Working Class Novelists". What makes Lee important is his combination of active political work as a socialist (he was on the Rochdale School Board as I.L.P. representative, amongst many other things) and his use of dialect to make political points - such as in "Owd Moneybags" and also in the above poem. The sense that it was the working class movement which was the real heir of Waugh's legacy, expressed in the poem, is also of considerable importance in the shaping of Rochdale socialism.

Several women writers contributed to Clarke's periodicals, and these are examined in more depth in the chapter relating specifically to women. However, it is important to note that Elizabeth Eckersall - 'Busy Bee' - wrote some powerful radical dialect in the Lancashire Annual - such as "A Bad Lot", quoted in Chapter 10, whilst contributing innocuous poems to the Bury Times and other local papers. Ethel Carnie, best known as an important working class woman novelist, contributed some poems and short stories towards the later period of the Northern Weekly/Fellowship. "Owd Jim's Last Looms" (117) is a short prose story using dialect in the dialogue about a son coming home from America' textile industry, to provide for his sickly father who can no longer stand the strain of weaving. "A White Geranium" (118) is another story about a weaving family, published shortly before. Sarah Robinson of Padiham also contributed occasional stories and poems, usually in standard English, to the Northern Weekly. (119)

Conclusion

It is clear that a new generation of dialect writers emerged in the period between 1880 and 1900 which was able to express current political and social issues in a far more direct way than the earlier writers had done. Allen Clarke forms the central figure in the period, both encouraging other writers by the success of his work, and also providing a means by which aspiring writers could get published - in particular, through the Northern Weekly, and the Lancashire Annual. These writers had no sponsorship by sympathetic middle class people and largely depended on the local press. There were undoubtedly differences in their published work - usually between what was published in the local press, and subsequent collections, and material which was published in Clarke's periodicals. This is particularly evident in the work of Samuel Hill, Sam Fitton, Elizabeth Eckersall and even to an extent Clarke himself.

A possible explanation for this, which avoids suggestions that there was a 'conspiracy' to prevent radical dialect being published would be as follows. Writers such as the above were broadly socialist in outlook, generally from a semi-religious/I.L.P. standpoint. They were conscious of writing within a strong tradition of dialect literature, and many of them - Hill, Clarke and Lee particularly - make constant overt references to Waugh, Brierley and Laycock. In a sense they became trapped by the cultural form of dialect literature as passed down by 'the classics' - its stress on nostalgia for the past, morality and working class respectability. Many of them continued to write in this way, with occasional socialist messages breaking through - such as Hill's "Owd Bill", which uses all the devices of traditional dialect. Bill is a friendly old man who lives down the street and calls on him occasionally. He reminisces about his life, but brings into it a radical subject matter: physical force Chartism. Hill submitted the poem to Allen Clarke who published it in Fellowship.

We do not know if he submitted it elsewhere, to local papers such as the Ashton Herald which used his work. Neither do we know if Elizabeth Eckersall submitted, or had rejected, her radical dialect poetry to the Bury Times. My feeling is that they did not. They knew who they were writing for, and were happy enough to write dialect poems about non-controversial aspects of working class life (and many of these were published in the Northern Weekly) but also wanted to express a political message on occasions too. In which case, the obvious place to send them was not to the local press, but to a socialist paper like Clarke's. Clarke himself may have had a more sophisticated approach towards his writing - including an occasional strongly political piece amongst other less overtly radical stories and poems. Hence his popularity remained, with non-socialists reading his work despite the occasional 'bit of politics'. Too heavy a dose would have jeopardised the wide readership he built up, and this is probably just what happened in 1907. The content of the paper changes at this time towards being a much more overtly revolutionary journal, before ceasing publication in 1908.

The actual number of working class dialect writers is worth noting - the above coverage is by no means comprehensive - and is suggestive of a second 'boom' in dialect literature, which coincided with the socialist revival in Lancashire in the 1890s. Hence it became almost 'natural' to express a more progressive labour-oriented standpoint, as part and parcel of one's writing. One is still struck by a degree of continuity with the 'classic tradition', both writers and readership. Most of the writers of the new generation were 'respectable' working class, from cotton-worker families in the cotton-belt towns of Bolton, Rochdale, Oldham, and Bury. Their readership was among that section of the working class which had supported Liberalism, and was beginning to question its allegiance. Some, a minority, had already made the switch to socialism. The world of the general readership was bounded by the town, the mill or weaving shed, the trade union, possibly the church, the friendly society. It read the local press, and most probably the Cotton Factory Times and possibly Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly.

One issue worth mentioning is the treatment of trade unionism by the 'new generation', Clarke tended to reflect the views of some ILP socialists that trade unionism was 'collective selfishness', and the real issue was to change peoples' hearts, and in turn society. This did change by the turn of the century though, and he became an outspoken advocate of strike action, giving strong support to local disputes, such as that at Sunnyside Mills, Bolton. Burgess was similarly antagonistic to trade unions; both he and Clarke had experience of the autocratic spinners' unions in their childhood spent in the mills.

The importance of having an easy outlet for working class writing cannot be overestimated, and the contribution of Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly, the Cotton Factory Times and other dialect and local papers was crucial. These outlets more than compensated for the lack of middle class sponsorship, and enabled writers like Clarke and his circle to establish themselves as the leading force in dialect literature by the turn of the century. More conservative writers, like William Baron, were consigned to the status of local commentators, rather than part of a county-wide 'movement'.

Notes

1. see comments by Clarke and Brierley in G. H. Whitaker (ed.) A Lancashire Garland Stalybridge 1936 p.93.
2. John Trafford Clegg Sketches and Rhymes in the Rochdale Dialect Rochdale vol.1 1895 vol.2 1898.
3. John Trafford Clegg David's Loom London 1894.
4. John Trafford Clegg Reaund Bi'Th'Derby Rochdale 1890.
5. Introductory memoir, in Clegg (1895) op.cit p.xvi.
6. *ibid* p.xvi.
7. Rochdale Observer (hereafter RO) March 15 1890.
8. RO March 29 1890.
9. Clegg (1890) op.cit p.4.
10. *ibid.* p.23. Sung by Harry Boardman on Trans-Pennine Topic Records, London 1971.
11. *ibid.* p.25.
12. Clegg (1895) op.cit p.216.
13. *ibid* p.233.
14. *ibid.* p.218.
15. Clegg (1894) op.cit. p.268.
16. Bill o'Jack's Lancashire Monthly, no.13 May 1910.
17. *ibid* no.18 October 1910.
18. William Baron Echoes From the Loom Rochdale 1903 p.48.
19. *ibid* p.192.
20. Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly (TANW) June 25 1904.
21. May Yates A Lancashire Anthology Liverpool 1923 p.64.
22. *ibid* p.65.
23. in George Hull The Poets and Poetry of Blackburn Blackburn 1902 p.388.
24. in Whittaker op.cit p.29.
25. James Leigh Gleams of Sunshine Hyde 1904 p.49.
26. William Cryer Lays After Labour Farnworth 1902 p.315.
27. David Lawton Webs From Fancy's Loom Manchester 1918 p.69.

28. Joseph Burgess A Potential Poet? Ilford 1927 p.25.
29. *ibid* p.60.
30. *ibid* pp 83-85.
31. *ibid* p.115.
32. Bolton Trotter October 21 1892.
33. see "Amongst the Agitators", serialised in TANW from May 27 1905.
34. TANW August 26 1905.
35. "Billy Bobbin Wi'Th'Demonstrationists" in Teddy Ashton's Journal (TAJ) July 25 1896.
36. TANW August 26 1905.
37. *ibid*.
38. 'Teddy Ashton' (C. A. Clarke) Tum Fowt Debatin' Menociation (TFDM) "Heaw T'Menociation Were Formed" in Tum Fowt Sketches Bolton n.d. c1893 p.2.
39. *ibid* p.4.
40. 'Teddy Ashton' Tum Fowt Sketches No.9 1893, pp.111-2.
41. Cotton Factory Times, September 15 1893, September 9 1893, and November 3 1893.
42. See Chapter 7, section on "Work and Everyday Life".
43. Bolton Trotter October 14 1892.
44. See Allen Clarke "Cats Out of the Bag" Cotton Factory Times January 18th 1935 for an account of his early years on the paper.
45. Teddy Ashton's Journal began May 22 1896. It changed its name to Northern Weekly and Teddy Ashton's Journal on March 12 1898. The original title was later dropped and the paper became Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly until April 20 1907 when it became Fellowship. It became Teddy Ashton's Weekly November 8/9 1907. The final issue, number 615 (from the start of Teddy Ashton's Journal) was March 1 1908.
46. TAJ August 1 1896.
47. TAJ September 9 1896.
48. published in TALA 1898, and in TAJ February 13 1897, reprinted in P. Salveson (ed) Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Scrapbook (Bolton 1985).
49. TANW October 12 1901.
50. TANW May 20 1905.

51. TANW March 10 1906.
52. TANW January 26 1907 et seq.
53. TANW March 9 1907.
54. TANW April 6 1907.
55. Fellowship October 18 1907.
56. Liverpool Weekly Post (LWP) August 4 1908.
57. LWP October 31 1925.
58. TALA 1919 p.65.
59. Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Readings No.2, 1922.
60. Several of Clarke's Tum Fowt Sketches were broadcast during 1935 - see Chapter 5 "Lancashire Dialect Literature in the Twentieth Century" for details.
61. TALA 1923.
62. TANW May 9 1903.
63. Written November 18 1903 in Bolton. See Salveson (ed) op. cit p. 64.
64. also in J.R. Swann Lancashire Authors St Annes 1924 pp.53-4.
65. TALA 1920 pp.66-7.
66. R. H. Brodie Random Rhymes Bolton, no date - c.1905.
67. ibid p.4.
68. TANW April 21 1906.
69. TANW March 23 1907.
70. TANW September 15 1900.
71. TANW October 6 1900.
72. TANW August 2 1902.
73. TAJ May 22 1897.
74. TAJ August 14 1897. A biography of Whittaker appeared in Labour Prophet October 1897, pp 1-2.
75. James Swinglehurst Summer Evenings with Old Weavers Manchester n.d circa 1880). See also Chapter 1, and Chapter 7, section on "The Last of the Handloom Weavers". Allen Clarke mentions Swinglehurst in Moorlands and Memories Bolton 1920 p.286.
76. TANW September 12 1903.
77. See Haslam's autobiographical sketch "From Jennygate to Journalism" in

- TALA 1919 pp 8-10, and Allen Clarke "Amongst the Agitators" TANW July 22 1905..
78. TANW July 22 1905.
 79. TANW July 19 1902.
 80. TAJ September 19 1896.
 81. The Record (R) no.100 June 1936.
 82. "The Dialect and Other Social Features" R June 1919.
 83. Ammon Wrigley, Introduction to Sam Fitton Gradely Lancashire p.xx.
 84. *ibid* p.xiv.
 85. Whittaker op. cit p.139.
 86. Fitton op.cit p.20.
 87. TANW April 21 1900.
 88. Fitton op. cit pp.78-9.
 89. *ibid* p.80.
 90. *ibid* p.114.
 91. *ibid* p.180.
 92. R August 1923 p.9. The Crompton Chanticleer only lasted for a few months; it began in September 1911 and shortly after became Sam Fitton's Humorous Monthly which ended with issue no. 8 in April 1912..
 93. R June 1957 p.16.
 94. Yates op. cit p.18 and Whittaker op. cit. p.185.
 95. Samuel Hill Foirewood - Splinters An' Shavin's Fro' A Carpenter's Bench Stalybridge 1902 p.171.
 96. *ibid* p.314.
 97. *ibid* p.317.
 98. *ibid* p.90.
 99. Samuel Hill Little Spadger's Dog and other Lancashire Stories Stalybridge 1908 p.64.
 100. Samuel Hill Bygone Stalybridge Stalybridge 1907, p.75.
 101. Fellowship (F) June 15 1907.
 102. F November 23 1907 for notice of lantern-slide lectures. Hill's Old Lancashire Songs and their Singers was first published by the author at Stalybridge in 1898. A revised edition appeared in 1906.

103. Teddy Ashton's Lancashire War Journal October 23 1914.
104. TALA 1919 p.57.
105. TALA 1923 p.112.
106. Swann op.cit p.219.
107. See Paul Salveson "Allen Clarke and the Lancashire School of Working Class Novelists" in G. Klaus (ed) The Socialist Novel Volume 2, Brighton 1987.
108. Bolton Trotter October 9 1891.
109. Bolton Trotter May 15 1891.
110. TANW June 27 1903.
111. TANW October 14 1903
112. TANW February 9 1907.
113. TANW February 23 1907.
114. Rochdale Labour News (RLN) July 1898. A biography of Peter Lee appeared in Labour Annual Birkenhead 1898, p.201.
115. RLN October 1897. See Paul Salveson The People's Monuments: A guide to working class monuments and memorials in north-west England Manchester 1986, for an account of the building of the monument.
116. F October 4 1907.
117. F July 26 1907.
118. A feature on Sarah Robinson appeared in Cotton Factory Times on January 5 1923.

Chapter 5: Lancashire Dialect Literature in the Twentieth Century

The aim of this chapter is to survey developments within Lancashire dialect literature from the beginning of the century up to the outbreak of the Second World War. The reasons for this seemingly arbitrary stopping-off point are that the late 1930s saw the death of the most important dialect writer for the purpose of this study, Allen Clarke, who represents the culmination of the dialect tradition established by Waugh and Brierley. The time-scale also allows for consideration of important younger writers such as Ammon Wrigley and Tommy Thompson and minor writers like Samuel Hardman, W.F. Hampson and others.

The first third of the century sees the establishment of the Lancashire Author's Association (L.A.A.). It was formed in 1909, and quickly established itself as the most representative organisation of dialect writers ever formed. By the late 1930s the L.A.A. had settled into a distinctive niche within the regional culture of Lancashire and a number of interesting developments and controversies took place in the first twenty years of its existence. The first third of the century saw some important changes in the publication of dialect. Allen Clarke's Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly ended in 1908, but his work continued in the Liverpool Weekly Post, Bolton Evening News, his own Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Annual, as well as in a number of other local newspapers and short-lived magazines. The Cotton Factory Times published an enormous quantity of dialect writing in this period, and that paper went into decline after the Second World War. Other labour movement newspapers also published significant amounts of dialect material in the same period, including Labour's Northern Voice, The Power Loom (journal of the Nelson Weavers), various co-op publications and the Woman Citizen. Many of these publications either ceased, or no longer used dialect, in the post-war era.

This chapter divides into four basic sections. Firstly, the origin and growth of the Lancashire Authors' Association is considered, with reference to early debates over political content in dialect and the issue of partisanship in literature. The social composition of the L.A.A. is an important question which relates to the previous issue, and to the links between the L.A.A. and other organisations such as the co-operative movement.

The second section looks at dialect writers of this period: the later work of Allen Clarke and Sam Fitton, and the younger writers like Wrigley and Thompson: it considers the changes in perspective from the 'radical generation' of the 1890s. A third section looks at how labour movement newspapers used dialect in this period, suggesting a deliberate use of 'regionalism' to support wider 'class' aims. In the fourth, concluding, section I will ask whether the dialect literary tradition established by Waugh and Brierley was continued in the inter-war years, or whether by institutionalising dialect writing, the L.A.A. had unwittingly contributed to its death. The development of new media, particularly radio, will also be looked at to see how far dialect writer's exploited its potential.

The Lancashire Authors' Association

The history of the Lancashire Authors' Association is a fascinating study in microcosm of the stresses and strains within dialect literature, in particular between working class and middle class writers, and over the subject-matter of dialect writing. It should be said at the outset that the L.A.A. did bring together a very diverse range of people who shared a common love of Lancashire and its literature. But the apparent harmony which it naturally tried to foster publicly was often a gloss on quite acute conflicts. Patrick Joyce has accepted the superficial appearance in Visions of the People, when he says:

In the Lancashire Authors' Association, cotton employers, teachers, and socialist trade unionists met amicably together to foster the language and culture of the region. (1)

The L.A.A. began in spectacular fashion. One of the largest gatherings of dialect writers ever held took place in Rochdale on April 3rd 1909, to celebrate the bi-centenary of the birth of 'Tim Bobbin'. The day's celebrations included talks, dialect readings, an exhibition in Rochdale Art Gallery and the chance for dialect writers to discuss their work. Those present included: Allen Clarke, J. T. Baron, Joseph Baron, William Baron, Fred Plant, R. H. Brodie, Robert Atheron, David Lawton, Thomas Booth, Joseph Cronshaw, Arthur Laycock, Arthur Smith, James Lees, Sam Hill and Sam Fitton.(1) Less well-known writers present included two women - Sarah Holt from Rochdale, and Annie Spencer from Hebden Bridge. The middle class literati were represented by Colonel Fishwick, the Lancashire historian, Sir James Duckworth MP, Henry Brierley and W.E.A. Axon.(2) During the day's events (which owed much to the organising talents of Henry Brierley, Sam Hill and Art Gallery Curator F. Williamson), Allen Clarke made the suggestion of forming a 'dialect writers' association'(3). The local press announced its formation in their reports of the event, although at that stage it was still very much an informal grouping. Hopes were expressed to return to Rochdale in the summer to commemorate Edwin Waugh and put the group on a firm footing, but this did not happen. R. H. Brodie and A. H. Pearce wrote shortly after:

The project seemed likely to fail for various reasons, but eventually the present secretary (Brodie-PS) and the present Chairman of the Committee (Clarke -PS), along with Mr. W. Baron of Rochdale, got their shoulders to the wheel, and a meeting was called for November 27th 1909 at Woodhall's Restaurant, Rochdale. There were less than twenty earnest spirits at that auspicious gathering, but when it was over the "Lancashire Author's Association" was in being...(4)

Henry Brierley, a solicitor and respected antiquarian, was elected President - a largely honorary post. Allen Clarke was elected chairman, and his friend and fellow socialist R. H. Brodie secretary. Several Lancashire 'notables' were given honorary

Vice-Presidentships, including W. H. Broadhead, the entertainment tycoon and Mayor of Blackpool; also honoured were the Manchester antiquarian George Milner, Alderman R. C. Bury, Mayor of Accrington, Harold Baker MP, and Richard Ashworth, JP. The only dialect writer to be made a vice-president was William Cryer, of Farnworth.

It should be noted that from the outset the L.A.A. contained within it two trends: the working class radical writers like Clarke, Brodie, J.J. Wild, the Eckersalls, Fittons, Fred Plant, W.F. Jenkins, John Tyrer, David Lawton and William and J. W. Cryer, and the middle class antiquaries (and social leaders) like Henry Brierley, Captain J. Harwood, S. W. Partington and the Rev. Spencer, Vicar of Accrington. These two trends within the L.A.A. acted as sorts of literary 'poles of attraction' for other people within it. For example, Alfred and Ethel Pearce were both socialists and good friends of Clarke, and naturally supported his 'radical' approach to dialect literature, though they both usually wrote in standard English. The herbalist, Charles Hassall of Farnworth, was a friend of Clarke's and sympathised with him politically. Others within the L.A.A. such as William Baron, Langford Saunders, J. T. Baron, and Fulcher Robinson found nothing problematic about having middle-class 'worthies' as patrons of the organisation. If two trends existed, this is not to say that the L.A.A. was riven by conflict at every meeting. There was much that all could agree on - the importance of preserving Lancashire's literary heritage and publishing the work of Lancashire Author's writing at the time. The second meeting of the newly formed Association in Rochdale on January 29th 1910, celebrated the work of Waugh, Brierley and Laycock, which all members could admire and respect. On November 12th of that year the Blackburn meeting discussed the importance of "Lancashire Dialect" - again, a subject that all members would agree on. At the September 10th meeting a message of greetings were sent to Tolstoy on the occasion of his birthday, doubtless at the instigation of Allen Clarke.

The agreed aims of the L.A.A. were to "foster and popularise Lancashire Literature:

- a) by getting the works of Lancashire Authors into Public Libraries and placing simple memorial tablets on the houses where they were born;
- b) Organising lectures on Lancashire Authors and entertainments at which the programme shall be composed of Lancashire songs, recitations, etc.
- c) Organising pilgrimages to birthplaces, graves and haunts of Lancashire Authors, and also picnics to places made memorable in their work;
- d) Issuing, as means allow, publications and compilations of past and present Lancashire Literature;
- e) Pecuniarily assisting when necessary by means of concerts, subscriptions etc Lancashire Authors or their families(7)

Dialect is not specifically mentioned, and the L.A.A. was at pains to welcome any Lancashire writer - "historical, antiquarian, geological, botanical". Alf Pearce emphasised that "though a goodly number of our members are dialect writers, we are not solely concerned with the study and illustration of the homely dialect".(8) This was not from any sense that some members found dialect an embarrassment and wanted something more 'elevated'; it was simply that the early members genuinely wanted to have a representative association of 'writers' who were committed to a specifically Lancashire-based literature. As an example, one of their pilgrimages in 1910 was to Knutsford, former home of Mrs. Gaskell, the middle class 'industrial novelist' who made use of dialect in many of her writings, and whose husband was a dialect enthusiast.

What is clearly missing is any sense of class in the L.A.A., other than a reference in the aims that members falling on hard times could be helped out financially: a recognition of the working class composition of much of the L.A.A. who had no 'private income' to rely on. The ignoring of the class issue was inevitable given the broad

nature of the association; the inclusion of antiquaries like Brierley and Milner meant that the possibilities of developing a Lancashire worker-writers' organisation were closed off. Equally, some working class dialect writers like William Baron, were primarily interested in literature for its own sake without any particular social relevance. Literature was glorified as an absolute - being above considerations of class or politics: a common commitment to 'pure' literature could thus over-ride any differences in social background or party beliefs. Whilst having a practical use in welding together different and potentially opposing trends, the ideology of value-free literature meant that, ultimately, conservative ideas would predominate in the Association.

The first problems the L.A.A. encountered were not, however, over ideology. The difficulties were far more practical and related to the running of the organisation. Edith Pearce, writing in 1939, looked back on the early days when Allen Clarke was Chairman:

Though we had a committee, no meetings were called. The chairman would tell the secretary that our next meetings should be held at such-and-such a place and the secretary would inform the members. The meetings were held at irregular intervals whenever the chairman thought fit and had no set form.

After discussing the problems with her husband, she suggested he drew up a list of proposed improvements, and call a special meeting. However:

This was not so easy as it sounds, for at that time Allen Clarke was the practical dictator of the L.A.A. and it meant criticising him and taking the autocratic power out of his hands.(9)

The meeting took place on March 11th, and Alfred Pearce delivered a paper on "Suggestions For the Improvement of our Association". About forty members turned up, and, as Edith Pearce said, "all admirers of Allen Clarke as a writer, but not having the same admiration for his organising ability". The paper was delivered, criticising such things as:

...the futility of the current haphazard procedure, its lack of meeting- interest, usefulness, publicity; its low subscription, its lack of papers on Lancashire literary subjects, its need for an official organ to promote, by its report of useful meetings, the scope, prestige, membership of such a Society as we had at first aspired to be. The paper suggested new rules, regular meeting-months, definite procedure.(10)

Pearce's proposals were largely accepted; Allen Clarke seems to have accepted the justice of his friend's criticisms and took them in good part and Edith Pearce tells us that at the end of the meeting "all were good friends"(11). James Leigh and John Allen proposed Pearce for the position of editor of the L.A.A.'s new journal, The Record, and he was elected unanimously. Some of Pearce's proposals were deferred until the Annual General Meeting held on October 7th, in Bolton Town Hall. Meetings would henceforth be held on a regular, quarterly basis in January, April, July and October. The Record would be published mid-way between the meetings, providing reports of the previous one and notice of the forthcoming. The meetings themselves would be held in a different Lancashire town on each occasion.(12)

In response to Pearce's criticisms, the meetings were made into much more lively affairs. The Wigan meeting, held on May 11th 1912 attracted over 200 people. It was held in the town hall, with a warm welcome from the Mayor of Wigan and a visit round the library where the contribution of Wigan writers such as John Roby and John Critchley Prince were pointed out. Members visited other historical sites in the area and then had tea in the Co-operative Hall with a speech on the "Literary Associations of Wigan" by Henry Brierley, who also delivered a paper on "Wigan Dialect Words". In the evening the Wigan Harmonic Male Voice Choir performed, followed by more songs and a dialect recitation by Sam Fitton.(13)

This was the general pattern for L.A.A. meetings for decades hence: a mayoral reception, lectures on the host town's general and literary history, and visits to local shrines. This would be followed by tea, usually at the local co-op restaurant, with an

evening of talks followed by songs and members' recitations. The events of the day were usually reported on in great detail in the local press, in addition to full reports in the following Record.(14)

Following the seemingly amicable re-arrangement of the L.A.A.'s organisation, Clarke continued as committee chairman. In the early months of the First World War Clarke, amongst other committee members, argued strongly in favour of publishing a collection of members' writings, and took on main responsibility for the matter, and wrote in The Record a letter to members asking for contributions and orders for the book.(15) However, perhaps largely because of the dislocation caused by the war, few orders came in and not many contributions. At the committee meeting held in Oldham in September 1915 William Baron argued against proceeding with the venture, and got support from a majority of the committee. (16) The sixty-three subscriptions received were to be refunded. This appears to have caused some amount of ill-feeling on Clarke's part, and he was reluctant to continue as chairman of committee. However, he apparently consented to re-election but shortly afterwards resigned. At the meeting of December 9th 1916 the committee discussed Clarke's position:

Some discussion took place over the recent differences of opinion on Association policy existing between Mr. Allen Clarke and the other members of the Executive, which resulted in the former's resignation from office. Whilst it was felt that Mr. Clarke had acted unwisely in issuing his recent printed circular, it was ultimately resolved to let bygones be bygones; and without expressing any further opinion on the controversy, the meeting accorded a vote of thanks to Mr. Clarke for his past services to the Association.(17)

No copies of the 'printed circular' have, to my knowledge, survived and one can only make vague surmises as to the contents. Certainly, one issue would have been the proposed volume of members' work; yet this seems an unlikely issue to have raised such a furore. The most likely possibility was that Clarke was annoyed at the increasing drift away from being a group of working class writers towards being a

middle class 'literary and philosophical society'. The L.A.A. was acquiring an increasingly long list of upper-class patrons in the form of Vice- Presidents, such as imperialist adventurer Sir Lees Knowles, Major David Halstead, Clara Swain Dickens, Marjory Lees and a selection of local worthies in the shape of JPs and councillors. Clearly, this was not what Clarke had in mind when he suggested the L.A.A.'s formation; but equally one senses that Clarke wanted to be able to control the Association and took offence when his ideas were not followed. He resigned completely from the Association the following year "owing to lack of time and other reasons", though Pearce noted that he hoped the lapse would be temporary, and paid tribute to Clarke's contribution to the L.A.A.. Pearce also mentioned the dispute between Clarke and the Executive, suggesting the argument was long-standing: by saying "in recent years he could not see eye to eye with the rest of the executive in matters of policy."(18)

Clarke's departure from the L.A.A. does not appear to have significantly altered the overall activity of the organisation. The L.A.A. continued to publicise in a friendly manner his various publications, and there is no doubt he retained the friendships of Alf and Edith Pearce, and other L.A.A. members. However, his good friends R. H. Brodie and Fred Plant were no longer active; Brodie died in 1913 and Plant became ill. Sam Hill had died within a few months of the L.A.A. being formed, depriving the organisation of one of its most enthusiastic pioneers. William Cryer died in 1917, and his son's death followed shortly after in 1926. By 1923 the L.A.A.'s composition had changed considerably from its early shape of being mainly a body of working class dialect writers. It now had no fewer than fifteen Vice-Presidents of whom four were life members. These included the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, Sir Lees Knowles, Major Halstead (then Tory MP for Haslingden) and Alderman Barlow of Accrington. Of the remaining Vice-Presidents there were five JPs, the aristocratic Marjory Lees, and other 'worthies'. Amongst the twenty-two honorary members there were eleven councillors (many of whom were aldermen), an archdeacon, army captain, Sir James

Hacking (Tory MP for Bury) and the novelist W. Ralph Hall Caine. A mere three of the founder, working class members had been given honorary status: W. H. Jenkins of Oldham, and the Eckersalls of Heywood. Few of the honorary members or Vice-Presidents, with the exception of Major Halstead, played any practical role in the L.A.A..

A novel feature of the L.A.A. was its Red Rose Circulating Magazine, approved at its AGM on December 9th 1916. This was a manuscript magazine of members' work, which was passed round (by post) to each member on the circulation list. In addition to inclusion of members' work, space was provided for criticism of other members' work. The editor was Edith Pearce, who continued the work throughout the inter-war years and after. The magazine provided a unique forum for members of the L.A.A. to 'test out' their work, and to receive usually helpful criticism from fellow members. Also, it helps us today to understand the approaches adopted by Lancashire authors at the time, and in some cases cast light on controversies.

The main contributors during the 1920s and 1930s were Samuel Hardman, a Liberal councillor who had little of Edith Pearce's radicalism, Mary Higgs, Oldham's remarkable environmentalist and social reformer, Elizabeth Webber, a 'non-political' dialect writer of 'homespun' verse, Ammon Wrigley, John Randal Swann, the Accrington literary figure, Alf and Edith Pearce, Sam Fitton (up to his death in 1923) and Henry Brierley. The dialect writers who contributed to the circulating magazine were in a minority, though cuttings from newspapers relating to dialect were a common insertion.

Although the contributors were predominantly conservative or non-political, the editor, Edith Pearce, was a convinced socialist. Accordingly, she from time to time inserted left-inclined writings, such as those of Hannah Mitchell, unknown to the author herself! An interesting controversy followed the appearance (unauthorised) of

Mitchell's sketch "May Day", a cutting taken from Labour's Northern Voice of May 15th 1925. The sketch advertises the new I.L.P. paper, relating it back to Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly. It takes the form of a discussion between Dick Kilshaw and his workmate, Tom Bates. Dick tries to sell Tom a copy of the paper and Tom begins a long story about his observation of a Labour demonstration at Belle Vue the previous week. He then tells Dick that he wanted to go to a football match but his wife, Sarah-Ellen is off to an I.L.P. meeting and he has to stay at home:

Tha gets no brass off me to goo watchin bigger foos nor thisel kickin a baw abeawt. Tha con stop in an clean th'childer's shoon and peel th'taters for Sunday. Aw mun get th'dinner o'er i'good time, awm gooin to th'meeitin at Queen's Park i'th'afternoon.(20)

The combination of a wife leaving her husband at home to clean shoes and peel the potatoes whilst she goes off to a socialist meeting was strong stuff for some members of the L.A.A. and the divisions within the Association were brought into relief. Alf Pearce congratulates Hannah Mitchell's "first attempt at dialect writing", but makes no mention of the subject matter. Samuel Hardman however is more critical; while he admires the humour and finds it "as natural as one could wish", he continues:

Still, as we as an Association include all shades of public opinion which we have up till now put on one side, for obvious reasons. I believe that Mrs Mitchell would do better in not introducing anything which has a political bearing. I hope she will accept my advice in the same spirit in which it is given.

Elizabeth Webber was equally disturbed by the politics:

The dialect will not die whilst we have writers like Mrs Mitchell to carry it on, but try a subject where there will be no fear of controversy. Leave the question of politics out.(21)

Edith Pearce defended Hannah Mitchell's work in the following edition, but the defence is based on an absolutist view of 'literature as truth' and judging a work on the basis of 'what it sets out to achieve' - a somewhat open-ended yardstick. The reply is worth quoting in detail:

In criticising, some of the critics objected to the politics expressed... I mention this because I wish to take all responsibility for that sketch appearing in our mag. Mrs. Mitchell sent the paper to me for my private criticism as the first dialect sketch she had written. As a dialect sketch I thought it very good and for that reason used it.

I would like all our readers to realize that our Magazine is broad and free. It has no politics but the politics of Literature. In judging literature we should try to be above bias and seek only to realise the object of what is written, and judge if that object is likely to be attained. Mrs. Mitchell wrote for a Labour periodical to suit the taste and propoganda of that paper and I think she did her work well... Our pages are open to any member of any shade of opinion who has literary work to offer. In reading, as intelligent men and women, we shall accept that which appeals to us, and graciously allow the other to pass by, knowing that Truth is quite capable to take care of itself and not one of us can claim a monopoly of its great white light.(22)

Hannah Mitchell was a member of the L.A.A. and does not appear to have been unduly put off by the criticism from Samuel Hardman and Elizabeth Webber. Her dialect contributions to Labour's Northern Voice and the Woman Citizen continued for many years, and copies appeared from time to time in the Red Rose Circulating Magazine. However, controversy stirred once more when Edith Pearce included two of Mitchell's sketches in the June 1930 issue. "Parlours" is about the shortage of decent sized accommodation for working class families, and the long waiting list for council houses. It is an attack on the pretentious obsession with 'parlours':

But mythical parlours which they could not afford to furnish, let alone lighting and heating, bring little comfort to the men and women huddled in one or two rooms with four, five or six children... Do these people want a book-lined study, or a courting parlour or smoking room? Not likely! What they want is a big living room, a good scullery, a bathroom...with the upper floor divided into three or even four bedrooms to meet the needs of a growing family(23)

The dialect sketch which accompanied the above standard English piece was called "Why He Went" - the story of why Tom Bates went on the socialist demonstration. Dick Kilshaw is surprised to see him, and thinks Tom has been converted. After moaning to Dick about the speeches, singing "The Red Flag" and being harangued to buy a dozen different socialist newspapers Dick asks what he was doing on the demonstration after all:

"Well then, tha doesn't seem to have enjoyed thysel so weel at Belle Vue," says Dick. "It's a wonder to me what tha coom for. Aw thowt tha went to sleep of a Sunday afternoon after tha'd spotted aw th'winners i'th'pappers."
"Well, Sarah Ellen an th'childer were i'th'procession," Tom said rather sheepishly, "an aw thowt it ud happen come on wet, so aw browt their coats."(24)

The reaction to the sketches was again, mixed. Samuel Hardman suggested that Mrs. Mitchell exaggerated the housing problem, and that many working class people wanted 'parlours and gardens'. He added "The L.A.A. as an association knows no politics, no contentions. Its badge is its flag." To which 'H M M' (Hannah Mitchell? - not her handwriting) - said "Hear Hear". Alf Pearce liked "Why He Went" but was less sure of "Parlours". Hannah Mitchell responded to the criticisms in the following letter:

Perhaps I ought to supply the critics with less contentious matter, but 'Time' is a plant which does not grow in my garden, alas. But when I come to think, I have no recollection of supplying her with these samples of my literary skill, but I thank her for including them. The fact that the critics have criticised the subject matter rather than the literary style of these efforts causes me to hope that they are not hopelessly bad...(26)

She concluded by saying that the L.A.A. is "a good school" and she continued to hope that her literary skill will improve with experience. Yet increasingly she seemed a lone voice within the L.A.A. in the 1930s, despite the often unknown encouragement of Edith Pearce. While socialist propagandising in dialect was regarded as unacceptable by many of the Association's active members, the same response did not greet anti-socialist or pro-imperialist writings. "Jimmy o'Bob's Speech on Socialism and Other Topics" by Samuel Hardman was first published in the Radcliffe Times, and a cutting appeared in the Red Rose Circulating Magazine. After warning against listening to 'agitators' he continues:

Then ther's that cry abeawt 'equality o'opportunity' an 'equality o'labour'. Thoos'll never come whol there's sich a thing as human nature. Han yo ever seen a socialist procession an notic't who wawk i't'front; an who carry t'flags? If yo hannot, aw have. Its thoos behind 'at carry t'flags; thoos i't'front carry nowt but swelled yeds.(27)

The response from the critics contained no objection to 'bringing politics' into the L.A.A. Rather, the response was enthusiastic. A. B. Robinson wrote:

Well done! Better than ever! Your report of "Jimmy o'Bob's" learning are truly British. And patriotic to the core...

Robinson's comments are particularly interesting for helping us to see the relationship between region and nation in conservative ideology: regional consciousness bolsters a greater British nationality. The homespun conservative wisdom of 'the common man' represents 'patriotism to the core'. Walter Butterworth, a Manchester literary figure who had become prominent in the L.A.A. by the 1930s, wrote: that he "is a beggar to think" and "like Waugh he can write, and write and write well." Helen Lawson, and other middle class recruits from Liverpool said:

There is truth, common sense and good advice in Mr. Hardman's writings.(28)

The three other comments from critics were all favourable, though comments from either the Pearces, or Hannah Mitchell, were notable for their absence. Perhaps they did not want to rock the boat, or had already long since handed over the captaincy. In the same edition of the magazine Arthur Bennett contributed poems including his jingoistic "God Save Empire!" which included such lines as:

And may the races strange,
With dusky limbs who range
These regions vast;
Love the same laws as we,
From utmost sea to sea
Be as one family
With us at last.

Helen Lawson thought that "Mr. Bennett's poems are beautiful". W. H. Lloyd, Southport businessman thought them 'exquisite'. A. B. Robinson considered them "well worth our careful perusal". 'RA' - probably Richard Ainsworth, a literary gentleman from Accrington, called Bennett "this gifted writer of modern Athens" (that is, Warrington) and W. F. Hampson thought the poems "full of good things".(29) No

criticism comes from the socialist members of the L.A.A., leaving the field open to the conservatives.

Despite the drift away from its original, more progressive, outlook Allen Clarke patched up his quarrel with the Association and rejoined in 1926 - largely due to the pressure of Alf Pearce. He was shortly after made an honorary member. However, he took no part in the business of the Association, confining his activities to speaking on Lancashire literature at meetings. The Association did not neglect its commitment to keeping Lancashire's literary heritage alive and its meetings frequently honoured the 'classic' writers, such as Ben Brierley (Failsworth, June 1925), Laycock (Blackpool, July 23rd 1926), Bamford (Middleton March 1935) and Waugh on too many occasions to mention.

By the outbreak of the Second World War the L.A.A. had established itself, but had not developed as rapidly as some of the big early meetings might have suggested. At November 1st 1938 ordinary membership stood at 195, and the various honorary positions 21. The much-respected Henry Brierley had died, and Rev. T. C. Porteus, Vicar of Chorley, took his place.

I would argue that the development of Lancashire dialect literature advanced little during the 1920s and 1930s, at least within the Association. The L.A.A. fostered an increasingly conservative view of dialect literature which was both 'homely' and 'above politics'. The sharp, contemporary, message of dialect writing in the 1890s gave way to a self-satisfied 'common-sense' wisdom, which was ultimately banal. In the next section, the work of writers in this period shall be examined to see what sort of Lancashire dialect was being written, mainly in the inter-war years.

Dialect Writing After the First World War

The volume of dialect writing produced during the 1920s and 1930s was substantial, with a continuing interest in dialect sketches and poetry in the local press, as well as in papers such as the Cotton Factory Times, and periodicals including Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Annual. Dialect writers were published by many local publishers, and during this period three substantial collections of Lancashire literature, mostly in dialect, were published: J. R. Swann's Lancashire Authors, in 1924, May Yates' Lancashire Anthology in 1923, and G. H. Whittaker's Lancashire Garland in 1936. It would be impossible to cover the work of all of these writers, though I hope a representative selection will indicate the subject matter covered by them, and differences of approach adopted.

Allen Clarke continued to write a steady flow of 'Tum Fowt' sketches for the Liverpool Weekly Post, often commenting on, and satirising, current events. He also produced several novels, including perhaps one of his best - The Men Who Fought For Us. Serialised initially in the Co-operative News in 1912, it appeared in book form during the First World War. It is based on the struggles of the Chartists and the founding of the co-operative movement in Rochdale. The novel makes good use of Rochdale dialect in the dialogue between the characters, including Tom Livsey, Charles Howarth and other historical figures. A novel development was his history of dialect literature which appeared in the Liverpool Weekly Post during 1926 - written itself entirely in dialect. Clarke was also writing regularly for local papers like the Bolton Evening News (as 'Old Boltonian') and for the Blackpool Evening Gazette. He patched up his quarrel with the Cotton Factory Times, and, after a gap of forty years, began writing for them again.

His most regular contribution to Lancashire literature, following the demise of his Northern Weekly, was Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Annual. This continued to provide a forum of Lancashire writers and gave him some independence from the commercial pressures of the Liverpool Weekly Post. He could write and say what he wanted, and often did. In his "Editor's Gossip" for the 1934 Annual, he ridicules Conservative statements that six million people were starving to death in Russia and makes the Swiftian suggestion that we eat the unemployed in Britain, as a way of easing the burden on taxes.(33) Clarke saw the progress of the Soviet Union as the one hopeful political sign in the 1930s, and again in his 1935 Annual he returns to praising 'the first great co-operative, socialistic adventure and experiment in all history'.(34)

It must be said though that Clarke's writing did not progress in the 1920s and 1930s; it was more of a levelling-off, with new material written which was similar in form and content to his pre-war work. He re-published many of his novels in serial form in the Liverpool Weekly Post, with minor alterations (such as the titles!)(35). The new writing coming from the young Soviet Republic by working class writers like Gladkov, Fadeyev, and Sholokhov do not appear to have had any influence on him, though given his interest in Russian literature he would probably be aware of their work. The political culture which Clarke had inhabited in the 1890s and early 1900s, of sincere, moralistic I.L.P.-type socialism, was dead. The political message of his socialist novels - to hope for utopia but in the meantime support the Labour Party as an immediate end - was a long way from his youthful Tolstoyanism. Many younger working class writers, including Jack Hilton and George Chandler from Lancashire, saw the Communist Party as the most dynamic political force in the labour movement. Clarke, whose politics were formed in quite different times, became increasingly isolated politically from young, radical, writers in the inter-war years as much as from mainstream 'labourism' represented by writers such as Sam Fitton.

Sam Fitton's work did show important developments after the First World War, up to his untimely death in 1923. He increasingly became the literary spokesman of 'mainstream' labour politics in Lancashire, through his poems and sketches in the Cotton Factory Times. "The Inseparables" is a fairly typical celebration of two of Labour's main figures:

Gee and Turner, Turner and Gee
Me an Ben, an Ben an me
hond in hond in Labour's ship
Trusted, tried each troublous trip
Facin storms an bearin yokes
Doin their best for workin folks.
Staunch an true as true con be
Gee an Turner, Turner an Gee.(36)

Shortly after, Fitton warned about the dangers of 'direct action' and suggested that the best form of 'direct action' is at the polling booths, voting for the solid and reliable Labour Party candidates:

"Direct Action - Voting"

"Oh words are cheap" I hear you say
Yet let this be a word in season
Be circumspect an act direct
Get right by reason.
If you would save yourselves think well and note
The only Direct Action is the vote. (37)

Sam Fitton was more than a mouthpiece for official Labour policy however. In "The Weaver and the Bottom Dog" he shows his sympathy for the thousands of poorly paid, low-status women workers of Lancashire:

I've yerd folks talk abeawt the bottom dog,
That dog 'ats yowlin' to be free;
It may be shackled but I'll eyt my clog
If ony dog's worse off than me!
I'll swop my job wi' oather dog or cat,
I'm shackled, I'm a woman too, at that!
I merely weighve; I noather spin nor card.
I'm often tired but noody cares.
I work as long as them, an teyl as had;
My job is quite as skilled as theirs;
I mend their bad work too, you'll agree;
Heaw it is then they get mooar brass nor me?

The poem ends with a suggestion that the women weavers work as hard as the spinners, and that Labour should help its weaker members:

Who makes us bottom dogs? Does no'bdy know?
An don't yo think it seems a sin?
we're nobbut lilies but we want to grow;
We toil hard if we dunno spin.
If th'Labour cause is good an circumspect,
Why cornt its weaker members share th'effect?
Oh chivalry, this nation is a rum un
At thrives an sees its bottom dog's a woman (38)

The contribution of other, less well-known dialect writers who wrote for the Cotton Factory Times is considered in the following section on "Dialect Writers and the Labour Movement"; however, the contribution of Sam Fitton to dialect writing was wider than the labour movement, and he is rightly regarded as one of Lancashire's greatest dialect writers of the twentieth century. He acted as a literary spokesman for the working class people of the south Lancashire cotton towns. As argued elsewhere, he did not try to convert them to 'pure' socialism as Clarke did. Rather, he was happy to represent their modest, limited reformism, typified by the mainstream of the Labour Party. (39)

Ammon Wrigley: The Contradictions of a 'Countryman'

The dialect writer who increasingly came to be recognised as a potential successor to Edwin Waugh was Ammon Wrigley, of Saddleworth. Wrigley's writings stand out as being quite different to those of other dialect writers of the 1920s and 1930s in that they are strongly rural-based. Wrigley's Saddleworth was still very much an isolated industrial village in the inter-war years, surrounded by bleak moorland and a way of life little since the Industrial Revolution. Wrigley, comparing himself to Fitton, admitted, "I am not stirred by the town or its people".(40) One of his most substantial

collections - The Wind Among the Heather - seems to sum up in its title the writings of Ammon Wrigley. It is rooted in the moorland communities of Saddleworth, enriched by a centuries old 'common people's' culture. It is ironic that Wrigley spent all his working life as an industrial worker, as a minder in a woollen mill. None of this industrial experience is reflected in his writings. Although older than Clarke - he was born in 1862 - his first work was not published until 1901. (41) In one sense he is a generation behind Clarke, in that his publishing history, and reputation do not commence until this century. However, the content of his writings places him more with Waugh, on the threshold of the 'new' Lancashire of the Industrial Revolution. He seems to recognise this when he says:

I was bred in the cold grey hills,
In the days when life was stern,
When work had left the handloom,
And wages were hard to earn(42)

Reginald Kenney said of him:

He was a poet of the moors who lived and understood the moorland folk as no other living writer did.(43)

Wrigley is frequently nostalgic about the hand-loom weaving days of Saddleworth, and in addition to his literary work, spent much time researching the history of the area. "Owd Cronies" is the lamentation of two old weavers about the 'world we have lost':

Win sin yond mooredges sum busy on wick,
Win son o'th'owd naybors sum merry un thick!

When th'wayter mills sang, Jone, i'every clough,
Un foak wur o'hearty un lusty un bluff -
Those wur th'days for us two;
When a collop o'ham every neighbor ud gi'e,
Un a pint o'whom-brewed to wesh it deawn wi,
Then, wi awlus wur welcome i'every fowd!
But those nayburs ur gone, Jone, thi're o' lyin' cowd
Eaut ut top o'yond broo.(44)

A lot of Wrigley's poetry is in standard English - he tends to reserve his use of

dialect to represent the speech of local people, rather than use it as a descriptive tool in, say, describing the Saddleworth moors. "'Nem o'th'owd Poots' At a Churn Gathering" is an example of using dialect to let the people 'speak for themselves', describing a centuries-old village festival. The narrator sees 'Nem' at the door and calls him in to describe the events which took place:

Is that thee, Nem, hay, do come in,
Sum oft aw wundert wheer theau's bin,
Fur th'age ov a duck theau's ne'er bin sin;
Asto getten agate o'courtin'?
Hay, nowe, sed Nem, but mich aw want
To get some felley in a bant,
But tother neet awd sich a rant,
Aw'll tell thi o'abeawt it.(45)

While 'churn gatherings' were the sort of traditional customs which Wrigley could exult in, occasionally he would write of more contemporary, almost modern, institutions. His "Th'Divi's Deawn Agen" is a dialogue between two local women about local people, and in particular their irritation about the co-op 'divi' being reduced:

Aw guess theau's yerd ut th'divi's deawn?
Ther'll be a row thi sen,
Fur tother neet aw yerd ther'd bin
Sum plutcherin agen. (46)

The poem indicates that, though the women see the co-op as 'theirs'. Nonetheless the committee elected to run it are not doing their job - "Not bullyeds yond Committee are". The 'committee man' and his wife get criticised for putting on airs and graces and having a good time at everyone's expense:

Un tother neet, owd Candle wife,
Wur toakin hay soh fine,
Her mester'd bin a dellygate
Toh Ashton-under-Lyne.(47)

The narrator vows to go "streyght whom" and tell her husband Bill to "wacken up" and get himself elected as a delegate - but then the conversation veers off onto another

subject, suggesting that women are too ready to complain and do nothing much about it!

Although Wrigley was a member of the L.A.A., he played little part in its activities and his membership lapsed for a period in the late 1920s. He tended to stay within his own 'back yard' and appears to have sought little of the comradeship of writers which many L.A.A. members found rewarding in its activities. However, an "Ammon Wrigley Fellowship" was formed in 1932 which acted as a local circle of admiration for the poet, and continues in existence. Whilst Wrigley's poetry is undoubtedly of a much higher literary standard than that of most dialect writers in the 1920s and 1930s, the same criticism which I earlier levelled at Waugh could be made against him - that he avoids describing the social reality of an area (perhaps the 'divi' sketch is as near as he gets) preferring the timeless beauties of the moors, or writing of 'characters' who tend to be rooted in an idealised past. While Saddleworth was certainly old-fashioned compared with neighbouring Oldham, it still had many of the social problems of its bigger neighbour - unemployment, speed-up in the weaving sheds, bad housing and - more so than Oldham - bad working conditions in the mills, where Wrigley himself worked. His work is essentially escapist, a fact which clearly recommended himself to middle class critics like Reginald Kenney:

His work is great because he follows, with instinctive genius, the canon of true literary art. He never pushed himself, his morals, or his philosophy in front of his subject.(48)

If Wrigley was open to criticism for ignoring those parts of Saddleworth life which did not fit in with his image of 'a moorland parish' - like the job he did, and many others like him - he was simply following the time-honoured path of 'rustic' working class writers supplying the sort of romanticised images of rural life which Waugh and Brierley thrived on. The Wind Among the Heather was published by subscription, and the addresses of most of the subscribers suggest that middle class patronage played a strong part in ensuring Wrigley's work was published. The great majority of names and addresses given indicates that the ordinary 'street' address is few and far between.

Middle Class Resurgence: Strike Poetry

A feature of dialect writing in the inter-war years was the increasing number of middle class attempts to use it. As mentioned earlier, the L.A.A., from its beginnings as an organisation of working class dialect writers with some middle class support, became dominated by middle class people. While many, like Henry Brierley, Walter Butterworth, Reginald Kenney and J. Cumming Walters were content to criticise dialect writing, some did write in it. One such person was A. B. Robinson, a Darwen mill manager. During the weaving strikes of 1931 and 1932 Robinson wrote a number of anti-strike dialect poems. One harked back to the great strike of 1878 which led to serious rioting in Blackburn:

Mi fayther kept a grocer's store
When I wer' th'owdest o'childer four,
i'seventy-eight.
For nine or ten weeks mill closed deawn
Un folks i'th'village un teawn
Wer short o'meayt.

While Robinson describes the privations of the strike, and displays sympathy with some of the victims, it is the strikers themselves who are to blame. The longer a strike lasts, the stronger is the likelihood of firms placing orders elsewhere:

These facts are things that must be faced,
Our orders lost elsewhere are placed;
- We miss the tide.
We can't afford to lose good trade
That British brawn and brain have made,
Our country's pride. (50)

The appeal is very much one-sided: while appealing to the workers' sense of patriotism, nothing is said about the morality of firms placing orders elsewhere to avoid the effects of the action; this is simply good business. Robinson returns to the theme of industrial conflict a couple of years later in "The Dispute" - a reference to the strikes

sweeping Lancashire at the time (1932) over the introduction of 'more looms' per weaver. The poem is interesting in that it begins in dialect, and appeals to local sentiment, as from 'an ordinary' person, and ends on the tone of the schoolteacher addressing an unruly, but potentially 'good' pupil:

Aw wer' born i'this teawnship, as many a one knows,
Un it ne'er wer' my wish to turn friends into foes,
Aw'm rather outspoken in thad sooart o'thing,
For aw'm deeply concern'd what this upset may bring

Every look-out or strike we have managed to scrape through,
Aw've sed to misel "What's this world coming to?"
We still go on muddling our chances away,
Which both 'loser' and 'winner' the cost must defray.

The poem switches into standard English, with the voice of the mill-owner:

By making this rhyme I have nothing to gain,
And if you read further will try to explain.
We are not tied to any one place, that is true,
And can leave if we find something better to do.

Robinson clearly warns the strikers that capital is not tied to one area, and has no sense of 'community responsibility' in the last resort. The voice of the pedant in the last verse upholds this 'freedom' of capital, and lectures the workers that Britain is still 'the best place on earth':

This freedom, no-one could appraise at its worth,
And bad as things are, this the best place on earth.
If you'll help to mend it there's no reason why
These clouds of misfortune will not quickly roll by.(51)

Here, dialect writing is used by the 'local' middle class to appeal to the 'local' working class: the bonds of a common industry, community and dialect over-ride those of class. 'If we only pulled together, everything would be perfect' is the message. What is interesting in the above poems is how late they were written, and how self-conscious the poems are. This is true particularly of the last one with its switch from dialect to standard English, the crude threats of the mill-owners, and the final appeal to reason

and common sense.

Samuel Hardman and 'conservative' Common Sense

Another middle-class man who established a reputation as a dialect writer was Samuel Hardman, whose father ran a Radcliffe bleaching and dyeing firm.(52) Samuel Hardman became an office manager in his father's business, and was for many years a local Liberal councillor. His 'common sense' attack on socialism, as if from an ordinary working class man, has already been mentioned. "Billy Tomkins Un His Pigs" was another dialect assault on socialism:

Billy Tomkins were a socialist as big as could be seen,
If yo look't for quite a month on end un used two pai o e'en:
He hadn't bin one very lung but then he'd larnt so fast,
He knew their creed fro' end to end, ther rules fro' fust to last.

He once had bin a workin' mon but sin he fun it eawt,
That wark were not so easy t'do he geet a job that's beawt;
Un neaw he's spendin every neet wheer he con find a spot,
In tellin' foaks they'r nowt but slaves, un sich-like tommy-rot.(53)

The poem uses the familiar theme of socialists wanting to divide everyone else's belongings; after Bill explains 'the theory' to his friend Joe, Joe explains he is a bit 'hard up' and will take one of Bill's pigs for his supper. Bill is suitably 'fooled' by his own silly ideas. The point is not that Hardman is ignorant about what socialism is, as much as the fact that he is an educated middle class office manager using the dialect of the Lancashire working class to rubbish socialist ideas. Socialism is seen as unnatural, and working class men like Bill who are taken in by it are just fools. Use of the dialect suggests a common-sense 'pro-capitalist' ideology, that everyone will get what they can and to share things collectively, is 'against human nature'. In "Advice Wuth Takkin" he gives more homely advice to working class people, as though one himself. One of the suggestions is to speak kindly of the rich, or else they might stop being benefactors of the poor:

Ther's now ut's gained bi hate an scorn, un daubin foak wi pitch,
It winnot turn wrung into reet nor poor men into rich,
Like rubbish thrown into a stream bi some unthinkin mon,
It stops the sea o'charity fro' rowlin sweetly on.

People should be happy with what they have, and strive to improve. If they meet someone worse off they should help them. Collective solutions to poverty are, however, only likely to stir up hatred and materialism:

If ther's owt good i'most o'men, un that there is, aw'm sure,
Durnt grumble if its noan so mich but try to make it moor,
Un if, when on yo'r travels, yo should come across a mon
Who's lost his way, for mony a day, just help to put him on.

Un try to live i'harmony, bid discord quickly cease,
Ring eawt thoos passion-breedin' strikes, ring in an endless peace,
Let not selfish love o'gowd but duty spur yo on,
For they are blest above the rest who love their fellow-mon. (54)

Hardman's Liberalism had none of the radical edge which Laycock's and David Lawton's had, belonging to a later generation which saw the party of Gladstone turn into a pale reflection of Conservatism. However, while he clearly saw only individual solutions to the problem of poverty - self-advancement, and charity from the rich - he was a firm supporter of religious tolerance, and of environmental causes ("The Smoke Nuisance" was a favourite lecturing topic).

Other writers of this period who could be called 'middle class dialect writers' included W. F. Hampson, of Edgworth, near Bolton, who wrote mostly 'homely' pieces like "A Bit o'Good Feighr", and "Owd Ephraim Woods". He died in 1957. (55) Major Halstead himself, who came to occupy a central position within the L.A.A., wrote a number of dialect poems, such as "Billy Suet's Song", "An Owd Fashioned Welcome" and "My Owd Case Clock" (a reply to Sam Fitton's well-known poem).

Hard Times Return

The conservative prescriptions of Hardman and Robinson met with approval from other members of the Lancashire Authors' Association; an increasingly middle class membership could strongly empathise with the homely, conservative, message of their poems. Conservatively-inclined politics, expressed in dialect, became 'plain common sense', rather than 'political'. There was a sense that this was how working class people really felt, and all the agitation over socialism and trades unions were the result of 'outside agitators'. The depression of the Thirties was frequently put down to labour unrest, or to moral reasons, such as Thomas Welsby expressed in "A Poor Look-Out":

This Christmas, I'm thinkin, poor heightin ther'll be,
For some as connot get wark,
An th'wost of it is, there's no use o'denyin',
As th'furtur' for th'mooist looks dark.

Its nobbut a few 'ats content uppo th'dole,
It hurts me to see lads abeawt,
As 'ud wark if they could, but what can they do?
It's enough to break a chaps heart.

The writer is sympathetic to the unemployed; he doesn't suggest they are idlers, but realises that most want to work. However, the reason for their troubles does not lie in economic causes:

It sarves us aw reet, to my thinkin,
Booath gentle an simple alike,
We'n aw spent too mich brass i'drinkin',
An spooart an ridin abeawt. (56)

The poem ends on vague hope that things will turn out right in the end, we'll "power on just as weel as we con" and hope that "the fight may be won".

John Mullin, a Manchester painter and decorator, wrote "The Lint Among the Yure" in the 1930s, lamenting the hard times afflicting the Lancashire cotton industry,

and comparing today's depression with past prosperity. Although, in times past, the mill workers lives were far from affluent there was a basic contentment with their lives and sense of workplace comradeship. He wrote of his attraction to the mill girls in "The Lint Among the Yure":

The'r tresses they were black or brown,
The'r faces fresh as May,
An' though they spent aw th'week i'th'mill,
They smelt as sweet as hay.
They 'ur happy as the day wur lung,
Altho' they'r nobbut poor.
An' when they looast fro' th'fact'ry yon,
They'd lint among the'r yure.

Mullin describes his own love for a mill girl and 'that lint among her yure', and ends on a note of optimism that although time are bad, as in previous slumps things will mend:

In th'cotton teawns toimes han bin bad;
They're noan loike what they wur,
An' fac'try folk han teighten't belts -
Hard toimes are reawnd the'r dur.
Bo' varra soon owd fortune's wheel
'Ull gi'e a turn, aw'm sure,
Then fact'ry honds 'ull have agen
That lint among the'r yure.(57)

Mullin very cleverly uses the 'lint' - fluff which abounded in the mill and stuck in clothing and hair - as an emblem of life and vivacity, particularly in relation to women workers. The decline of the cotton trade naturally meant that the common sight of workers 'loosing' from the mill covered in lint was less frequently seen. The poem's identification with working class people and the final optimism that bad times will mend remind the reader of Laycock's 'Cotton Famine' poetry, although this time round the decline became permanent.

Dialect in the Labour Movement

Lancashire dialect remained an important part, if declining, of the culture of the organised labour movement in the twentieth century, certainly up to the time of the Second World War. This was expressed in two ways: through labour movement publications like the Cotton Factory Times and Labour's Northern Voice, and through social events at which dialect recitations would be given. These will be looked at in turn.

The labour movement press of the period clearly had a strong regional bias. This reflected the structure of Lancashire's labour movement as a whole. The cotton industry was still organised in trade unions which usually did not extend outside Lancashire, and very often were confined to a quite small locality. The weavers' organisations, although federated in the Weavers' 'Amalgamation' were to all intents and purposes locally autonomous. (58) In the case of the Nelson Weavers for example, local disputes and pro-union propaganda were disseminated through their own journal, the Power Loom. (59) The Cotton Factory Times remained the mouthpiece of the cotton unions as a whole, covering in considerable detail current issues within the industry, but also having a 'lighter' side as well. Within the 'political' labour movement the I.L.P.'s Labour's Northern Voice expressed a quite distinctive regional politics - frequently to the left of the party nationally, and highly critical of Labour Party policies over, for example, Soviet Russia. This independent-minded approach combined with a willingness to publish dialect pieces which put across an ideal of socialism 'in the colours of the red rose'. The co-operative movement remained strongly de-centralised, with powerful grass-roots organisation. Most of the Lancashire towns had their own independent society, very often with its own publication - for example the Oldham Co-operative Record, Leigh Co-operative Record, and others. Frequently, the national publications (such as Wheatsheaf) had local supplements. These frequently used local dialect poems or sketches. A further regional publication which expressed women's interests was the Woman Citizen, which was linked to the

co-operative movement.

Dialect and the Union: the Cotton Factory Times

The Cotton Factory Times was by far the most popular of the regional labour movement publications, and was required reading for most cotton workers. It was a way of keeping up-to-date on conditions and rates of pay in other localities, and strikes and other disputes. The publishers were careful to ensure that it was, however, a popular and readable paper. Short stories, serialised novels, cartoons, pictures, dialect sketches and poems, and a column called "Mirth in the Mill" provided this broader appeal. Some excerpts from this are given in Chapter 7, in the section on "Everyday Life" in the mills. (60) One example is the following story, based on the differing meanings of 'union' to working class people:

Some weavers are refusing to learn anyone to weave who is not in the union. A small boy went up to a six-loom weaver the other day and said: "Mi mother wants to know if yo'll larn me to weighve?"
"Is hoo beawn to put thi in t'union?" inquired the weaver.
"Aw don't know," answered the little innocent, "but hoo's put mi grondad in, for they took him up yesterday!" (61)

The story was signed by 'A Jay' of Burnley - a frequent contributor to the column. In the same issue 'Fost Time' of Bury writes a dialect poem complaining about the new wages agreement in her section which - whilst reducing hours and improving the rate of pay - has cut out some tea breaks:

For "Owd Times" Sake

Yo' con talk abeawt your shorter heurs
And t'increased rate o'pay,
But everything is no all fun
Wi me an mine today.
Aw fairly miss them natty chats
We used to ha o'er tay,
When seated on a weft can
Just after t'break o'day. (62)

It was almost obligatory for the contributions to be in dialect - reflecting the actual speech of the cotton workers, giving extra realism to the tales and jokes. The column regularly received a large number of contributions, only a few of which could be given space in the paper. However, by expressing the lighter side of everyday mill life, the column helped to cement the close relationship between the paper and its readers - and also provide an outlet for inexperienced working class writers and humourists.

The paper was particularly interested in publicising and printing the work of cotton workers. A contributor to Allen Clarke's old Northern Weekly, Sarah Robinson, was featured in the issue of January 5th 1923, under the title of "Shuttle and Pen", with illustrations of her at her writing desk, and on her looms. Although she wrote very little in dialect, she did, on occasions, draw attention to grievances in the weaving shed, such as the practice of 'steaming' the cloth (a temporary 'sizing' of the material which was injurious to weavers' health):

The steam is falling upon us
Though great is the pleading of mine,
Dear comrades why don't you come forward
And join in a cause that's divine? (63)

The work of S. J. Bardsley was featured in the same year when his collection "Echoes of Controversy" was published. Bardsley was the full-time secretary of the Manchester and Salford Weavers' Association, and came from Heywood. The reviewer quotes from "Whully's Ghost" - the ghost of an old Chartist come back to berate the local councillors:

Aw'll tell thi what, between eaursel,
It's time ther'n o'pack't to he--l
Aw'll co' an' tell owd Nick misel
They're fit for fotchin.
An' once HE has 'em to hissels
He'll give 'em tatchin'.

"Nay, nay" aw sed; "yo murnt do so,
Yo, surely won't condemn 'em o.
Yon Labour councillor yo' know -

Just spare a friend."
"Well aye," he sed, "he's young an so
He'll happen mind." (64)

Bardsley's poem "Ay! Fayther!" is about a mill engineer whose two daughters weave in the same factory. The weavers are called out on strike, and the management try to force the father to pressurise the daughters not to strike. He refuses - and is sacked. One of the daughters, in the poem, addresses her father:

They thought they'd frighten yo aw'll bet,
An' make us goo a-weavin,
Aw'd freighnten them if aw could get
Mi bit o't'woman's neive in!
Let those goo creepin' in 'at's fond
O'trucklin' an time-sarvin';
Aw couldn't be a knobstick hond
To save misel fro' starvin.'

The poem is a moving affirmation of working class family solidarity. It ends with the daughter saying she is "preawd o'sich a fayther". Other poems quoted include "Mary Jane" - the weaving shed chatterer who is always telling the official what the union should do, but is always behind with her contributions.

Sam Fitton was writing regular sketches for the Cotton Factory Times up to his death in 1923, using a variety of pseudonyms including 'Billy Blobb' 'Peter Pike', 'Sally Butterworth' amongst others. Fitton's work has been covered elsewhere so particular examples have no need to be quoted. Tommy Thompson, who later became one of Lancashire's most famous dialect writers and reciters, during and after the war, had some early work published in the Factory Times. Other writers who contributed dialect sketches included Alex Southall, J. Quinn ('Flash'), J. P. Bilsborough, Nelly Wild, J. J. Roberts, Emily Greenhalgh and Alice Pratt. The Yorkshire textile workers' leader Ben Turner frequently contributed Yorkshire dialect poems, often on 'labour' themes.

Ethel Carnie Holdsworth wrote a large number of dialect sketches for the paper,

published at various times between the First World War and the late 1930s. During the mid-1930s she had short series of sketches published under the general title "Towd In t'Bell Hour". One tale, of Ted and Mary an old weaving couple on short time, is about the approach of Christmas and the knowledge that they had no money to buy the usual goods. The sketch is a commentary on the workers who had spent all their lives in the mill, with nothing to show for it - materially or emotionally:

Mary did not say much. But Ned knew hoo were thinkin a lot. An' he felt sorry for Mary as he felt for hissel. Two grey-headed old weavers - 'at had woven hundreds o'miles o'cotton in their time, and 'at had bin kept that busy kissin t'shuttle they'd hardly had time to kiss one another! and Kesmas coming and naught for Mary to put in to'oon... (65)

Shortly before his death, Allen Clarke re-established relations with the Cotton Factory Times which reprinted several of his old 'Tum Fowt' sketches - such as "Bill Spriggs as a Minder", "Bill Spriggs in the Weaving Shed", etc. In the 50th anniversary issue (January 18th 1935), Clarke wrote a short article about his early connection with the paper, but does not mention the row which led to his departure and the establishment of Teddy Ashton's Journal. (66)

The importance of the Cotton Factory Times in maintaining a link between the labour movement and dialect writing, at a time when the Lancashire Author's Association was becoming more middle class dominated, cannot be over-emphasised. It published working class writing for a working class readership, and dialect clearly retained a considerable degree of popularity throughout the inter-war years. While many of the dialect sketches were straightforward humorous tales, some of the contributions from writers like Ethel Carnie Holdsworth, Sam Fitton, Allen Clarke and J. S. Bardsley (among many others) did put over a political argument.

Dialect and the Socialist Message: Labour's Northern Voice

Within the I.L.P. and the Labour Party, the plethora of small, irregularly produced local papers had disappeared by the 1920s. However, the publication of Labour's Northern Voice from 1925 onwards, by the I.L.P.'s Lancashire Divisional Council, gave a stable, regionally-based weekly newspaper for the socialist movement. Lancashire dialect writing did not feature in each issue, but the sketches of Hannah Mitchell, writing as 'Daisy Nook' (a reference back to Ben Brierley's Daisy Nook Sketches), appeared approximately every month. Mitchell used dialect to put over a socialist and feminist argument with the labour movement. During the run-up to the General Strike she wrote sketches about the impending conflict - "Abeawt This Coal Crisis" (July 24th 1925), "The Council of Action Meeting" (August 14th 1925), and "Coastal Propaganda" (September 4th 1925). In "Abeawt this Coal Crisis" the use of middle class blacklegs is prophesied by Sam Bates and Dick Kulshaw. Sam, the non-socialist, begins by mentioning the dispute in the mines, and wonders if there will be a strike and use of blacklegs:

"They'll look weel if they came eawt an th'bosses fill their places wi some o'these unemployed".
"Aye they will," said Dick. "They'll look weel as tha ses, but them as take their places ull look seven ways for Sunday when they getten deawn th'pit. Sum o'these unemployed clerks 'ud mak a rare show wi' a pick an shovel aw should think. There'll noan be so mony volunteers to blackleg deawn below..."
(67)

Mitchell's sketches helped to drum up support for the miners, though she does not appear to have written anything on the General Strike itself. At the same time as she was contributing her 'Daisy Nook' sketches, other occasional dialect pieces appeared, such as the anonymous "Sam's Son". The 'two gradely 'uns' are Ned, the non-socialist, and 'I.L.P. Jack'. Ned begins by cataloguing all the things that his Tory and Liberal friends say about socialism:

Dick Tohray ses id meons thad I
Shall share wi aw mi brass,

Divide id up, then start ogen -
Aw'll noan do that, bi'th'mass!
Jem Rad ses soshalism meons
Nowt but a foolish dream,
He sees 'at some must sup milk
While other folks sup the cream.

To which I.L.P. Jack replies about socialism:

Id meons that th'nation, one an o',
Shall be a great co-op,
'At we shall buy aw th'stuff we want
At ours - that's th'nation's shop.

The poem gives a long catalogue of the socialist argument, ending with the lines:

An' Soshalism meons just this -
'At we shall nobly strive
To mak this world a place where o'
May live an reetly thrive. (68)

The poem uses similar techniques to Mitchell's 'Daisy Nook' sketches, although it is probably a different writer - the dialect spellings are different, apart from the masculine pseudonym. The gullible non-socialist 'Ned' innocently takes in all that the Tories and Liberals tell him; however he genuinely wants to hear the socialist case. Unfortunately, the technique tends to suggest that all the 'Neds' of this world are dim-wits, and the conversion is too often simplistic. On the other hand, it does provide a structure to attack anti-socialist arguments, however crudely. The difficulty one has with Mitchell's sketches is to assess to what extent they had become archaic: did they still have the contemporary force that Clarke's sketches of the 1890s and 1900s had? I suspect to many of her readers, they appeared to some extent artificial and old-fashioned.

Occasionally, Labour's Northern Voice commented on wider aspects of Lancashire literature. In 1925 the centenary of Ben Brierley's birth was celebrated in Failsworth and North Manchester. 'Amicus' contributed an article on "The Ben Brierley Centenary - A Gradely Author of Lancashire" which attacks the middle class appropriation of this

working class writer. Referring to the L.A.A. meeting in Failsworth Council Chamber, 'Amicus' compliments the Liberal Alderman Middleton for his 'masterly eulogy' of Brierley's works. However, he then criticises Walter Butterworth for his presumption in criticising Brierley's deficiencies 'in varsity English'. Major David Halstead gets the hardest knock:

The 'Major' it seemed, was the Tory MP for Rossendale, who, after reciting poetry about "beer", said he had better propose a vote of thanks to somebody, and eyeing the chairman proceeded to eulogise him. Poor Ben Brierley was forgotten.... Why do we invite Tory MPs to celebrate the memory of our great literary men? Probably none are less capable of paying tribute to working class genius than those who help to crush and keep in shackles the workers. (69)

'Amicus' praises Brierley's descriptions of hand-loom weaving life, and his own radical ideas, suggesting that "an educated democracy" in the future will realize the full worth of his literary contribution. He also makes a practical suggestion that Lancashire libraries should have 'Ben Brierley' rooms, devoted to working class literature, and suggests that Labour-controlled Manchester should make a start.

Labour's Northern Voice circulated throughout Lancashire, including the weaving districts of the north-east part of the county. At least one dialect sketch, "Spengin' an Savin'", was reproduced from the Power Loom, the Nelson Weaver's paper. The sketch, by 'J.E.L.', otherwise J. E. Lee, an activist in the Nelson union. The narrator speaks to Ned in standard English, while Ned uses dialect to make his point, in this case about the local rates, and the effect of reducing them. It is election time, and the right wing candidates are saying that rates should come down:

"Tha con expect wot tha likes, but th'chap at expects th'rates commin daen so varry far must be a bit ov a simpleton."

"There seems to be a lot of them, Ned."

"A lot o'wot?"

"A lot of folks who think that the rates can be brought down a long way yet, and I fancy we shall hear a lot about it during the next few days." (70)

Both Ned and the narrator agree that reducing the rates means reducing health

care, standards of cleanliness, educational provision and services. The narrator ends by saying that we need councillors with broad vision:

Men who are not afraid of change, but who believe that precedents were made only to be broken, when a better way was found - Aye (says Ned PS), but afore tha gets awl that, tha'll hev to get a new set o'vooaters ats sin that New Jerusalem, even if it were nobbut in a dream, an wants to get theer.

More frequently, Ned is placed in the position of the non-socialist, or at least someone in a state of uncertainty, with the narrator presenting the full socialist argument to an unsure Ned. The first sketch Lee wrote, appearing in the Power Loom of August 1918, has Ned doubting the possibility of reducing the working day to eight hours:

"It's all varry weel for yo chaps to talk abaat moor holidays, working shorter haars, and sendin childer to skooil till they're full time, but what aw want to know is, Wheer is 't' brass goin' to come fro'?" (71)

In the debate, Lee argues that over the last twenty years hours have gradually come down, yet the standard of living of both employers and workers has improved - in the case of employers markedly, with new villas springing up on the edge of Nelson. So shorter hours have not meant ruin, as the employers were arguing. Although the sketch ends with both Ned and the narrator agreeing the workers are better off, with shorter hours, Ned is not quite convinced. The narrator promises to explain the finer points of his argument in a later issue. In the same issue as "Eight Hours Day" there appeared "An Open Letter from Maggie Ann to Sarah Jane". Most probably this is also by Lee - the dialect spelling is the same, and the letter reflects the aims of the union to involve women more in the work of what is still very much a man's world. Maggie Ann tells Sarah Jane that the union has helped her in getting paid the correct price for her cuts, and also that the union meetings are worth going to. She says that she wasn't the only woman who attended, and the more women who do go, the more chance there is of the union responding to women's interests:

I've bin to meetin's at Weavers' and I find that ther's more women ner me there, and if they keep increasing and asking to know all about the workings o't'Union, it'll be some encouragement to them as has to look after t'weavers' interests. So if tha thinks tha'd like to know more about it thee just ask thi collector or Union chap at works wheer tha does, and don't be flaid on him, he weant hurt thi, if there's owt goes wrong let him know and tha'll see, he'll look after it for thi. (72)

The Nelson Weavers were not typical of Lancashire trade unionism in the inter-war years. Nelson was one of the most militant centres with a strong I.L.P. tradition, into which the Communist Party was able to step. The publication of the Power Loom was only possible on the basis of a large, committed rank and file group of activists. However, the fact that it used dialect in its propaganda suggests that the left-wing leadership saw advantages in putting across a socialist message in 'local' terms. Many of the readers would be familiar with the dialect sketches of the Cotton Factory Times, and the more overtly socialist writings of J. E. Lee could build on that tradition. There was further over-lap, as we have seen, with regional socialist publications such as Labour's Northern Voice.

It should also be emphasised that by the early 1930s the I.L.P. was going into decline nationally. Labour's Northern Voice was not a mass circulation paper, in the way that the Cotton Factory Times had been in the 1920s, or even Northern Weekly in the 1890s and 1900s. The organisational break with the Labour Party, and the I.L.P.'s drift to the far left in the 1930s, resulted in its own isolation, although strong pockets of support continued in its traditional heartlands of the North of England.

Summat Abeaut Co-operation

The co-operative movement's publications within Lancashire used dialect, although the picture is uneven. Many of the local 'Co-operative Records' had regular contributions in dialect, some appear to have had little. Mary Thomason wrote regular sketches for Leigh Co-operative Record during the 1920s, and was an active member of

the Women's Co-operative Guild in the town. David Lawton for many years edited the Greenfield Co-operative Messenger and the local edition of Wheatsheaf (a national co-op journal with local editions). In addition he made regular contributions to Co-operative News and Millgate Monthly (a co-op magazine). Many of the dialect pieces published in Webs From Fancy's Loom had previously appeared in one or other of the co-operative publications. J. T. Taylor was instrumental in establishing, and then editing, the Oldham Co-operative Record in 1894 and included regular dialect items. Sam Fitton was a keen co-operator, although his contribution was mainly in cartoon sketches for the Co-operative News. During and immediately after the First World War he had a series of cartoons published supporting the aims of the Shillito League for co-operative ownership of raw materials, as well as cartoons promoting the co-operative movement generally.(73)

Local co-operative societies had a long record of dialect recitals at social events - or 'soirees' - going back to the time of Edwin Waugh. Co-operative Women's Guild groups often invited speakers like Edith Pearce to talk on dialect writers during the 1920s, or were entertained by recitals from amongst their own members.(76) The independent co-operative societies helped to support a distinctive local and regional culture; and dialect formed an important part of it. It was not accidental that Rochdale, the birthplace of co-operation, also lays a strong claim to having been the dialect capital of Lancashire (see Appendix 32).

Post-War Decline

The decline of these local and regional periodicals after the Second World War contributed to the general demise of dialect within the labour movement; the plentiful outlets that existed for working class writers in the inter-war years, whether through The Cotton Factory Times or local co-operative periodicals, ceased to exist. Labour's Northern Voice continued into the 1960s, although the dialect material had long since

disappeared.

As well as the publication of dialect material through labour movement newspapers and magazines, dialect recitals were a regular form of entertainment at social events, concerts and presentations. Hannah Mitchell gave readings of her works at Labour Party/I.L.P. events, and also mentions in her autobiography hearing other people recite her work.(74) The Communist Party, although I have found no publication of dialect writing, certainly had dialect poetry and sketches recited at social events. Mrs. Emma Partington regularly recited socialist dialect poetry for Bolton Communist Party socials at the Socialist Club on Wood Street, and Harry Pollitt was well known for his 'party-piece' recital of Laycock's "Welcome, Bonny Brid".(75)

The tradition of social events within the labour movement did not die out in the post-war years, but it certainly became less common as an institution; dialect recitation as such became out-dated with the inception of radio, and then television. Dialect reciting probably reached its high point in the early 1920s. (76) Performers like Sam Fitton, L.T. Whipp, Teddy Whittle and others attracted great crowds for their readings (see Appendix 27). The genre was popular for both labour movement socials, and other social gatherings; in some cases, such as the Bolton Communist Party events, the content would be strongly political. In most cases, the sketches would probably be similar both within and outside the boundaries of the movement.

Dialect on the Air

The 1930s saw a number of dialect sketches broadcast by the B.B.C.'s North region, based in Manchester. Among these were several of the original 'Tum Fowt' sketches, recited by Jim Fleetwood of Bolton, and included "Bill Spriggs as a Minder",

"Bill Spriggs as a Gaffer", and similar sketches.(77) Writing in his last Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Annual, published December 1935 just before his death, Clarke commented:

Most of you will have heard the adventures of Bill Spriggs, of Tum Fowt, on the wireless the last few months. It's over forty years since Teddy Ashton wrote the first Tum Fowt sketches that speedily became popular. Well, at that time, if anybody had said, "In forty years somebody in Manchester will be reciting these yarns, and by a marvellous invention, without any telegraph wires, people, hundreds of thousands of 'em, sitting in their homes all over Lancashire, all over England, and abroad, listening to 'em", we should all have answered, "Incredible". (78)

The same theme was picked up in an article published in the Cotton Factory Times, to which Clarke was then contributing similar sketches. Clarke is interviewed and expresses the same astonishment that when he first wrote the pieces he never imagined he would one day sit at home in Blackpool and hear them being recited in Manchester. He also picks up the point that the radio may give dialect a new lease of life:

I am glad we've got some real old dialect on the wireless at last, because it may do something to arrest its slipping from favour. Lancashire dialect, like all other dialect, is slowly dying, but it will be a long time before it is dead.(79)

The 'Tum Fowt' sketches were not the first dialect pieces to be recited on the radio. On June 14th 1932 some of Ammon Wrigley's poems and songs were broadcast by Tom Case. The broadcast was commented on in the Radio Times of June 3rd, in the following way:

Why not give us some of the real Lancashire and Yorkshire songs? is a question often asked by listeners. Perhaps the best answer to this is another question. "Where are these songs?"

The Radio Times goes on to mention Waugh and Brierley, but pleads ignorance of any contemporary dialect writers - other than Ammon Wrigley, whose broadcast it announces. The attitude of the B.B.C. towards dialect was a contentious one in the

1930s; many saw it as more of a threat to the survival of dialect, than a potential aid.

Reginald Kenney identified 'B.B.C. English' as the most serious enemy of dialect:

The announcers of the B.B.C., and the lecturers and speakers who broadcast, are standardising both the English vocabulary and the English pronunciation, and the effect is being gradually felt throughout the cities and shires.(81)

We shall return to this theme in more detail in Chapter 6, "Defending Dialect"; suffice at this stage to note the alarm which was being expressed over radio's potential effect. J. R. Swann, editor of The Record suggested that L.A.A. members write to the B.B.C. requesting that Kenney be commissioned to give a series of talks on the air about Lancashire dialect, in view of his popularity as a speaker on the subject.(82) The L.A.A.'s request was acceded to it in a sense: the B.B.C. put on a programme called "Jannock" which produced this reaction quoted in The Record from an unknown newspaper:

This medley is the sort of thing Southerners lap up as eagerly as a cat swallows cream - and with about as much knowledge as the cat has of a milk separator.(83)

In the following issue of The Record the editor re-published a Radio Times letter congratulating the B.B.C. in broadcasting some Cotswold dialect, and expressed the wish that more dialect might be similarly broadcast. J. R. Swann added:

"Hear hear" say we. It is to be hoped that the B.B.C. having admitted this letter into their organ will pay it appreciative attention. We venture to say that a series of Lancashire dialect recitals on the Wireless would prove highly successful. Now and again in the past we have had brief expositions from L. T. Whipp and Mr. G. Baldwin but many others of our members could well be included.(84)

Swann goes on to suggest several L.A.A. members as possible contributors including Hugh Beech, W. F. Hampson, Hamilton Harris, Sam Heywood and A. Webster. For more general commentaries he proposes Clarke, Hardman, Halstead, Kenney, Butterworth, Pomfret, Swann, Ainsworth and Salkeld. He adds that such

material is less likely to result in the 'switch-offs' which greet 'such an intolerable "heap of jazz 'music'" and other objectionable forms of entertainment. One clearly gets a sense of a campaign by the L.A.A. to get 'on the air'; no doubt the decision to broadcast some of Allen Clarke's early stories was a response to it. Certainly, The Record quotes approvingly from an un-named newspaper report in its December 1935 edition:

And so 'Teddy Ashton' has actually won a B.B.C. showing, even though it is only a series of his Bill Spriggs sketches. The way of the Lancashire dialect writer is hard; nobody takes him very seriously, and the problem of finding an outlet for his work is a heart-breaking one. (85)

Despite the half-hearted praise of the above piece, the broadcasting of the 'Tum Fowt' sketches proved to be a breakthrough. In the following year Hamilton Harris gave a recital of Waugh's songs and poems.(86) During 1937 the B.B.C. ran programmes entitled "The Northern Muse" with poems by W. F. Hampson and Ammon Wrigley, and "Gradely Folk" with contributions from Hugh Beech and Ammon Wrigley.(87) In the December 1938 edition of The Record J. R. Swann could comment that "Our Association members have had quite a good show recently on the Wireless". The B.B.C. broadcast a "Lancashire Neet" on October 27th with performances by Hamilton Harris, Wrigley, Pearce, W. H. Jenkins, and recital of a Sam Fitton sketch. Pearce was critical of the B.B.C.'s refusal to name all the authors and performers who appeared in the programme. He announced the L.A.A.'s intention to send a letter to the B.B.C., suggesting that the L.A.A. should act in an 'advisory capacity' in relation to the broadcasting of dialect pieces. It mentions the contributions already made by performers like Beech, Wrigley and Harris, and suggests other possible contributors covering literary and historical matters.

The offer does not appear to have been accepted, but the B.B.C. expanded their coverage of dialect and poetry and prose. "The Northern Muse" became a regular feature, although covering Cheshire and Yorkshire, as well as Lancashire. Another

regional programme which included some dialect verse was "North Countrywoman" broadcast during the war years. Mary Luty was one of the contributors to the programme. (88)

The L.A.A. fought a successful campaign to get dialect broadcast on the radio. In a sense though it was a pyrrhic victory. The rapid spread of television in the 1950s made the breakthrough short-lived. While dialect was eminently suitable to radio, it was less well fitted to the demands of television, both artistic and commercial. However, it cannot be said that Lancashire dialect writers were slow to exploit new media; further it seems clear that the radio dialect recitals were popular and made the B.B.C. put on more. In the post-war years Wilfred Pickles and Tommy Thompson became regular, and nationally famous characters.

Conclusion

This chapter has primarily covered the inter-war years, surveying developments in dialect writing, writer's organisation (the Lancashire Authors' Association), the use of dialect in the labour movement, and finally the impact of radio. What stands out is the continuing popularity of dialect in these years, evidenced by the wide publication of dialect - including radio broadcasting - and its use at social events. Middle class writers felt a need to write in dialect, as well as working class socialists. Arguably in both cases, they were trying to 'reach out' and influence a working class readership in different political directions; once again, it was the medium which was primarily the message!

For members of the Lancashire middle class like Major Halstead and A. B. Robinson, dialect was a naturally conservative medium, expressing a changeless 'common sense' world in which everyone knew their place and all worked for the common good. By using dialect a sense of community could be developed which over-

rode class differences, based on a shared locality, and a shared industry, cotton. Dialect was used to attack strikes and suggest that they only harm the people they were meant to help; at the same time middle class writers like Samuel Hardman used dialect to express the 'common sense' opinions of a typical Lancashire worker, dismissive of the mistaken ideas of socialism. However, writers like Allen Clarke, Sam Fitton and Hannah Mitchell were able to write dialect sketches in which socialism becomes the 'common sense' of the working class. Use of dialect in the 1920s was contested terrain and, while middle class writers came to dominate the Lancashire Authors' Association, the existence of a network of labour movement publications gave working class dialect writers an alternative outlet. However, working class writers using a socialist perspective were increasingly on the defensive. Socialism in the 1920s and 1930s became increasingly centralist, whether it was the social democracy of the Labour Party, or the Marxism-Leninism of the Communist Party. Regional sentiments fitted uneasily with either of these political ideologies. The conservative writers, who could use dialect to express a message of class harmony were in a much stronger position. Dialect was able to emphasise the claims of locality and region over those of class; a socialist politics which could have both a regional message as well as a class appeal was no longer available as the 'old' I.L.P. turned into a far-left sect, owing more to Trotsky than Keir Hardie and Bruce Glasier.

The late 1930s mark a clear dividing line for dialect literature; the death of Allen Clarke marked the last link with the dialect tradition of the nineteenth century, with its broad world-view combining with its 'homeliness' and domesticity. It was most appropriate that the first real breakthrough for dialect broadcasting were the 'Tum Fowt' sketches which Clarke originally wrote in the 1890s, and which hark back to Staton's Bowtun Luminary stories.

Notes

1. Patrick Joyce Visions of the People Cambridge 1991 p.290.
2. Rochdale Observer (RO) April 7 1909.
3. "The Rise and Progress of the Lancashire Authors' Association" in The Record (R) June 1930.
4. "Our Association - Its Rise and Development" by R. H. Brodie and A. H. Pearce, R May 1911.
5. L.A.A. Membership List, May 1911, in Lancashire Record Office (LRO).
6. Ethel Pearce edited The Young Socialist for a number of years.
7. L.A.A. - Rules and Objects, May 1911. see Brodie and Pearce, op. cit.
8. *ibid.*
9. "Reminiscences of the L.A.A." R December 1939.
10. Pearce R June 1930.
11. R December 1939.
12. R January 1 1912.
13. R July 1912.
14. It should be noted that the order of proceedings at L.A.A. events has changed little to this day.
15. R May 1915.
16. R February 1916.
17. R February 1917.
18. R August 1918.
19. R November 1923.
20. Labour's Northern Voice (LNV) May 15 1925.
21. Red Rose Circulating Magazine (RRCM) February 1927.
22. RRCM February 1927.
23. RRCM June 1930.
24. RRCM June 1930 and LNV May 1930.
25. RRCM June 1930.
26. *ibid.*
27. RRCM November 1931.

28. *ibid.*
29. *ibid.*
30. Many of Clarke's early sketches were reprinted in slightly altered form - his sketch on the 1893 Miners' Lock-Out re-appeared in 1926!
31. C.A. Clarke, The Men Who Fought For Us Manchester 1914.
32. Liverpool Weekly Post (LWP) February 27 1926 to December 11 1926.
33. Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Annual (TALA) 1934, p.8.
34. TALA 1935 p.8.
35. for example, The Knobstick became A Workaday Wooing.
36. Cotton Factory Times (CFT) December 17 1920.
37. CFT July 6 1920.
38. CFT June 11 1920.
39. see Chapter 4 "The New Generation of Dialect Writers".
40. Ammon Wrigley, introduction to Sam Fitton, Gradely Lancashire p. xiv.
41. see biographical notes in M. Yates A Lancashire Anthology p.298.
42. R May 1915.
43. Talk to L.A.A. at Oldham on March 27 1915, reported in R May 1915.
44. in Yates op.cit. p.327.
45. Ammon Wrigley The Wind Among The Heather Huddersfield 1916 p.230.
46. *ibid* p.367.
47. *ibid* p.369.
48. Yates op.cit p.303.
49. see List of Subscribers, in Wrigley op. cit pp.377-399.
50. RRCM March 1931.
51. RRCM April 1933.
52. Yates op.cit p.173.
53. Samuel Hardman Around the Fire Radcliffe 1930 p.97.
54. *ibid* p.91.
55. see obituary in R March 1933

56. Warrington Examiner December 10 1932, reprinted in R March 1933.
57. G.H. Whittaker A Lancashire Garland of Prose and Verse, Stalybridge 1936, p.214.
58. see E. Hopwood The Lancashire Weavers' Story Nelson 1976 and Andrew Bullen The Lancashire Weavers' Union Nelson 1984.
59. see Alan and Lesley Fowler The History of the Nelson Weavers Association Nelson no date, c 1986.
60. See Chapter 7 section on "Everyday Life". Prizes were given for the best entries, most of which were in dialect.
61. CFT February 13 1900.
62. *ibid.*
63. CFT January 5 1923 H. Poulton "A Padiham Poetess - the Writings of Mrs Sarah Robinson".
64. CFT July 23 1920.
65. CFT November 23 1934.
66. CFT January 18 1935.
67. LNV July 24 1925.
68. LNV July 3 1925.
69. LNV July 9 1925, and see R, August 1925 for L.A.A. report.
70. Power Loom (PL) August 1918.
72. *ibid.*
73. Many of Fitton's cartoons are in the L.A.A. collection, Lancashire Library, Preston, as cuttings.
74. Hannah Mitchell The Hard Way Up London 1968.
75. Conversation with Mrs L. Davies, Bolton.
76. The Record carried regular accounts of co-operative dialect recitals.
77. "Bill Spriggs as a Minder" September 9 1931
 "Bill Spriggs as a Barber" and "Who's T'Gaffer?" September 23 1935
 "Bill Spriggs as a Sowjer" October 2 1935
 "Bill Spriggs at Top o'th'Pow" October 12 1935
 (information courtesy of B.B.C. Written Archives)
78. TALA December 1935 p.7.
79. CFT October 2 1935.
80. Radio Times June 3 1932.

81. R December 1933.
82. R November 1934.
83. R March 1935.
84. R June 1935.
85. R December 1935.
86. R June 1936.
87. R June 1937.
88. R June 1940.

REGION, CLASS, CULTURE:

Lancashire Dialect Literature 1746-1935

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Chapter 6: Defending Dialect

People's perceptions of Lancashire dialect over the last two centuries have had one thing in common - it was seen to be 'dying out'. Some commentators deemed this a positive thing; others regretted it. Some, like the early dialect poets and prose writers, and later generations of Lancashire writers, strove to keep it alive in their writings. During the 1980s, dialect speech recording became a growth industry financed by various programmes of the former Manpower Services Commission. This chapter is concerned with the 'defence' of Lancashire dialect; that is to say, why certain people saw it threatened and why they wanted to save it. The views of dialect 'defenders' certainly varied and were occasionally ambivalent; some wished to preserve it as a static relic, rather like an old building. Others saw it as a form of speech which expressed decent, honest virtues of 'ordinary' people and needed to be nurtured and kept alive. Many saw it as part of a threatened culture, under attack from metropolitan ways of life. Some writers saw part of its use as a literary form, others saw it as representing a distinctive Lancashire culture, part and parcel of the county's uniqueness. Pride in dialect could easily co-exist in a pride in Lancashire's progressive role in industrial development and social and political change; this is expressed very strongly in Allen Clarke's poem "In Praise o'Lancashire", reproduced in Appendix 33.

Early Defences

The period covered is inevitably a long one: from the publication of 'Tim Bobbin's' A View of the Lancashire Dialect in 1746, through to the 'radio era' of the late 1930s. 'Tim Bobbin's' work was the first conscious setting down of Lancashire dialect speech, and Samuel Bamford writing in 1850 was clear that dialect in 'Tim Bobbin's' time was threatened by the onset of the industrial revolution; he describes the various inventions in the mid-eighteenth century which transformed the cotton industry and continues:

Then came a wonderful facility of production, and a proportionate decrease of cost, whence followed an increase in demand, an increase of employment, an increase of population, a crowding towards the great hive, of many people of all industrial classes, and from all parts of the kingdom and world. Next, as a consequence, followed the breaking up of old associations and the formation of new ones; the abandonment of old habits; the giving up of old customs; new modes of dress became common; new modes of living were adopted; new subjects for thinking were started; new words for the expression of thought were introduced, and from that time the old dialect, with the old customs of the country, and the old fashions had been gradually receding towards oblivion. (1)

Bamford expresses a contemporary perception of the immense cultural changes ushered in by the industrial revolution in a fairly comprehensive way - new customs, changes in dress, ways of living and even thinking. The dialect, so much identified with the old rural society of south Lancashire, was part of the culture and was 'gradually receding towards oblivion'. The work of 'Tim Bobbin' was the first attempt to either halt the decline or at least preserve some dialect words for posterity, even if some of these were no longer used in normal speech: by the 1840s dialect was beginning to be seen as a rural form of speech, no longer used in urban society. Broadsheet songs using dialect usually have a 'countryman' speaking the dialect, frequently to express his astonishment at the new urban civilization in towns like Manchester.

Richard Townley's short biographical introduction to the 1818 edition of Tim Bobbin's Miscellaneous Works describes Collier's 'field-work' in collecting material for his View of the Lancashire Dialect:

Collier had been for many years collecting, not only from rustics in his own neighbourhood, but also wherever he made excursions, all the awkward, vulgar, obsolete words and local expressions which ever occurred to him in conversation with the lower classes. (2)

There is much in this statement worth commenting on: firstly John Collier made a conscious decision to go out and 'collect' dialect words, in an academic sense. Secondly Townley perceived the source of Collier's researches to be 'rustics' - again suggesting that the dialect was seen as a rural form of speech. Thirdly, these words

spoken by the rustics are 'awkward and vulgar' and, furthermore, 'obsolete'. Obviously, the fact they were still being spoken suggests they were far from being obsolete. Townley is saying is that 'polite society' did not use them, precisely because they were 'awkward and vulgar'. Finally, Townley refers to 'the lower classes' being the general body which uses this language. This perception of dialect as a form of speech related to a particular class in an important observation at this time (1818) when it could be argued that dialect was also being spoken by some of the cotton masters who had come from 'humble' backgrounds.

Tim Bobbin As An Embarrassment

'Tim Bobbin' became celebrated as 'The Father of the Lancashire Dialect' by later generations of dialect writers. However, some writers were somewhat embarrassed by their parentage. J.R. Swann commented:

Collier's verse, however, reflects somewhat too faithfully the coarseness of the times in which he lived, to make pleasant reading at the present day, and, for this reason, his works are rapidly passing out of favour.(3)

Ben Brierley saw his dialect writing as partly an attempt to get away from the 'coarse' image which Tim Bobbin had given it. In a speech given by Walter Butterworth at Rochdale in 1926 he quoted Ben Brierley as having said:

In all that I have written I have striven to rescue the Lancashire character from the erroneous impression of Tim Bobbin...(4)

However, 'Tim' did have his admirers - and these became more numerous towards the end of the nineteenth century. In 1892 several Rochdale dialect writers, including Margaret Lahee, restored 'Tim Bobbin's' gravestone in Rochdale Church Yard. In 1909, the bi-centenary of his birth, Lancashire dialect writers and historians met in Rochdale to celebrate the memory of 'Tim Bobbin' and out of the event came the

formation of the Lancashire Authors' Association. One of the main speakers was Colonel Fishwick, the Lancashire historian. Attempting to rescue him from charges of vulgarity he said:

He was said to be coarse, but was not coarseness all a matter of the age we lived in? Fielding, Smollett, Richardson were all popular authors in his day and there was nothing in Tim Bobbin as broad or obscene as there was in those writers. (5)

Fishwick goes on to refute allegations of drunkenness, and suggests he was a good husband and respected in the local neighbourhood. Henry Brierley, the middle class antiquarian who was elected President of the Lancashire Authors' Association was equally sympathetic to 'Tim Bobbin'. At the L.A.A. meeting in Rochdale on March 20th 1920 he defended Tim Bobbin, and the dialect, thus:

In the course of his address Mr. Brierley said that many people held that some of Collier's works were vulgar, and that "Tummus and Meary" in particular, was the height of vulgarity. Yet these words were no more vulgar than the things we see and hear in theatres and music halls today. It was natural that dialect writers should speak of things which had to do with and were an integral part of everyday life... (6)

In addition to his defence of the right of dialect writers to express the idiom of every-day life, Brierley went on to argue that the words used by Collier, far from being in any sense 'vulgar', were either Norse or Old English words which had survived in the speech of the rural communities of Lancashire. He continues that many of the words used by 'Tim Bobbin' in "Tummus and Meary" had since fallen out of use, and that members of the L.A.A. should strive to keep a note book and write down all the unusual dialect words they hear - as 'Tim Bobbin' did. Two years later Brierley wrote a series of articles in the Rochdale Observer entitled "John Collier (Tim Bobbin) - A Defence of his Dialect" which gave a list of the words Collier used that were of 'ancient origin'. He prefaced the list with the following observation:

Though a Rochdale man myself I am unable to join in any extravagant praise of Collier's writings as a whole. Indeed, to me they are dull and uninteresting, with the exception of "The View of the Lancashire Dialect" which Collier illustrates by his dialogue of Tummus and Meary... Now this dialogue whilst inexpressibly vulgar and commonplace, is undoubtedly for

the purpose for which it was written a stroke of real genius. Collier intended to present to the world the South Lancashire dialect as it was spoken in the reign of King George the Second... he has succeeded in giving us, nearly two hundred years after the first publication of the dialogue, instances of almost every dialect word then in use in relation to everyday country life. (7)

Brierley, I would suggest, is correct in his estimation of Collier as being mainly a dialect scholar. He was writing consciously as someone who wanted to preserve the Lancashire dialect, before it became lost or diluted. Today, it is not regarded as 'normal' for an academic to write amusing, and frequently risqué, stories - and perhaps it was not in Collier's day either. However, he succeeded in doing it - and the joking side of 'Tim Bobbin' complimented the studious side. "Tummus and Meary" should be read as an academic text, something more than just a funny story. Apart from the stuffy moralism of people like Brierley and Swann, they failed to recognise the literary project Collier was engaged in.

As well as Brierley and Fishwick, other Lancashire scholars recognised the enormous contribution Collier had made. Solomon Partington dedicated his Romance of the Dialect (1920) to John Collier, and in his earlier work, The Dialect: Future of Old English Words (1917), Partington says:

The practical everlasting character of Anglo-Saxon speech is established, we think, after searching inquiry regarding words investigated which appear in Tim Bobbin's glossary of words as revised by Sam Bamford "Tummus and Meary" by Tim Bobbin was first published in 1746. "The Gentleman's Magazine" wrote slightly of it at the time but Tim struck a resonant note, calling it "The Lancashire Dialect" and it ran through at least twenty editions. (8)

As Partington notes above, the first serious attempt to use 'Tim Bobbin's' writing as scholarly texts was done by Bamford, whom we quoted earlier. Bamford revised many of the words and expressions used by Collier, partly on moralistic grounds, partly because he doubted they had ever been spoken in South Lancashire:

A number of objectionable terms have also been left out of the Glossary, and excluded from other parts of the book. My chief object in the undertaking of this revision and correction, has been the production of a

true and consistent illustration of the dialect of this eastern part of South Lancashire...(9)

Many of Bamford's own corrections are probably subject to question, although this is not the point here. What I am suggesting is that, from 'Tim Bobbin' onwards through Samuel Bamford and after, Lancashire dialect has been seen to be decaying and in need of some form of preservation. Tim Bobbin combined an academic exercise with humorous entertainment - it can be read (with difficulty) on both levels.

Literary Defences: The Gaskells

Following the work of Bamford, the Rev. W. Gaskell lectured on "The Lancashire Dialect", and had two of these lectures published in 1854.(10) In all likelihood, Mrs. Gaskell used some of her husband's research for the dialect speech she employs in her novels North and South and Mary Barton. The Rev. Gaskell observes that the dialect is dying:

Old words, like some old fruits, are dying out from amongst us, and their places are being fast taken by others, more showy and attractive, but not always by any means so racy and full-flavoured. If anything is to be done, therefore, "Twere well it were done quickly." (11)

The substance of the Rev. Gaskell's lectures was the origins of dialect, a similar project to Brierley's, attempting to trace the dialect's lineage to a combination of Old English, Norse and Gaelic. Gaskell's importance lies in his being probably the first of the middle class antiquarians to take a serious interest in dialect, and to assist in 'making respectable' dialect literature. Mrs Gaskell played an equally important role in her literary use of dialect, and Brian Maidment has recently noted the way in which she sympathetically made use of it in her work:

In North and South the discussion of dialect forms part of the movement of sympathy through which Margaret Hale is able to come to some understanding of dialect culture. ...dialect is seen as a 'natural' form of speech, which articulated concepts which were uniquely available to dialect

speakers. Such a link between concepts and language is a crucial one which validates Mrs Gaskell's fundamental perception that only by a sophisticated reading of dialect is it possible to understand the industrial north - language reveals underlying perceptions to the outside observer, but also hides those perceptions by its unfamiliarity. (12)

Mrs Gaskell was one of the few middle class writers who were able, in the nineteenth century, to use dialect as a literary device. In a sense she is a little outside this study in that she could not be described as a 'Lancashire dialect writer'; her importance for the development of dialect literature lies in her literary respectability. Later dialect writers would quote her, Tennyson, Burns and Dickens as proof of the 'respectability' of dialect. Indeed, one of the first 'literary pilgrimages' made by the newly-formed Lancashire Authors' Association was to Knutsford in 1910, where homage to the Gaskells was paid.(13)

Joseph Ramsbottom

One of the earliest defences of dialect in its literary uses was by Joseph Ramsbottom, who wrote mainly during the Cotton Famine.(14) His article "Writing in the Dialect" was published in the Manchester-based magazine Country Words in 1866, after noting that many 'educated people' argue that literature should be confined to standard English, he argues that dialect can be an appropriate form to use in certain circumstances:

The old expressions get ready access to the feelings, and find a permanent place in the heart and memory, with the cherished ones already there existing... we have little doubt that the singer has greatest influence, and is most loved by the people, who, avoiding all elaborate expression and high flights of sentiment, comes to them in their own simple way, and, with their own homely phrases, weaves his songs, as it were, with a musical thread into portions of their everyday life.(15)

Ramsbottom suggests that dialect can express the feelings of ordinary people by its directness and reference to past memories and traditions. It discounts pretensions and goes 'straight to the heart'. The poet or song-writer can have a positive influence on

people's lives by expressing simple, almost changeless moral values. Dialect can also be used to get across messages of perseverance to working people who are in trying circumstances:

None but those who have lived it, or lived with it, and are able to describe what they have seen, can show us the life of an honest striving poor man, with a large family and an aspiring soul. Among other things, this has yet to be done; and the dialect should enter largely into the means of doing it, in order that our poorer brethren may feel its full force, and draw the encouragement they so much need from the contemplation of commendable examples of silent heroism. (16)

Ramsbottom appears to suggest that dialect can be used in an ideological sense to show 'the poor' that by earnestly striving they can better themselves. He does however suggest that only people from similar backgrounds, or those who have lived amongst the poor, can successfully use the medium of dialect. Ramsbottom could be saying that the 'poor' can be appealed to in dialect as a means of becoming part of the 'respectable' working class, and suggests that the reason for them being poor is not low wages but large families.

He suggests that the 'educated' critics of dialect forget that dialect has been used as a form of speech for centuries, and that "the custom of writing in local dialects is an old one". He goes on to ascribe dialect to 'the rural population' and suggests it is a way by which they could make their voices heard:

The reason perhaps, that we have more of it today than hitherto, is that there is more to be said of, and for, our country populations; that they have more to say for themselves; and that the great and hitherto dumb portion of our brethren has found a voice; and, rude and uncouth though it may be, it is better, rather than attempt to stifle it, we should try to understand it...(17)

The identification of dialect speech with rural life is again emphasised and reinforced by the title of the magazine - Country Words - for which he was writing. Ramsbottom ends by saying that the English language is spreading all over the globe, with the expansion of the Empire, and that people have little reason to worry about the

survival of standard English. Meanwhile, dialect will continue to be spoken, and written:

...while their homely phrases are the substance of our children's songs, the echoes of our mother's voices, shall they be welcomed to our lowly hearth.
(18)

In addition to dialect's 'rusticity' the author applauds its 'homeliness' and innocence, suggesting that these qualities will endear it to 'the lower classes'. The impact of Waugh's dialect writing is already apparent, the rough edges of 'Tim Bobbin's' dialect writing have been smoothed down by the demands of mid-Victorian morality, and while Ramsbottom suggests dialect is a traditional form of speech and also has a long ancestry in literature, the 'homeliness' he talks of was a recent feature.

Views of the 'Classic' Writers

George Milner, in the Introduction to Edwin Waugh's Poems and Songs, argues at length for dialect's acceptability as a poetic medium quoting Wordsworth, Chaucer, Milton and Tennyson to support his argument. He ends by saying:

It would not be difficult to show... that in the hands of a few, and especially those of Edwin Waugh, it has been found fully adequate for the expression of all the elementary emotions; and that, although anything like subtlety or complexity of ideas is beyond its reach, love, humour, pathos, and a certain shrewd delineation of character are distinctly within the scope of its powers. (19)

Waugh himself commented little on his use of dialect, despite his pre-eminent status in setting the parameters for dialect literature's subject matter in the 1850s and 1860s. Ben Brierley was more forthcoming, and in his Journal in 1871 put forward a surprisingly apologetic argument for dialect writing. In response to criticism that dialect is 'a relic of barbarism' and should be eliminated, he wrote:

We readily accord our concurrence with these remarks; and if the writer has watched the progress of this Journal, and understood the secret of its mission, he would have seen that we were quite alive to the necessities of the

age. Since our commencement we have been gradually refining the tone of what some people choose to call dialect, but which is simply the language in which a humble Lancashire operative would speak when expressing his thoughts and feelings in the most natural and forcible manner. (20)

Brierley goes on to mention Burns, Scott, Tennyson, Dickens and other 'respectable' writers who used dialect in the speech of their 'humbler characters'.

He continues:

Our object in making use of the humbler method of speech has been to get to a stratum of society to which no other class of journal can carry so potent an influence, and by degree lift our readers out of their present 'barbarism' and lead them to the pursuit of a higher class of literature. (21)

Quite what his 'barbaric' readers thought of this is difficult to guess, and Brierley's dialect writing frequently expressed attitudes which middle class respectability may have blanched at - particularly its criticism of war and imperial adventures. In a sense he is making a similar point to Ramsbottom - that dialect can appeal to the 'vulgar classes' and by capturing their interest help to elevate them to higher things. Brierley, however, seems to have an oddly mechanistic view of reading development: people first start reading dialect, then progress to 'proper' literature. This ignores the fact that to read dialect in the first place pre-supposes mastery of standard English, since by Brierley's time dialect literature had become very definitely a refined and processed literary convention, largely owing to Waugh.

In a review of the work of the 'Big Three' dialect writers - Waugh, Laycock and Brierley, written by James Dawson in Ben Brierley's Journal, their main virtues are seen to be their 'uplifting' characteristics which should be applauded:

Who shall say that these homely singers in the Lancashire vernacular, with their humble, modest Muses, have not a mission with which they have been authoritatively charged? That they do no little good in the limited sphere in which they work, who that is at all acquainted with their labours... can doubt? To set to music, as it were, and make tuneful, ever so little, of what seems discordant in the lives of the poor and the toil-doomed, is surely to do good work. (22)

It seems clear that the appeal of dialect literature to a mid-Victorian middle class

readership had much to do with its message of solace to 'the poor'. It could suggest contentment with one's lot, or honestly strive to improve by individual effort and heroism. Dawson himself wrote in dialect, and seems to share Ben Brierley's somewhat limited evaluation of dialect: it has its place, but is not 'great literature'. Its main value lies in its appeal to 'the lower orders' who would not bother to read anything else. Waugh's own attitude towards dialect was expressed in a speech to the Manchester Literary Club on November 19th 1883. (23) He comments that he had learned the dialect "as the birds learn their notes" and goes on to relate dialect back to the days of Chaucer and Spencer and suggested that "the provincial dialects were the ancient footpaths of England" with Lancashire and Yorkshire dialects being amongst the richest. Waugh suggests that the use of dialect by Chaucer and Spencer artistically enhanced their work, and attempts to translate their dialect into standard English could only be done "with loss of force and beauty".

The New Generation

The new generation of dialect writers who emerged in the 1890s were less concerned with the need for middle class approval, or to 'morally uplift' their readers. In an interesting review of Ben Brierley's work, which appeared in Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly in 1898, James Haslam, a former 'little piecer' attacked the middle class appropriation of Brierley and commented on the remarks made by the Mayor of Manchester following the unveiling of Brierley's statue in Queen's Park:

...the affluent Mayor of Manchester said: "I should have liked by my personal presence to testify my appreciation of a man who in his day did so much to brighten the lives and make happier the homes of the masses of the people." In spite of this outburst being ungrammatical, it gives us the pivot upon which the fame of Brierley has always moved. "To brighten the lives and make happier the homes of the masses of the people..." I well remember when the light of Ben Brierley's genius first illumined my dark days of poverty... There is another thing I remember - I had no money with which to buy his books.

Haslam argues that Brierley 'tried to make people forget their woes with ringing laughter' and this is the reason why the rich applaud him. He denounces the Manchester Literary Club 'for making a pet' of Brierley and rejects the attempts of the middle class to claim him - for he was a working class writer, writing for a working class readership, however open to challenge some of his message of comfort was. Haslam continues by noting the changes which are taking place within dialect writing, and how future writers will need greater skill:

It has often been said that the day of the dialect writers is over. If by dialect writers we mean Brierley, Laycock, Waugh, Bamford and company, perhaps there is much truth in the statement. Dialect is now not so broad or common as it used to be. Twenty-five years application of the Education Act of 1872 has done, and is doing much to make dialects a matter of past history and of use only to students. At any rate, the educational movement is making it necessary for a new school of dialect writers and singers, and the Brierley of the future will have to work on different lines and be a more polished genius than the Brierley who has just sung and laughed for the last time.

Haslam is very clearly arguing for a new generation of working class writers who can avoid the pitfalls of simply providing solace to the poor, for:

Whilst Brierley and his contemporaries were soothing the people with dialect, song and wit, the manufacturers were making them into slaves. And we cannot now sing a people out of slavery... it may be noble to try pipe peace-making tunes for such a people; but it is more useful to try to remove all the causes of a people's pain; so that they enjoy the wit and song and pretty rarities of their geniuses, and the love of each other with untrammelled minds. We want Lancashire writers who will assist in this work.
(24

Haslam was writing the manifesto of the 'new generation' of radical dialect writers - himself, Allen Clarke, Sam Hill, Fred Plant, Arthur Laycock and Ethel Carnie. The divide between their work, and their predecessors is very clearly drawn. The need for middle class acceptability is rejected - the importance of both entertaining their readers and assisting in the cause of socialism through their writing, comes out strongly. The heritage of Waugh, Laycock and Brierley is not rejected - Brierley in particular receives praise for his literary career which

received little financial reward, during his lifetime. The argument of Haslam is that this heritage should be built on, by recognising the changes within dialect itself, and its relative weakening, along with the political demands of producing Lancashire working class writing which assists in the process of radical change, instead of acting as an opiate.

Allen Clarke himself was clearly following Haslam's programme, and frequently editorialised on the importance of dialect. In his actual dialect writings - the Tum Fowt Sketches, dialect poetry, and his novels, he combines a popular appeal with a political message. His own 'defence of the dialect' was expressed in 1896, when he criticised a writer in the London Athenaeum who suggested that

The Lancashire people have clung to a dialect the associations of which are not altogether elevating... Let them cast away this impediment... It fetters her intellectual and her social advancement, for it imparts a tone of roughness and coarseness to ordinary intercourse and everyday life.

Allen Clarke replies by saying that the magazine is displaying the 'London prejudices' towards the north which are by now commonplace, and attacks London in stinging tones. He describes Lancashire dialect as being:

No more vulgar than the English language; and no coarser. It is not as broad, nor as deep however; though it is certainly more humorous, more witty; and I think in many cases more pathetic. It is dying out though, and in one sense I am not sorry; for I think the language of a country should be the universal tongue, not several dialects.

Again, we have an example of a popular dialect writer who appears to suggest that the ultimate death of dialect will be a good thing - yet continues to write in the medium, and indeed becomes highly popular. He goes on to quote the words of the Rochdale dialect writer, John Trafford Clegg, saying of the dialect:

It is concise and forcible, it speaks of a race who had little time to waste in idle chatter... it lacks delicacy... and does not reach the highest standards of mental or moral elevation... but snobbery and humbug wither under its vigorous downright phrases... (25)

It is worth noting that Clarke sees dialect as dying out 'from natural causes' - no doubt the influence of school, population changes, and so on. He sees positive features in the dialect, as the quote from Trafford Clegg shows, but also perhaps recognises that a strong dialect is a major handicap for a working class child wanting to 'get on'. There was considerable debate in the 1890s and early 1900s over attitudes of educationalists towards dialect, and Haslam's comments above about the working of the 1870 Education Act are a case in point. The general attitude of both teachers and inspectors was that dialect should be eliminated as far as possible. Solomon Partington wrote:

Ever since 1870 the Education Board has done its utmost to kill dialect...The reader may have seen Professor Moorman's illuminating statement of how Government Inspectors complimented teaching staffs on having eliminated all trace of dialect from their scholars' mode of speech. (26)

The Rochdale Controversy

In Rochdale, a different situation arose. A local schools inspector, Mr. Wylie, suggested that dialect ought to be taught in schools. John Trafford Clegg replied in the Rochdale Observer that this should not be countenanced:

Keep th'owd Lanky eawt o'th'schoo's Mesther Wylie, for aw want my childer to talk smart when they grow up.(27)

While Clegg's initial argument may seem to relate to the needs of upwardly-mobile children requiring 'proper speech', in a following letter he makes it clear that there are other dangers: if dialect is taught systematically it will merely reduce it to a schema, and "Yo'll find 'at o'th'flavour an' beauty an' power's flown away." (28) Another contributor, only known as 'Lancashire' suggests that there is no need to teach dialect in schools because "hey get it in their mother's milk anyway" The writer goes on to argue that by positively discouraging dialect at school this reduces the child's

capacity to learn, by making the child:

...write and speak only in a language fixed by southern writers and speakers who know nothing of his ideas, of his modes of expression, of the beauties of his everyday speech... (29)

The argument is an interesting one, and has considerable relevance for present day debates within education, as Brian Hollingworth has shown.(30) For our purposes, the most important part of the debate is the attitude of Trafford Clegg, who appears to share the view of Allen Clarke that the dialect was dying. In his first letter he suggests it has almost died out by then:

Dialect saysta! there is noane neaw. There's nobbut a tuthri owd folk at Mildhro, or Shore, or up o'th'moor ends, 'at talk i'th'owd road; most on us han gotten a mongrel sort o'talk 'at's noather good Lanky nor gradely English... (31)

Clegg makes similar claims in the Preface to the 2 volume Sketches and Rhymes in the Rochdale Dialect, from which Clarke took his earlier quote. He argues that the 'pure' old Rochdale dialect is "rapidly dying", though it will remain "woven into the texture of our hearts" with memories of childhood and youth, and friends who have died.(32)

Clarke: Novels and Dialect

Clegg was, in his writings, very much a purist - in contrast to Allen Clarke who deliberately wrote in a "watered down" dialect which would be readily intelligible to any reader in the north of England. The Tum Fowt Sketches appeared, for example, in the Yorkshire Factory Times, as well as many Lancashire publications. The use of dialect in his novels is confined to the dialogue of the novel's characters, and this is used selectively. In novels like A Daughter of the Factory and Driving(32) the female heroines, although working class women, do not use dialect - suggesting that Clarke did not want them to seem 'cheap'. Bertha Lindley for example, the politically-active and

class conscious weaver in Driving speaks standard English, although her parents speak 'broad Lancashire'. The villain in the novel, Lot Ruff, also speaks dialect along with the other working class characters. The inference must be that Clarke thought the 'ideal' socialist working class woman would be well-read, articulate and well-spoken. In male characters, the use of dialect is modified. Chartist Grimshaw - hero of The Cotton Panic - is 'bi-lingual':

Sometimes Chartist Grimshaw talked ordinary English, sometimes the undiluted Lancashire dialect, sometimes a mixture of both. Like most educated workingmen in Lancashire he could speak either English or dialect fluently, using either according to the company he happened to be in. (33)

This is quite a perceptive statement, and suggests that, by the time Clarke was growing up as a young boy in Bolton, in the later 1860s, dialect had become far more complex in its use than, say, in the days of the hand-loom weavers. Clarke was able to express this perception of the use of dialect through 'Chartist Grimshaw': a working class intellectual who kept his class culture, including dialect, but was capable of a wider view, which included speaking in standard English.

Clarke frequently uses dialect in a humorous way in his novels, expressing the basic good-humour of Lancashire working class people. The use of 'big words' was frowned on, and this excerpt shows Clarke using dialect to poke fun at town councillors' use of English. The scene is a discussion between 'Fat Dick' the councillor, and Billy, a local 'character'. After spinning a joke, Billy is complimented by the councillor:

"Oh Billy," said Fat Dick, when he and the rest had done laughing, "We must have you in the Town Council. You'd be an acquisition."
"I dunno abeawt that," said Billy, who didn't know what the word meant, "But I'm sure I should be a dal foo if I were t'same as t'majority on em. But durnt caw me no acqusiston, Mester Gimlett, I've done nowt at yo as aw know on, so keep yore big aristocrack words to yoursel. Gie me plain whum-med Lanky dialect an tek aw yore fine confectionery tawk to hek." (34)

In his work Clarke at once celebrates his dialect, yet distances himself from it - he clearly loves the 'characters' who speak it, yet hesitates to use it in the speech of his female characters. In 1926, thirty years after he had prophesied dialect's death, he was interviewed in Great Thoughts, a national magazine. When asked about the popularity of dialect writing, Clarke mentions the dozens of appreciative letters he gets each week in response to his dialect sketches in the Liverpool Weekly Post. He repeats the now familiar argument that 'established' writers like Dickens, Hardy, Mrs Gaskell and others used dialect. He also notes that dialect writing - particularly his own - has proved popular and readable outside Lancashire:

Why is this? How comes it to pass? Well, because as I have so often told friends who thus enquire, the great secret is to soften, dilute, and treat the dialect that it shall not be too obtrusive, too difficult, too insistent, to make the outsider tire of it. (35)

Towards the end of his life Allen Clarke joined in a controversy over the views of a Manchester journalist who suggested that positive steps should be taken to make dialect redundant. The writer was James Haslam, who had written for Clarke's papers in the 1890s. Clarke's response was relaxed:

Is the Lancashire dialect dying? Of course it is. So are you. So am I. So is the English language. It is all a matter of time... I grant that it is well for a nation (nay, te world if possible) to have a common language, and as regards written language which after all, is the chief thing that is the case. But at the same time there is no reason why a nation, or section or shire of a nation, should not be bi-lingual if it wants.

Clarke also suggests that accusations of vulgarity are irrelevant - vulgarity can be expressed in standard English just as easily. He further argues that Lancashire dialect has certain human, and literary, advantages over standard English:

While the Lancashire dialect is equal to any other language in pathos, its fundamental character is humour, mostly cheery and kindly, and in that respect it is first and foremost in the world. (36)

Probably few commentators would disagree with Clarke's suggestion that 'humour' is Lancashire dialect's strength. He used it to brilliant effect in his Tum Fowt Sketches.

At the same time, the identification of dialect with humour could also undermine any serious cutting edge. Anyone speaking or writing in Lancashire dialect was almost immediately assumed by reader or listener to be saying something funny; though this was not the case with, for example, Burns' Scots poetry. While there is nothing intrinsically funny about speaking in any dialect, Lancashire dialect, and perhaps Irish, speech has been formed into something laughable, confirming stereotypes of dim-witted Lancastrians or thick Irishmen. Clarke used both stereotypes, turning them into critical weapons (Bill Spriggs as the Lancastrian, and Patsy Filligan as the Irishman, in Tum Fowt Sketches. George Formby (Junior and Senior) continued the tradition, in song and film.

The twentieth century saw the defenders of dialect becoming increasingly well organised. One of the first broadsides against the detractors of dialect came from Clarke's friend, referred to earlier, Solomon Partington. He was particularly concerned at the attitude of educationalists towards dialect as we have seen. His two books on dialect are essentially attempts to demonstrate the intellectual credibility of dialect words and speech forms. Both books are primarily glossaries, showing the roots of particular dialect words. F. Taylor's Folk Speech of South Lancashire(37), which is also a dialect glossary, had been published some years previously, but Partington's work is the more important in that he saw both books as political statements.

The Crusade of Solomon Partington

Partington was not a man who took life as it came. He was forever involved in campaigns over rights-of-way, exposing local tyrannies, and attempting to preserve Lancashire culture. The defence of the dialect was seen almost in terms of a military campaign:

Now is the time for the initiation of a movement for gathering up the

fragments, all ancient words which are shown to have a perfectly good claim to be reinstated in the language... Leadership, organisation, and a determined campaign are pre-requisites. (38)

In the introduction to Romance of the Dialect Partington makes a number of important points relating to working class speech and education. He suggests that dialect has been kept alive by working class people, and that 'Tim Bobbin's' works were read aloud to illiterate workers by the minority of literates amongst them. The minority of working class intellectuals thus provided a link between the spoken dialect of the masses, and the early dialect literature of 'Tim Bobbin'. During the nineteenth century it was this minority which acted as the stimulus to extend educational provision which ultimately led to the Education Act of 1870 - which had the effect of deliberately attempting to destroy the dialect:

Ever since 1870 the Education Board has done its utmost to kill dialect. Up to that eventful year the truest educationists taken in bulk were found in working class circles. They offered no opposition to the passing of the first Education Act. This noble magnanimity has been ill-required. (39)

Partington is suggesting that the extension of state control in education is a mixed blessing. Whilst undoubtedly the Education Act brought provision to a wider sector of the working class, it also attempted to foist an alien culture on working class children. Partington goes on to appeal to the National Union of Teachers to pressurise the Education Board not to persecute the dialect. Partington's own political standpoint was that of a radical Liberal with considerable sympathy for the young socialist movement. He represents that strand of working class politics which distrusted the state and 'philanthropy'; he links the Lancashire dialect to what he sees as the positive sides of the Lancashire character:

There is a subtle connection between dialect and character. The Cockney dialect betokens sharpness; Devonshire and Cornwall ponderousness; Lancashire ruthless naturalness and blunt humour... it must be rigidly truthful at all hazards... The Lancashire Lad is self-sufficient, or rather, self-reliant. Woe be the mere philanthropist! (40)

Partington's defence of the dialect combined an antiquarian reverence for dialect origins in Old English and Norse, with a radical interpretation of dialect as being carried by the working class of Lancashire who are the 'true' inheritors of Lancastrian tradition. Independence and distrust of philanthropists and the state are directly linked to the 'feel' of the dialect; it expresses the Lancastrians' own class characteristics. Against them, in Partington's eyes, are ranged the forces of the state represented by the Board of Education, landowners and capitalists. (41) The examples Partington gives to show the Lancashire man's independence and use of dialect is that of a collier during the miners' strike - emphasising the militancy and independence of the working class.

If the implications of Partington's defence of the dialect were radical, there could be equally a strong defence of dialect on conservative grounds. Men like Henry Brierley and Colonel Fishwick saw dialect's survival as being part of the survival of a society in which the poor were content with their lot and sang and joked in the Lancashire dialect of their predecessors. The decline of dialect could be equated with other changes in society such as the rise of trade unionism, and particularly the militancy in the years immediately before the First World War; the growth of the women's movement, the Labour Party and other forces which irreversibly altered the nature of Lancashire culture and society. Dialect was clearly a conservative form of speech which could be used by some writers - such as Samuel Hardman in the 1930s - to express conservative values. (42)

Battle is Joined: James Haslam and the L.A.A.

The debate referred to earlier between James Haslam and members of the Lancashire Authors' Association over the survival of dialect raised a number of uncomfortable images. Haslam himself had written dialect sketches in The Bolton Trotter and Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly in the 1890s, and had been brought up among the last survivors of Bolton's handloom weaving community. He managed to

get to the top of the journalistic profession, and in 1929 launched an attack on Lancashire dialect as:

...uncouth, a confounded social disadvantage, a thing that should be kicked out of existence...

Walter Butterworth replied for the Lancashire Authors' Association saying:

The dialect belongs to us and we are partly the outcome of it... As we stick by our kith and kin, to our family possessions and records, to any good thing that belongs to us, so we should hold to our dialect and its modest literature, so long as the levelling influence of schools and journalism, and the swarming, choking, artificiality of towns, leaves it breathing space..Would he 'stamp out' folk speech, folk songs, folk dances and all the old things of times past, with their ten thousand memories, grave and gray, tender and beautiful? (43)

Butterworth's argument is that of the middle class antiquarian and conservative, frightened by the spread of urbanisation and its attendant 'levelling' influences - presumably politically as much as socially and culturally. Dialect is still seen as a rural form of speech - the oral equivalent of dancing around the may-pole. Its justification to exist lies primarily in its nostalgic association and its being part of a non-problematic tradition.

Haslam, however, made a retreat in the face of the L.A.A. onslaught in reply to his articles. It is worth quoting his final article on the subject at length:

Dialects change (as all our writers admit) and my contention would be that once upon a time Lancashire took a very bad turning with respect to both dialect and accent. It happened that I was reared among a lingering band of domestic weavers - industrial workers who were the last survivors of the pre-factory days. A quieter more domestic race, the older weavers spoke a quieter, a richer, a sweeter and more tender dialect. Side by side with them were the mill workers whose dialect was as hard and often as brutal (if one may use the term) as the earlier days of the factory system - then a blot upon the industrial history of England... the factory people having been thrown together in indiscriminate heaps, regarding age and sex, developed a more careless, a coarser and less musical dialect... the softer dialect of the older domestic workers passed away. The later dialect, through education and the growing desire for a new social life, is also passing away, and all that I asked is that we should assist its declension for the sake of the children who have to live a different life from that to which we have been accustomed... Need the Lancashire Author's Association, or anybody else, be annoyed at such a progressive suggestion? The Lancashire of the past

will never be repeated in any industrial system, or in any rising industrial area. I am not denouncing a single Lancashire dialect writer, nor the genius of his literary creations, but I am objecting to any or organized or unthoughtful practice of persisting in maintaining a dialect which is uncouth and a stumbling block to children who become rooted in it through either street or home influence. (44)

Haslam's response here combines a very personal argument, related to his experience as a child brought up amongst the last hand-loom weavers, and a wider social outlook which recognises the changes taking place within Lancashire and the difficulty of dialect in responding to them. His earlier comments remind the reader of Samuel Bamford's remarks at the beginning of this chapter - the coming of the factory system breaking up the culture of the weavers, including their dialect. Yet Haslam was referring to Bolton in the 1880s not Bamford's Lancashire of the 1800s! His dislike of the factory worker's dialect stems perhaps as much from his personal sense of loss of the old way of life when he was a child, as any objective statement about dialectal differences between occupational categories. Admittedly, the factory system must have affected speech forms. The noise in a weaving shed or spinning room would have forced a sharper, perhaps less 'musical' form of speech. His later comments suggest even that dialect is dying, as young people no longer see their only future tied with going into the mill. A purely artificial attempt to keep the old dialect alive may provide amusement for the antiquarian, but will not help the young people of Lancashire get on in the world.

The response from the L.A.A. did not attempt to counter Haslam's arguments about dialect restricting social mobility for working class children; the attack was based on dialect's literary strengths, and its historic roots in the English language. Samuel Hardman quoted Sir John Foster Fraser who saw dialect as expressing "individualism" against "uniformity" in an article in an un-named Sunday paper.(46) Most of the L.A.A.'s contributions were from people in middle class (or even upper class) positions who could, it may be argued, be in such a position of social well-being and security that they could afford to praise dialect speech. The parents of a young

child at school, hoping for a better career than a life in the mill, might not have taken so favourable a view of dialect if it held back their child.

Despite Haslam's strong criticisms of dialect there is all along a slight sense of writing 'tongue-in-cheek'. A few years later Haslam admitted that "he was cradled in the dialect" and that his mother told him dialect stories as a child. He notes the diversity of dialect throughout Lancashire, and returns to his theme of social and cultural change, tied in with the decline of dialect:

By the spread of education many of the rough edges have been worn away. The dialect is dwindling. The iron clog is neither seen nor heard as it was a generation ago. The typical 'Lancashire lass' with her tartan headshawl is no longer seen. Dress is more varied and attractive. Factory wenches no longer dance in clogs by factory walls, but crowd the more gorgeous halls of the towns and look like ladies, and act and speak with more care. To us 'old uns' the Lancashire youth is a new creature. How will it shape the Lancashire of the future we can hardly know. It would be encouraging to see it shaping a little better. (47)

In a sense, Haslam and the members of the L.A.A. who attacked him were talking in different languages. (48) Haslam's arguments against dialect were largely sociological; Butterworth's defence, and that of Pearce, Hardman and even Clarke were a combination of the historical and literary. None of the 'defenders' of the dialect themselves spoke it; Butterworth was noted for his "varsity English", and Pearce, Clarke and Hardman had little more than Lancashire 'accents'.(49)

Apart from the Haslam debate, the 1920s and 1930s saw a large number of articles in The Record, and reports of lectures, in which the Lancashire dialect was defended. Reginald Kenney lectured frequently on "The Historical Importance of Dialect Literature"(50) and identified its relevance to both philologists and sociologists. Kenney acknowledged that dialect was slowly dying as a result of attacks from the education authorities, books and newspapers, and radio, with the BBC radio being 'the most deadly enemy'. Kenney's 'philological' examples relate to the collection of

dialect words and include words rooted in Old English. He quotes poetry by Ammon Wrigley, and the broadsheet song "Jone o'Grinfilt" to show how dialect helps illustrate social conditions. It should be stressed that Kenney is dealing specifically with two particular areas of dialect's importance, and accepts more general arguments as to dialect's appropriateness both as a form of speech and as literature. At around the same time Riley Stansfield, son of the Todmorden dialect scholar Abraham Stansfield, wrote "In Defence and Appreciation of the Dialect", which was originally given as a talk to the L.A.A.'s Southport meeting on June 24th 1933. He notes the continuing popularity of dialect at public readings, and the artistic achievements of Waugh, 'Tim Bobbin' and Ben Brierley. He also locates dialect as a predominantly rural form of speech, "the language of hundreds of thousands of our country people".(52) Joseph Pomfret, at a lecture delivered to the Preston Scientific Society's Literary section in 1936, defended the literary use of dialect, rejecting charges of vulgarity and coarseness. He quotes popular entertainers like Gracie Fields and George Formby who found that dialect - or a softened version of it - helped their stage careers. Most importantly, dialect was 'the natural form of speech' of ordinary people:

This I also submit as evidence that dialect is inherent in man; that literary English is a superstructure erected by teachers outside ourselves ie teachers, lectures, books etc, whereas the dialect in greater or lesser degree is natural.(53)

The spontaneous character of dialect suggests that its death will be a long- drawn out affair, and in particular Pomfret sees its continuance in the more remote villages and small towns of Lancashire, and in the factories and workshops of these communities. The defence of the dialect was not always confined to Lancashire proponents; the London-published Morning Post carried an article on "Threatened Dialects" in 1931 which linked attempts to preserve old buildings, wild flowers and other parts of the English 'way of life', with the threatened dialects of the country. It takes a strong class-based position on dialect, seeing its main detractors as being the 'establishment' and its defenders ordinary working class people:

All our fine English dialects are in danger of extinction. Dialect, to adopt and adapt the words of a country parson, "unknown in the drawing room, hunted out of the school, chased by the chapel deacons, derided by the middle classes, and despised by those who have been uneducated into the three 'Rs', takes refuge in the fastnesses of the tap-room, poor cottages, and outlying hamlets... the countryman who comes to London as a necessary recruit for its army of toil and moil... finds the possession of an 'accent' a distinct obstacle to getting a job. The BBC is the latest agency to take part in the campaign for a drab uniformity of anaemic diction. (54)

The writer goes on to applaud the work of Edwin Waugh and Tennyson's use of Lincolnshire dialect in "The Northern Farmer".

Clearly, the spread of radio was seen as a major threat to the survival of dialect by a wide range of writers and commentators. Up to then, a strong accent or use of dialect in ordinary speech was not necessarily a barrier to a media career - that is to say, as a professional writer. The coming of radio exalted a very specific upper class English into an ideal-type specimen of the English language, and all accents and dialects were judged against this yard-stick. Not surprisingly, this uniform pronunciation being delivered by a revolutionary mode of communication which was seen by many people as having a very strong cultural impact, became identified, in Reginald Kenney's words, as "the most deadly enemy" of dialect. As we shall see elsewhere,(55) dialect writers, and the L.A.A. as a body were not slow to see certain potential in the new medium if dialect could manage to dislodge standard English for a few hours a week on regional radio programmes. To an extent, the dialect lobby were successful in doing this, although the success was inevitably short-lived given the rapid spread of television - not so well-suited to dialect recitation - after the Second World War.

Conclusion

The 'defence of the dialect' was virtually a constant feature of dialect literature from Tim Bobbin's day onwards. Tim Bobbin began collecting dialect words and enshrined them in literary form in A View of the Lancashire Dialect in 1746.

Later writers such as Bamford (1859), Taylor (1901) and Partington (1917 and 1920) further developed dialect glossaries based on Tim Bobbin's early researches, in a more orthodox academic manner. Bamford's perceptions of dialect dying out as a result of social and industrial change were similar to those of James Haslam in the 1930s. Haslam, however, welcomed the extinction of dialect - for mainly pragmatic reasons. He argued that dialect hampered the career prospects for 'bright' working class children. The response to Haslam's arguments was largely conservative - dialect was defended as the remnants of an ancient language, and part of Lancastrian tradition. The Conservative MP for Rossendale and President of the Lancashire Authors' Association expressed it best when he said:

We love our old dialect words, just as we love our old Monasteries, Halls, Castles, Colleges - each and all cherished legacies of our ancestors. (56)

Dialect, for Halstead, Fishwick and others, was primarily an antiquarian form of speech which needed defending in the same way an interesting old building did. Whilst accepting it as a 'lower class' form of speech this was idealised into a 'rustic' language, spoken in the hill cottages and farming communities for centuries. A dialect became part of the romanticisation of poverty which was common in the early twentieth century: the homely poor, content with the little they had, not questioning their role. Dialect as a living language, spoken by factory workers, was usually ignored. Those who did see dialect in slightly more realistic terms included Solomon Partington - a dialect scholar who recognised that dialect had survived through working class speech, and was expressed in the modern day by the miner and factory worker. By contrast, some sections of the middle class establishment, particularly in education, had sought to extinguish it. Reginald Kenney, writing slightly later, also condemned attempts to silence the dialect, and laid considerable stress on the influence of radio and the 'ideology of standard English', variously referred to as 'Oxford accent', '2LO speech' or 'received pronunciation'.

Dialect writers themselves such as the radical Allen Clarke accepted some of the 'conservative' argument that dialect was part of our heritage, but also defended its capacity to express a range of human emotions in literature in a way which was more direct than standard English. There is a surprising degree of unanimity amongst dialect writers - from Tim Bobbin, through Bamford, John Trafford Clegg, Allen Clarke and Samuel Hardman - that dialect was dying out and they mostly saw themselves as only holding back a tide which would eventually flood out dialect. A further common feature of the defence of dialect was the appeal to established literature, showing that writers such as Gaskell, Dickens, Tennyson and Scott amongst others, used dialect as a literary device to give a greater naturalistic sense to working class dialogue.

The 1920s and 1930s saw the greatest phase of dialect defence. This was probably an expression of the newly-founded organisation of Lancashire writers, the L.A.A. - an organised voice could exert stronger pressure than a few isolated individuals. But they were clearly concerned that dialect was dying - through the influence of radio, popular literature and journalism, school, and wider social and cultural changes within Lancashire, as Haslam expressed them. Samuel Hardman, who wrote "Eawr Dialect Has Come to Stay" in response to Haslam's criticism, made the point:

"Eawr dialect is beawnd to dee"
So it's bin tow'd to yo' an' me;
But dunnot mind what prophets say,
It winnot happen in my day.

Eawr dialect has come to stay,
No matter what some folks may say,
Its homely prose and homely rhyme,
Will stand the acid test of time.

Un yet for o'that we've bin tow'd
"Ut it's on t'wane, it's deein eawt"
While at this day it's spokken moor
Than ever it's bin spoke afoor. (57)

People wanted to defend dialect for a variety of reasons, ranging from the antiquarian defence of an old form of speech for the sake of it, through to people who saw it as expressing a value system, be it conservative or socialist, which they adhered to. Clarke used dialect as a directly propagandist tool for socialism, between the late 1890s and the years up to the First World War. He was writing from the perspective of a Lancashire working class writer, who had grown up within the 'cotton culture', but was one step removed from it by virtue of having become a professional journalist. Dialect maintained his personal and cultural ties with his background; it also provided a vehicle for trying to influence those workers still caught within his hated 'factory system'. This overtly political use of dialect was also used by conservative writers, like Hardman (a Liberal), Major David Halstead (a Conservative MP), and A. B. Robinson, a Darwen mill manager.(58) Each, in their own way, had strong regional identities as 'Lancastrians', and each had a genuine love for a dialect which they saw as representing their respective images of Lancashire.

Their political use of dialect, to uphold the status quo, was an unconscious process for the most part, trying to put over what was, to each of them, self-evident truths in a language which people could understand. Dialect is an 'old' form of speech. Its use can carry ambivalent messages; on the one hand it is unashamedly working class, or plebeian. On the other hand, it is part of an older world, imbued with hidden meanings and suggestions of the 'poor but happy' working man, sharing a common culture with the bluff and good-hearted employer who would speak an equally broad 'Lancashire'. The left could thus use dialect for its 'class' references, and the right-wing traditionalists could use it for its sense of community which crosses class divides.

Notes

1. Samuel Bamford Bamford's Tim Bobbin, otherwise known by its full title as The Dialect of South Lancashire or Tim Bobbin's Tummas And Meary Revised and Corrected With His Rhymes and an Enlarged and Amended Glossary of Words and Phrases Chiefly Used by the Rural Population of the Manufacturing Districts of South Lancashire Manchester 1850 pp x-xi.
2. John Collier ('Tim Bobbin') The Miscellaneous Works of Tim Bobbin Esq., 1818, p xiii.
3. J. R. Swann Lancashire Authors, St Annes 1924, p.88.
4. Record (R) August 1925.
5. Rochdale Observer (RO) April 7 1909.
6. R May 1920.
7. RO July 8 1922.
8. Solomon Partington, preface to The Future of Old English Words, Middleton 1917.
9. Bamford op.cit p.xviii.
10. Rev. W. Gaskell Two Lectures on the Lancashire Dialect, London 1854.
11. *ibid* p.5.
12. Brian Maidment "Defence of the Dialect", unpublished draft, later revised and published in Maidment (ed.) The Fugitive Poets Manchester 1987 p.359.
13. R May 1911.
14. see Chapter 8 "The Cotton Famine" pp.337-344.
15. Country Words December 15 1866 pp.104-105.
16. *ibid*.
17. *ibid*.
18. *ibid*.
19. G. Milner, Introduction to Edwin Waugh Poems and Songs, 3rd series, Manchester n.d c 1892, p.xxxii.
20. Ben Brierley's Journal December 1871.
21. *ibid*.
22. James Dawson, "Lancashire Folk Song and Its Writers" in Ben Brierley's Journal February 1871.

23. Papers of the Manchester Literary Club Manchester 1883.
24. Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly (hereafter TANW) May 14 1898.
25. Teddy Ashton's Journal (hereafter TAJ) December 12 1896.
26. Solomon Partington Romance of the Dialect Middleton 1920, p. vii.
27. RO March 15 1890.
28. RO March 29 1890.
29. RO April 5 1890.
30. Brian Hollingworth "Dialect in Schools: A Historical Note" in Durham and Newcastle Research Review Autumn 1977, Vol. 8 Part 1, and Journal of the Lancashire Dialect Society No. 25 1986. The debate resurfaced during 1993 with efforts by the Secretary of State for Education, Mr John Patten, attempting to enforce a rigid adherence to 'Standard English' in English teaching. Mr George Keith, a Chief Examiner for 'A' level English Language, and a Yorkshireman, commented that "...Standard English has been used as a weapon by the Government to try and regulate the nation into a regular form of the language...we've been forced into a controversy that need not have existed. In language terms, Standard English is just another dialect. It is no better or worse than any other." - Huddersfield Examiner September 1 1993. See also Brian Doyle English and Englishness London 1989, for a stimulating account of the 'ideology' of English.
31. RO March 15 1890.
32. Both novels were serialised in TANW; Driving during 1901, and A Daughter of the Factory during 1898.
33. Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly (TANW) January 5 1901. Allen Clarke talks about 'Radical Grimshaw', whom 'Chartist Grimshaw' is based, in "Amongst the Agitators" in TANW June 10 1905. The historical figure is also described in Clarke's Moorlands and Memories, Bolton 1920.
34. Teddy Ashton's Journal (TAJ) November 14 1896.
35. Great Thoughts August 1926.
36. R June 1929.
37. F. Taylor The Folk-Speech of South Lancashire Manchester 1901.
38. Partington (1917) op. cit p. ix. Partington is mentioned in Allen Clarke Moorlands and Memories Bolton 1920 p.119: "The public owes much to Mr. S. Partington, as disinterested a champion of liberty and justice as ever used a pen on behalf of the robbed and oppressed." Partington's obituary appeared in the Bolton Evening News August 6th 1927. He was described as a "bonny feighter" and a defender of children's rights.
39. Partington (1920) op. cit p. vii. Partington would have been heartened by comments made in The Teaching of English in England, the report of the departmental committee appointed by the president of the Board of Education to inquire into the position of English in the Educational System of England, 1919. It endorsed the views of the Report on Adult Education, which refers to the

work of Professor F. Moorman, a University of Leeds and W.E.A. lecturer whom Partington admired, and his use of dialect in drama teaching. "Attention should be given to the possibilities of dialect literature, not as a philological curiosity, but because dialect, where it still lives, is the natural speech of emotion, and therefore of poetry and drama." p. 275.

40. "Dialect Speech" in Bolton Journal and Guardian August 19 1911.
41. see Paul Salvesson Milltowns and Moorlands: Rural Themes in Lancashire Working Class Culture, University of Salford 1985.
42. see Chapter 5 "Lancashire Dialect Literature in the Twentieth Century".
43. R June 1929
44. ibid.
45. ibid.
46. ibid.
47. "Lancashire Literature - the Dialect and Other Social Functions" The Record June 1936.
48. See chapter 4 pp 162-6 for an account of Haslam's literary output, which included a substantial amount in dialect.
49. Conversation with Edith Worthington, daughter of A. H. Pearce, at Whalley, August 1 1986.
50. R December 1932.
51. R September 1932 and December 1933.
52. R September 1933.
53. Lancashire Evening Post December 4 1933.
54. Morning Post March 12 1931.
55. See Chapter 5, pp 230-5, section on "Dialect on the Air".
56. R March 1932.
57. The Red Rose Circulating Magazine December 1934.
58. See Chapter 5, pp 212-6 for dialect and conservative politics.

Chapter 7: Through the Mill: Work and Factory Life

This chapter looks at the treatment of work and factory life by different generations of Lancashire dialect writers. The varying treatment of work is helpful to our understanding of changes which took place within Lancashire cotton-town society in the nineteenth century, and in particular the degree of working class accommodation to what Clarke called "the factory system". (1) The writings of Waugh, Brierley, and Clarke himself may also help to shed some light on debates over the labour process, and control over it, which has become a major area of both historical and sociological study. Gareth Stedman Jones was one of the first modern historians to comment on the importance of struggles over control of the labour process, between workers and employers, in nineteenth century Britain. (2) He has been followed by other writers, both from a Marxist and non-Marxist background, in exploring this area. (3)

Dialect literature is also valuable as a source of primary material in the 'labour aristocracy' debate, which has been based around Lenin's thesis that capitalist stabilisation in the second half of nineteenth century Britain was due to the existence of a privileged 'labour aristocracy' which acted as a buffer between the bourgeoisie and the mass of the proletariat. The thesis has been developed in more recent years by orthodox Marxist historians including John Foster. (4) Patrick Joyce's Work, Society, and Politics (5) has stimulated discussion on working class responses to industrial capitalism, in particular the degree of deference towards employers which may have existed in the nineteenth century cotton factory, and the extent to which the employers, through the factory, exerted hegemonic power over working people. Dialect writing does not offer a clear, unequivocal answer to the protagonists within this debate, but such writings do at least testify to the complexity of the issue, and cast major doubts on simplistic notions of pure, unbridled, class conflict in the Lancashire cotton industry of

the second half of the nineteenth century.

This chapter will look at early dialect songs and poetry on work, and how some of the main dialect writers treated 'factory life'. Specific issues within the generality of the chapter are addressed individually. These are a) everyday factory life; b) industrial relations; c) the "labour aristocracy" issue; d) child labour; and e) 'the last of the hand-loom weavers'. A section on women workers has not been included because this is addressed in detail in Chapter 10.

"Work" in Songs and Broadsheets Before 1850

If the Lancashire dialect literary movement can be said to begin in the mid-1850s with the publication of Waugh's "Come Whoam To Thi Childer An Me" in 1856, there was a substantial body of dialect song and poetry in existence well before then, as outlined in Chapter 2. Many broadsheet songs were written in dialect and some have survived, usually as anonymous works. John Grimshaw, a hand-loom weaver from Gorton, is known to be the writer of some songs dealing with weaving which have survived, notably "The Handloom Weaver's Lament" and "Handloom v Powerloom".(6) The 'Manchester Wilsons', Michael, Thomas and Alexander, had a vast output of songs in the 1840s, though only a few have survived. Some deal with the massive industrial expansion that was then underway in Manchester, such as "Johnny Green's Trip From Owdhum t' See t'Manchester Railway". The great majority of these songs that have survived are about industrial change and the reaction of the ordinary man, or sometimes woman, to them. 'Johnny Green' is the typical Lancashire lad for the Wilsons, as 'Jone o'Grinfilt' was for Joseph Lees and many other anonymous song-writers.(7)

A tradition grew in the eighteenth century of dialect songs passed on from

generation to generation of hand-loom weavers in the small villages and folds of south east Lancashire. For a brief stage in the development of the Lancashire textile industry the hand-loom weaver was able to have a comfortable existence as a semi-independent tradesman, with other members of the family working at the spinning wheel or on a second loom.(8) There was little sense of the division between home and work which later becomes pronounced in much of Lancashire working class culture.

One of the songs which has survived from this 'golden age' is the "Dreighlsdin Wakes Song" which was sung at the annual Droylsden wakes from the 1780s and continued throughout the nineteenth century, described in Chapter 1. (9) Two men - one dressed as a woman - would pretend to spin flax with a hand-spinning wheel, and collect money from onlookers at the same time:

It's Dreighlsdin Wakes un we're comin to teawn,
To tell yo o somethin o greet reneawn
Un if this owd jade ull let mi begin
Aw'll show yo heaw hard un how fast au con spin.

Chorus:

So it's threedywheel, threedywheel, dan, don, dill, doe (10)

The performance of the song, done while simulating a part of the process of cotton manufacture, is a form of carnivalesque in which the importance of cotton in the lives of a local community is celebrated. There is an element of badinage between male and 'female' characters, but pride in the craft of spinning is the most important part of the song. Harland, in his Ballads and Songs of Lancashire sees it as "the debris of an ancient dialogue song, in which man and wife quarrel over the domestic manufacture of linen yarn." (11) This is factually correct, but the song's place in local culture is more than that; it becomes a part of a community celebrating its own achievements in a slightly tongue-in-cheek fashion.

This particular form of industrial community was under major threat by the

1830s. In many parts of Lancashire, spinning was being done in large factories using self-actor mules. Weaving was also on the brink of major technological change, with the introduction of the power loom. Grimshaw, the Gorton weaver, wrote several songs in the 'come-all-ye' style of street ballads, about the changes taking place in Lancashire and their effects on traditional ways of life. This is an excerpt from "Handloom v Powerloom":

Come all you cotton weavers, your looms you may pull down
You must get employ'd in factory or in town
For our cotton masters have found a wonderful new scheme
These calico goods now wove by hand they're going to weave by steam.

He ends:

So, come all you cotton weavers, you must rise up very soon
For you must work in factories from morning until noon
You mustn't walk in your garden for two or three hours a day
For you must stand at their command and keep your shuttles in play. (12)

The song was written in standard English and can be dated to about 1830. It is extremely important for its illustration of the change which was taking place in power relations within the work process, perhaps in a somewhat exaggerated way. The change about to be forced on the weaver in his relationship to the master is clear: "For you must stand at their command and keep your shuttles in play". The degree of freedom enjoyed by the weavers, when they could 'walk in their gardens' is about to disappear.

The broadsheet songs written in dialect became more numerous in the 1840s, and the Wilsons in particular helped in popularising the form. Few have survived, and this "Factory Worker's Song" is a rare example from the 1842 General Strike:

Come carders and spinners an wayver's as weel,
Stop yo'r frames an yo'r jennies, strip roller an creel
Let yo'r lathes cease to swing, an yo'r shuttles to fly
For there's gone through owd England a leaud battle cry -
Derry deawn!

Eawr mesthers ar screwin eaur noses to th'dust
An if we don't strike we'n no' maybe seenth' wust
They've cheeant eaur bodies to slavery's wheel
And they'd sell, if we'd let 'em, eaur souls to the deil. (13)

The appeal is clearly to a new factory-based working class; spinners, weavers, and carders. The hand-loom weavers do not get mentioned; perhaps they were perceived as being already in a state of terminal decline, at least in the advanced centres of Lancashire cotton such as Oldham.

The more common form of political song remained in standard English, as shown in Kovalev's collection of Chartist songs in her Chartist Literature. The "Steam King" by Edward Mead, published in The Northern Star in 1843 is typical:

There is a King, and a ruthless King,
Not a King of the poet's dream:
But a tyrant fell, white slaves know well,
And that ruthless King is steam. (14)

This was the standard poetical fare in The Northern Star - a paper widely, and often collectively, read by radically-inclined Lancashire workers, described in Brierley's Home Memories. Many of these radical poets were self-educated working men - like Benjamin Stott, a Manchester bookbinder, or John Teer the secretary of the Operative Dyers Society. Their poetry is an attempt to express radical, stirring ideas to a working class audience in a form that was totally wedded to orthodox, established forms. The clumsy dialect form of the "Factory Worker's Song" remains far superior to the florid effusions of many of these working men poets of the 1840s.

Bide Lads, Bide: Classical Dialect Literature's Treatment of Work

It is an irony that when dialect literature did take off as a popular form it had little of a radical cutting edge. The Chartist papers ceased publication or suffered drastic

reductions in circulation by the early 1850s, leaving local papers with literary leanings like The Manchester Spectator or The Athenaeum to provide 'the intelligent working man' with poetic fodder. Edwin Waugh, followed by Ben Brierley and several others, ushered in a new era in working class literature, using a developed and circumscribed subject matter. Work was notable by its near-absence. Martha Vicinus commented:

Much dialect prose and verse was set in a pub or around the hearth. The factory or mine was less important than leisure time, partially because working people did not relish the monotonous and regimented life of the factory or modern mine. A more important reason however, was the increased acceptance of values and customs favoured by the middle class. Regularity of habits, close family ties and a romantic courtship leading to a happy marriage were all part of the better life espoused by advocates of self-help. The change in personal values was accompanied by a demand for reading matter that emphasised these priorities. (15)

It is ironic, and perhaps intentional, that the frontispiece of Waugh's Lancashire Sketches shows a picture of a young couple heading for the moorlands, leaving the smoking factory behind them in the distance (16). Waugh had little experience of the sort of industry that was springing up around his native Rochdale. He had spent many years as a printer and in 1848 began working as secretary of the Lancashire Public Schools' Association. That is not to say he was out of touch with the working class - he had a brilliant 'feel' for the popular, though as Vicinus (17) points out, he was always careful to keep a foot in the camp of the middle class, as well as the working class.

Waugh did not like factories - virtually all his few pieces on factory life are about getting away from it, or sad little pieces like "The Factory Bell":

Come, Billy, come; dost yer yon bell?
Thou'll ha yon mill agate
Afore thou'rt up! Do stir thisel
Or else thou'll be too late:
I know thou'rt tired, my lad - I know
What can a body do?
It's very cowl; but, frost or snow
Thou knows tha'll ha to goo! (18)

Waugh is much more at home with nostalgic pieces about the hand-loom weavers of the Lancashire hills, by the late 1850s very much on the way out. Those that did remain were weaving for an employer, rather than the idyllic family situation in "Tommy Pobs":

Tommy Pobbs wur a good natur't sort of a lad;
He're a weighver by trade, an he wove for his dad,
He're fond o' down-craiters; an th' neighbours o' said
That he're reet in his heart, but he'd nought in his yed. (19)

In "Yesterneet" the scene is even more unlikely for the Lancashire of the 1860s - a milkmaid who spins in the home:

I geet up a milkin this mornin -
I geet up afore it wur leet;
I ne'er slept a minute for thinkin
What Robin said yesterneet;
I've brokken two basins i'th dairy;
I've soaded my gronny wi tay
It's no use o tryin a-spinnin -
My wheels eawt o' trim today.(20)

Waugh's heart was with the moorland shepherds, hand-loom weavers and wandering tradesmen, all of whom were rapidly becoming but a memory from the past. In his introduction to "Owd Cronies" Waugh talks of an "ancient Lancashire" that was "a comparatively roadless wild; and its sparse population - scattered about in quaint hamlets and isolated farm-nooks - were a rough, bold and independent race, clinging tenaciously to the language, manners and traditions of their fore-elders; and despising all the rest of the world, of which they knew nothing." He continues to say that the rise of "modern industrialism... the vast influx of population from other quarters, and the rapid growth of wealth and towns - these things have altogether overwhelmed the ancient features of the land like a sudden deluge." (21)

Waugh, in a more developed way, was expressing the feelings of many Lancashire people towards the coming of industrial society. Most spinners and weavers did not

want to be reminded about life in the mill - they saw enough of all that as it was. Many longed for the fresh moorland breezes so beloved of Waugh, and the independent life-style enjoyed by the hand-loom weavers. Much of Waugh's best loved work was a celebration and legitimation of those feelings. His less nostalgic poems often deal with getting away from the factory, 'going on a spree', such as this unpublished poem from his diary:

Last Setterdo neet, soon ur th'factory're o'er
Aw went whom, un whas't mo, un combd eawt my yure
Donn'd my hallyday shoon, brust o'th'flur off my quot
An lapp'd up some moufin un cheese in a cleawt. (22)

Where he does sympathise with working class people, for instance in his Cotton Famine writings, he does so as a philanthropist rather than as a fellow sufferer, in contrast to contemporaries such as Laycock. This is treated in more detail in Chapter 8, on the Cotton Famine. In "Wails of the Workless Poor" he patronisingly describes the unemployed cotton workers who are forced to walk the Manchester streets singing to get a few coppers:

Now, when fortune has laid such a load of sorrow on the working people of Lancashire, it is a sad thing to see so many workless minstrels of humble life 'Chanting their artless notes in simple guise', upon the streets of great towns, amongst a kind of life they are little used to. There is something very touching too, in their manner and appearance. They may be ill-shod and footsore...but they are almost always clean and wholesome looking in person. (23)

The imagery is bound up with middle class ideas of 'the deserving poor' and the standpoint that of a sympathetic outside observer such as Dickens. I am not trying to suggest that Waugh is not part of working class literature - clearly he is by virtue of his own background and many of his themes of working class life (in the home, countryside, and nostalgic memories of the past) as well as his actual readership. However, it would be equally wrong to ignore the strong middle class elements in his work, perhaps partly as a result of outside pressures from patrons and publisher, but also bound up with his own self-image of being an independent, educated country-

loving Lancashire man who can mix with 'all classes' as an equal.

Samuel Laycock's Cotton Famine poems are his most direct statements on work, or the lack of it. They are the poetry of a 'respectable' working class man thrown into destitution by forces beyond his control. Laycock's poetry emphasises the massive shock to the system of everyone being plunged into severe poverty. The poem "Aw'v Hard Wark To Howd Up My Head" is the story of a spinner who finds it impossible to cope both financially and emotionally with unemployment. "Th'Shurat Weaver's Song" is about someone in work, but working with surat (Indian) cotton, which was a nightmare to work with, because of dust and breakages of thread.

Laycock knew his subject. He had worked on the loom himself, and was thrown out of work during the Famine. He turned to poetry to make a living, and was able to appeal to a working class audience as one of them. The basis of that appeal is discussed in Chapter 8 on the Cotton Famine. It presented no threat to middle class supporters and is partly aimed at them for donations to the Relief Fund. However Laycock, unlike Waugh by that time, was writing from within the working class. His last Cotton Famine song, "Cheer up Toilin' Brothers" illustrates how things are falling back into place again and normal life can be resumed:

Cheer up, toilin brothers! cheer up an' be glad;
There's breeter days for us i' store;
Things are lookin' more sattled i'Lancashire here
Neaw 'at th'Merica war's gotten o'er.
Th'long chimnies are smokin' as hard as they con
An' th'machinery's wurlin areawnd;
Owd shopmates 'at havn't bin seen for some years
Are o gettin' back to th'owd greawnd. (24)

The poem was signed "A Poor Workin' Mon" - though by this time he had got a permanent job as librarian at Stalybridge Mechanics Institute. Clearly, the identification was still there. With his later move to Blackpool, he became more involved in Liberal politics, on the party's radical wing. Some of his poetry reflects

this very strongly though we do not find a high level of continued interest in industrial questions. His poem "Eawr Pooastmen" reflects an enlightened view of paying decent wages for a socially useful job, but it is more out of moral sympathy than a trade-union oriented commitment:

An' whoa's more desarvin than th' pooastmen?
What a lot o' hard wark they get through!
An' yet, wheer are th'Government sarvants
'At gets as ill paid as they do?
Th'idea of a mon in his senses
Gooin' splashin' thro' mire an' thro' clay,
Th'public sarvant for o'th'foalk i'th'village
For less than a shillin' a day! (25)

Laycock was undoubtedly at his best during the Famine - he was writing from the heart, sharing the sufferings of his fellow workers thrown out of their jobs. However, Laycock's Liberalism cut across any possibility of identifying social wrongs as the result of industrial capitalism. His critique remains a moral one, with the 'enemy' being the aristocracy, or the unseen hand of 'fate'.

Brierley, the third of the classical triumvirate, was born into a hand-loom weaving family, and much of his writing reflects his childhood roots, and touches similar nostalgic chords to Waugh.(26) Most of his work is prose and deals with 'homely' Lancashire life - the goings on in 'Treadlepin Fowt' and Daisy Nook. Again, it is totally unreal and there is little in Brierley that reflects actual working life in the Lancashire of the 1860s/70s. The "Weaver of Welbrook" is his best-known poem and is typical:

Yo gentlemen o wi' yo'r hounds an yo'r parks,
Yo may gamble an' sport till yo dee
But a quiet heause nook, a good wife an' a book
Are more to the likin's o me-e

Wi' mi' pickers an' pins
An' mi' wellers to th'shins
My linderins, shuttle an' yealdhook
My treadle an' sticks
My weight-ropes an' bricks

What a life! - said the Wayvor of Welbrook (27)

Factory life seldom, if ever, impinges on Brierley's writings. Like Waugh, Brierley preferred to write of the hand-loom weavers and other characters from the pre-factory age.

James Taylor Staton was a contemporary of Waugh and Brierley, but as we have already seen in Chapter 3, there any similarities end. He was pre-eminently a popular journalist and humourist rather than a poet. His work is fascinating as an important and neglected stream within dialect writing. Some of his work deals directly with industrial issues in a way that 'the poets' never did.

His main contribution to the dialect tradition was his publication of the Bowtun Luminary between 1853 to 1864 (it became the Lankshire Loominary in 1862).

Staton wrote a long dialect account of the Luddite attack on the Westhoughton factory in 1812 called "Luddites un Blackfaces" which he serialised in the paper. (28)

Some of his sketches from the "Loominary" were republished in pamphlet form by Heywood's as Rays Fro' Th' Loominary - a Selection of Comic Lancashire Tales. (29) The subjects are various and often very funny; few deal directly with factory life but the characters are often spinners, piecers, weavers and colliers. Staton takes factory work for granted, on the basis of his readership being factory folk.

Staton's sketches are less romanticised than Waugh's or Brierley's. They have none of their sentimentality, or nostalgia for the old days: all the characters, however absurd their adventures, are firmly rooted among the working class of mid-Victorian Lancashire.

Like other dialect writers, before and after him, Staton used a stereotypical

character: 'Bobby Shuttle' of 'Tum Fowt' (Tonge Fold, Bolton). 'Bobby' has predictable adventures - a trip to the Great Exhibition, doing daft things and being kept in check by his wife Sayroh. A particularly interesting sketch, published in 1874 is Th'Lond Tillers Lock-Eawt - Bobby Shuttle Wi'Th' Demonstrationists at Manchester, Saturday June 20th 1874. (30) It is about the reactions of one of the surviving handloom weavers to the large demonstration held by trades unionists in Manchester in 1874, in support of the agricultural workers' campaign for improved pay and conditions. Extracts from the sketch are given in the section on "The Last of the Handloom weavers, p.307.

William Billington had direct experience of factory work, as a weaver. His two main collections - Sheen and Shade, published in 1861, and Lancashire Songs, with other Poems Sketches of 1883 have some interesting contrasts in his treatment of work.

In Sheen and Shade the poetry is elevated, idealistic and, of course, written in standard English. It has close similarities to the Chartist poetry of the 1840s. "They Crush Because We Cringe" is a good example:

Oh! wherefore are the people so oppressed?
Why do the haughty tread the people down!
Why have the poor this mountain on their breast?
The rich breathe freely - pride still wears the crown
While Want and Wealth the social world unhinge!
Is Heaven at fault? Ah, no. They crush because we cringe! (31)

The nearest he gets to a direct commentary on industry is in "The Uncrowned Conqueror" - about the inevitable progress of steam power:

Shall we mourn o'er the ills that prevail in those mills,
And the misery caused by machines
Which supercede men in toil's mart?
Must we then sigh and groan o'er these huge magazines
Of war and of wealth which are bought by the health

of myriads of mammon-led slaves?
No! these are the ships of industry, whose trips
Are to freedom o'er destiny's waves!

Billington is saying that the coming of industry lays a basis for future prosperity, even if things look bleak today:

Let no murmurs be heard, let no famine be feared,
For old time treads a heavenly track
Though bleak mountains be seen, fruitful valleys between
Never dread that his journey will lack.
Then hail unto steam! tis the base of the dream
Of the future unfolding to sight -
tis the spirit of man breaking through the world ban
Ere he leapeth to leisure and light! (32)

His later work deals more directly with contemporary Lancashire life - the work of weavers and spinners, the problems of being poor. Much of his Lancashire Songs is in dialect, which again makes the appeal more direct. "Wod Con A Weyver Do?" is a sad reflection on the life of a weaver in hard times:

Aw've hardly a shirt to mi back,
An aw've scarcely a shoe to mi foot
Mi goods, they are o gwon to tack,
aw've a wife an five childer to boot;
when they're wed, yo know, young unds will come!
An mi wife gwoes to t'factory too -
Ho wants mo to keep her a-whoam!
But wod con a poor weyver do? (33)

Billington was widely read in the Blackburn area and, in his position as a publican, was perhaps more in tune than most to popular working class feeling - so it would be easier to express quite diverse sentiments in his poetry.

Allen Clarke, the *Northern Weekly*, and the Factory System

The previous writers belong to the 'classic generation', writing between the mid-

1850s and the 1880s. The pre-eminent writer of the next generation was Allen Clarke, from whom work and factory life were key themes in his writing. His paper, the Northern Weekly, which ran under various titles between 1896 and 1908, provided a forum for a number of other working class writers who wrote directly about factory life, from both critical and favourable standpoints.

Clarke had first hand experience of the factory system which he came to hate so much. His father was a spinner in a Bolton mill, and was active in the spinners' union. His mother also worked in a mill, as a carder. Clarke himself worked first as a half-timer, and then full time in Cross's Mill in Gilnow, Bolton. It proved to be an invaluable apprenticeship. In 1904 he was to argue:

Yes; I think I know the factory and the factory towns, and the factory folk. I know the long days of labour, the bitter grind of monotonous toil, the tyranny of machinery, the slavery of a soul-less system. I also know the pleasures and sorrows, the loves and hates, the struggles and hopes of the factory folk. I know how they bear their labour with heroism, often with good humour, and make mirth even in misery. (34)

Clarke had a complex , often contradictory attitude towards industry and the 'factory system'. Whichever approach he took, he never ignored it - it is right at the centre of his writing.

His first major effort was production of Labour Light in 1890. It was subtitled "Local Trades Unions Journal" with the motto "No creed - No politics - No Cant", and it circulated mainly in the Bolton area. It consisted of lengthy trade union reports and lofty, pro-labour poetry such as "The Rising of Labour":

And the tyrants in fear are shrinking and
capital shakes the head
For the workers have have begun thinking
and thought is a thing to dread;
and the subgleams give glad warning that
the day is nigh at hand
And at last, at last the morning, has

dawned on every land (35)

Labour Light was lightened by the inclusion of humorous dialect sketches - featuring fictitious stereotypes - 'Bill and Bet Spriggs' of Tum Fowt. Here, Clarke, writing under the pseudonym of 'Teddy Ashton', is clearly following Staton whose work he knew well: not just with the stereotype figures, but even the choice of 'Tum Fowt' as the location for Bill and Bet Spriggs' goes on. He used the 'Tum Fowt' sketches as light relief to the heavy labour reports, and at first they are straight unpolitical funny stories - later he develops them as vehicles for expressing more direct political messages, as he himself acknowledges:

At the end of 1891 "Labour Light" was extinguished - Bolton wasn't ready for the labour politics and was bored by the trade union reports - the only thing that kept it going so long was the Tum Fowt sketches. (36)

Clarke turned to more popular journalism, producing the Bolton Trotter. However, the industrial coverage remained - there were regular reports, often satirical, of life in local factories. The railway works at Horwich got frequent attention, whether criticism of unpopular bosses, or in support of different sections of the work force who were in dispute.

He went to work on the staff of the Cotton Factory Times in 1895, and by this time his views on 'the factory system' were fairly well developed. In 1896 he published The Effects of the Factory System which exposed atrocious working conditions in the mills and called for a return to land-based small industry. He used his creative literary skills to support campaigns for better working conditions. In Voices, published in 1895, a number of poems, some dialect, some standard English, express his feelings on issues such as child labour and the half-time system, part of which is reproduced in the section on Child Labour, below.

Clarke was well aware that there were few ways out of the system; he had

managed to escape, but was under no illusion that any but a small minority could follow him. In the same volume he expresses his own role as working class writer:

"The Voice of the Poor Poet"

I'll be the poet of the poor -
to those that spin and those that weave
A message in song I'll leave,
to cheer the heart and mend the mind.

In case that sounds as though he is advocating a cosy solace where people can forget about the real world of work, he says:

I'll sing of all that lies between
the cradle and the coffin scene
Sing to myself and nature true
Songs for the many, not for the few,
For all the down-trodden, despised, oppressed,
For those who are weary and long for rest,
For those whose burdens are heavy and sore -
I'll be the poet of the poor. (37)

Clarke remained what he set out to be, though his poetry is far from being his strongest asset. His strengths were in journalism and dialect sketch writing. Before turning to these, it would be useful to look at two of Clarke's earlier novels, The Knobstick and Lancashire Lasses and Lads for further indications of his views on work.

The Knobstick, a Lancashire term for 'blackleg' was based around the great Bolton engineers strike of 1887, and was first serialised in his Teddy Ashton's Journal (as was Lancashire Lasses and Lads). I will look at Clarke's position on trade unionism in a separate section, on Industrial Relations, below. Here, it is important to note that there is little of the blanket rejection of industrialism that later figures in Clarke's work. We find the hero, Belton sitting on a Bolton railway bridge gazing at a locomotive:

"Great and wonderful is man" mused Belton "who conceived and constructed the locomotive! It is almost alive! It flies along of itself, and carries its maker in its arms like a child! How beautiful! How glorious is the locomotive! The lightning on wheels! The horse made divine! Mighty and sublime must be he who made the locomotive!" (38)

His description of a cold April morning, with the spinners and weavers trooping to the mill, brings us back down to earth:

But what an impressive lack of conversation! All faces silent, and almost stern; no voluntary speech; nothing only curt verbal necessities. the silence was solemn; and it was a fantastic experience to see these male and female figures hastening along, head first, without uttering a word, almost like a gang of convicts... it is a grim and cheerless sight to see the crowd of workers turning out in the chill, dark hours of an un-sunned winter's morn. (39)

In The Knobstick Clarke is mostly working on an engineering theme; in Lancashire Lasses and Lads he deals directly with the cotton workers of Bolton. In The Effects of the Factory System he strongly criticises cotton workers for being basically conservative, alienated from the broader things in life:

Politics though, are much discussed by the more intelligent of the factory operatives; but they seem unable to grasp the problem of government in its more general sense, and always discuss particulars more than broad schemes. This peculiar mental state is undoubtedly caused by work amongst machinery as they know and understand little parts of factory work, but have no notion of the mill revolving round the engine boilers, so they know and understand insignificant political details, but have no conception, only the haziest of the plan and purport of a nation's parliament. (40)

He contrasts this narrowness with the broad radicalism of the Chartist hand-loom weavers, whom, he says, dominated the movement:

And the aims of the Chartist movement were wider and more generous than the aims of most movements inaugurated by factory folks. For the Chartists - the old hand-loom weavers - were men of some ideal; they loved nature, poetry and philosophy... they were broad, where the factory operatives are narrow.(41)

Lancashire Lasses and Lads is a literary expression of this conviction, or, if you like, contempt. The hero is the son of a mill owner who has left home to make his own way in 'life' and became an engineer. One scene has him watching the cotton workers go to work, with similar descriptions to that I have quoted from the Knobstick. Here, though, Clarke is more directly critical:

They're all mad, every one; man, woman and child. they must be made to crawl out of warm beds, and shudder to horrid work in this cold... They're mad to work as they do; to slave as if their very lives depended on killing

themselves by work. I wouldn't do it. Everybody's mad but me and the rich, and the rich are only half right. The poor must be mad. (42)

He returns to his criticism of the half-time system - of the masters who profited from it, and the parents who gained a few pennies out of their children's labour:

...and the town went on with its work and its business; and the children went about their tasks in the mill, and many of them were wan and worn but nobody had thought anything about it; it had always been so and always would be so; that was the indifferent fatalism in which people regarded everything. (43)

Clarke is not criticising the factory workers as an outsider - he is doing it from within, and this makes his attack that much harder and more bitter. In a sense he is attacking his own family, for did he not work half-time as a child, while his father was a spinner, exploiting little piecers and at the same time being a 'good trades unionist'? This is never uttered directly, but by accounts from Clarke's own children, Clarke's father had a harshness which probably was not exceptional amongst men of his day. (44)

Not all of Clarke's writing on factory life was blistering criticism. In the Tum Fowl Sketches Bill Spriggs is found doing various mill jobs, as a tackler, and as a minder in the spinning room. (45) Here, the humour is on the assumption that mill work is easy and anyone can do it - so Bill has a go at tackling and gets the run-around by a group of weaver-lasses who are anything but ground down by the iniquities of the factory system. The humour rests on a quite detailed knowledge of weaving processes which clearly the reader is assumed to have. The same is the case for "Bill Spriggs as a Minder". Bill, in response to a mill manager's request, tries his hand at minding a set of mules with hilarious consequences. (See Appendix 21 for the sketch in full).

In The Effects of the Factory System Clarke details the daily toll of injury and mutilation that went on in the spinning rooms - not least those injuries suffered by the young half-timers. "Bill Spriggs as a Minder" is a skillful blend of humour and sharp social criticism. Also, it is an affirmation of the skill of the minder: contrary to Bill

Spriggs' earlier confidence, not just any fool could mind a set of mules - it took years of experience.

By this time, Clarke's own romantic notions about getting back to the land were taking a heavy knock. The Daisy Colony Land Scheme, which he had been closely involved in, was falling apart through personal animosities and lack of cash. (46) Clarke had moved politically away from a rather vague socialist-Tolstoyanism towards a much more militant anarcho-syndicalism. During 1905 and 1906 his paper had regular contributions from S.C. Potter, of the Industrial Union of Direct Actionists, who wrote a lengthy series on "The General Strike and the Social Revolution" which Clarke clearly approved of (both by printing it, and by commenting on the issue in several editorials).

His anarcho-syndicalism was short lived: reflecting as much a prevailing mood within the working class movement at the time - 1906-8, when syndicalist ideas became more popular as disillusionment with the Labour Party's parliamentary performance set in. Clarke was in some ways a political dilettante and was easily swayed by prevailing trends. However, throughout his life he carried a strong dislike of the 'factory system' and looked forward to its ultimate downfall.

When the Northern Weekly ceased production in 1908 he lost the complete literary freedom he had up to then enjoyed. Writing for the Liverpool Weekly Post he continued to produce novels about working class life. Some of these were either re-works of earlier novels or sketches, or previously published novels with a different title. For instance, The Knobstick reappeared as The Love of A Weaver Lass and The Girl in the Watch House became The Factory Master's Son. Whether the management of the 'Post' knew of this is not known.

After the war he continued to publish his Lancashire Annual which maintained a

wide readership. He had drifted away from the organised socialist movement, and living in Blackpool meant he was less in touch with daily factory life. However, his work between 1890 and 1908 - both his novels and his 'Spriggs' sketches - rank him as a major working class writer. This is in terms of his perspective as a socialist writer with working class roots, his subject matter, and the type of audience he was aiming for - the Lancashire working class. The main reason for his lack of recognition was the very narrow geographical area he was writing for. Since his best work was published in his Northern Weekly which mainly circulated within a fifteen to twenty mile radius of Bolton, plus Blackpool, this non-recognition is not surprising.

It should be asked to what extent Clarke was 'typical' of other dialect writers of this period in his views on factory life. On the whole, I would say he was. I have not come across any poems which actually suggest that factory work was positively enjoyable. It is true that the work of Clarke himself, William Baron, Sam Fitton, and many others bring 'lighter' touches to factory life. Yet even Sam Fitton, the cheerful good-humoured dialect reciter, could write in "Six o'Clock i'th'Morn":

It's very nice for weel-off folks
To sing o'er early risin';
If they wer' forced to rise the'rsels
they'd stop their eulogisin';
They may be wise an' wealthy, but
they'd weesh they'd ne'r bin born,
If they'd to tumble eawt an'wark
At six o'clock i'th'morn. (47)

Clarke's editorial control of a newspaper which was written for, and by, working class people opened up great opportunities for a number of worker-writers. Fred Plant, a Stockport socialist who was eventually elected as a Labour councillor, wrote several serial novels with factory struggles at their heart. These include Tamsie and The Conductor's Sweetheart: A Tale of the Great Tram Strike (48).

William Baron had a less critical view of factory life, and his Echoes From the Loom contains poems like "That Young Chap 'at Weaves Across th' Alley", a celebration of weaving shed romance, referred to in Chapter 10. When the book was published, in 1903, it came in for criticism from Allen Clarke. Writing in Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly:

Mr Baron certainly depicts certain homely scenes in a sweetly sentimental way, and occasionally points out a social ill - but the big evils of town life, the degeneration of the factory operatives, the uglification of the shire by the monstrosities of manufacture - he says nothing about these. (49)

The criticism points to the fact that there were differences of opinion within dialect, and that these were often openly expressed: there was not a single accepted view on factory life. The dialect literature produced between 1890 and 1914 accepts factory life as the reality for most people in Lancashire, and within that finds some positive experiences, as well as making many critical comments, particularly about the employment of children, as we shall see below.

Themes Within Factory Life:

a) Everyday Life

There is precious little comment in any of the writings of Waugh, Brierley, or Laycock on the 'everyday' in factory life, perhaps for the reasons that Vicinus points out above (50). Their readers did not want reminding, in their leisure hours, of the realities of factory life. Later dialect writers did not feel so constrained.

The Cotton Factory Times was perhaps the greatest exemplar of the 'everyday' in Lancashire's cotton industry. From its beginnings in 1885 it encouraged its readers to send in letters, comments, jokes, and other tit-bits of mill life. Its regular column,

"Mirth in the Mill" published a selection of readers' jokes about mill life, awarding prizes for the best entries (51). Some of the jokes give a picture of ordinary life for mill workers which is seldom represented in more academic texts. For example, "H.S." of Royton won the first prize of 5s for this entry:

Joe and Billy, two piecers, had been sent to the corner shop for a quart of beer for their minders. Just as they arrived back at the mill, Joe says to Billy:
"By gum, Billy, we'n supped too much o'this ale. What shan we do?"
"There's nowt for it neaw but a haccident," replied Billy.
"What does t' mean?" asked Joe.
"Why, tha mun let t'jug fo'!" (52)

This was published in 1920, and suggests that a piecer's life may not have been quite so onerous as to forbid the occasional excursion to the shop. It also suggests that the minders still had sufficient control over the work process to send their piecers on errands, and also to drink beer on mill premises.

One of Clarke's most celebrated 'Tum Fowt' sketches, "Bill Spriggs as a Minder", brilliantly uses a spinning room as the scene of one of 'Bill Spriggs' adventures. The 'minder' - a Lancashire term for spinner, who 'minded' a set of spinning mules - was almost as much a figure of good-natured abuse as his counterpart in the weaving sheds, the tackler. Both enjoyed a semi-supervisory position over other workers. In the case of the minder he would be responsible for a big piecer and a little piecer, and paid them out of his wage. The relationship between minder and piecer was thus a potentially fraught one, and cotton town folklore is full of less-than-complimentary references to minders. The sketch works on this folklore tradition, but shows that there is more to 'minding a set of mules' than is often suggested. It is a dangerous and physically demanding work, as 'Bill Spriggs' soon realises.

In this excerpt from "Bill Spriggs As A Minder", the awful realization that Bill and his 'piecers' are about to be crushed by a set of bloodthirsty mule carriages gradually dawns:

"By gum", said Bill, "bloomin fence is runnin at us." "Eh, an so is this behind us!" cried Joe Lung in alarm. "They'll meet an crush us to deeth between 'em!" yelled Cock-Eye.

"They're comin ner!" striked Bill.

"Run for yore lives!" shouted Joe Lung. Th'carriages were slowly drawin' up, an t'space betwixt em went less an less. For haue a minute Bill an his piecers were dazed. Then wi a howl they aw three turned tail an climbed up a stump, one under t'other. ..They aw three looked deawn i terror, an seed t'carriage nearly meet below em.

"They'd ha squeezed us as flat as poncake," said Bill, "It's a good job we aw run up hee."

The three unfortunate heroes are eventually rescued and Bill returns to his local, 'Th'Dug an' Kennel' to reflect on the experience. The story ends with Bill's conclusion which for all his self-imposed ordeals, has a strong element of the reality of life in a spinning room:

Never no mooar mindin' for me. I wouldn't do it for ten peound a week. Mindin'? Theau cornt mind nowt else, for it taks thee aw thi time for t'mind thisel, an then theau't lucky if theau gets away beaut a harm or a leg missin. No mooar mindin for me... (53)

The sketch was very popular at readings, and audiences were able to identify closely with the work situation, and take some pride in the complexities and dangers of cotton spinning, which many of Clarke's readers were involved in. Another sketch which was almost as popular was "Bill Spriggs as a Tackler" in which he tries his hand, with disastrous results, in a weaving shed. In this sketch, he tries to assert masculine superiority over the female weavers, but finds that the weavers are more than a match for him. The sketch highlights the gender conflict between tacklers and weavers, which is elsewhere treated in a more melodramatic way. In the "Tackler" sketch the conflict is good-natured, and the women weavers are shown as strong and independent characters.(54)

The period from the 1890s onwards saw 'everyday' factory life become a regular feature in the Lancashire press, mostly the Cotton Factory Times and Teddy

Ashton's Northern Weekly. It was also common in local co-operative society journals, and in some trade union journals such as The Power Loom, produced by the Nelson Weavers' Association. By this time, factory work clearly had, in Patrick Joyce's words, "got under the skin" of everyday life. He rebuts Marxist approaches which suggest an 'ideological hegemony' exerted by the bourgeoisie, and instead gives ascendancy to work and its relations:

The operation of 'ideological hegemony' does not begin to explain the inwardness that characterised the accommodation of so many of the northern factory workers in the social system of modern factory production. This accommodation occurred not so much at the level of ideas and values, but at the centre of people's daily concerns, in terms of their sense of personal and communal identity. This was so because work got under the skin of life.(55)

He further comments that on how the realisation of the permanence of industrial capitalism was of profound psychological effect in the lives of working people. It was accepted, and there was no way out of it, except by emigration. Factory life was seen as 'reality' for industrial workers. The qualified acceptance of factory work, and counter movements against it, which was a feature of Lancashire in the first half of the nineteenth century gives way to a recognition that this *was* working life, and perhaps Patrick Joyce would add 'life' itself almost. While the formal pervasiveness of neither the factory, nor the employer, was perhaps not quite so overt as in, for example, railway company towns such as Crewe or Horwich, it was still an incredibly powerful force in shaping the everyday culture of the working class. It was an industry, cotton, rather than a particular employer which exerted hegemony. The employers in the centres of large scale cotton production, such as Oldham and Bolton, were less 'visible' than their counterparts in the smaller textile towns and villages, or the large single employers in, for example, railways and shipbuilding. While it would be impossible to deny the importance of the employers in shaping the factory culture of late nineteenth century Lancashire, one gets the sense in the dialect writing of this period that it was cotton - an immensely powerful impersonal force - rather than any human agency

which exerted dominance, and that the employers were almost as powerless as the workers in this 'factory system'. While Joyce is right when he suggests that the industrial working class occupied a subordinate role, the extent of political domination can be over-stressed. The working class existed within what was, to an extent, a self-imposed isolation: it had accepted the permanence of the factory system, and developed its own institutions, through the co-op, trade unions, sick and burial clubs, and bolstered this with its own spoken dialect and dialect literature. A further confirmation of the all-pervading nature of 'work' in working class life is in the large number of picture postcards which featured working life in them. Contrasting the carefree pleasure of Blackpool with having to come back to work was a popular motif. (56)

Conflict did take place, but this was generally over differences regarding allocation of resources within the factory system, not a struggle to end it. A delicate power structure existed within a spinning mill and weaving shed, reflecting class and gender distinctions, which was increasingly regulated by detailed agreements between the owners and the trades unions. Clarke's own dialect writing, despite his political objections to the factory system which he detailed in Effects of the Factory System, take this acceptance of factory life by the vast majority of workers as given. The 'everyday' culture of the factory is never far from the surface in much of Clarke's popular dialect writing, and confirms Joyce's view that the factory in late nineteenth century Lancashire exerted a dominant influence on working class life.

b) Knobsticks, Masters, and Turn-Outs: Industrial Relations in Dialect

Dialect literature has a large amount of material on industrial relations: not simply strikes ('turn-outs') but also relations between worker and employer. There is a mass of material in Cotton Factory Times and Northern Weekly, as well as many of Allen Clarke's published novels, notably The Knobstick (a Lancashire term for strike-breaker). (57) Earlier dialect writing is much weaker on 'industrial relations' and

seldom rises above stereotypes and moral homilies when, for example, a strike is in progress.

Edwin Waugh seldom, if ever, supported practical struggles for improvements in factory conditions. His "Hard Weather" written during the big cotton strikes of 1878, points in a different direction:

Though th'bitter air, an livin bare,
Gets keener every day;
an th'emptier folks pockets are,
the more they han to pay;
though strikes an wars and swindlin tricks
Are sendin th'wide world wrong;
Yet come what will, this shall be still,
the burden of my song -

Chorus:

But bide lads, bide
For a happier tide etc. (58)

Samuel Laycock's one commentary on a strike, "The Stricken Stokers" dealing with the Manchester gas stokers strike of 1883, is again on a moral level. He declines to take sides, though regrets "this settin' o' class against class". He suggests that "aw'm not gooin to argue whoa's wrung or whoa's reet", but instead appeals to people of all shades of opinion to help out during the strike,

What we've got to do -
Is to show eawr owd mates we're for helpin' 'em through
This painful, this sad distress. (59)

Laycock's sense of 'fair play' between masters and men, and Liberal politics, led to this obituary for Hugh Mason, the Ashton MP and cotton employer:

As a large employer of labour
He was generous just and kind
And, while seeking the good of the body
He tried to improve the mind. (60)

Ben Brierley says least of the three on the subject of industrial relations. In "Cast Upon the World" he deals, unsympathetically, with a strike clearly modelled on his childhood memories of the 1842 general strike. A crowd of "colliers, mostly armed with pick-axe handles" try to stop Shaw's mill where the hero of the tale works. "The Battle of Langley Heights", in his Chronicles of Waverlow deals directly with the 1842, though in a semi-fictitious setting. A 'troop' of Chartists - weavers from the village - set out to do battle but quickly retreat in disarray when faced with real live soldiers. At the end of the story he comments:

When the morrow came things had assumed their ordinary course. The village was early astir, but it was with preparations for a more peaceful solution of the problem "A Fair Day's Wage for a Fair Day's Work" in the breaking up of the strike. Shirtsleeves were rolled up, and ere noon shuttles were rattling as merrily throughout Waverlow as if the "Great Battle of Langley Heights" had not been fought the night before". (61)

James Taylor Staton's work is a major contrast to Brierley's. His newspapers (62), are full of references to current industrial disputes - both in Bolton and elsewhere. He gave considerable prominence to the spinners' case during the Preston Lock-Out of 1853/4. The following piece is typical:

Th'Preston cotton despots are gettin desperate, an not only desperate but cruel un reckless. At th'beginnin o'th present lamentabel struggle, th'operatives chargedum wi avarice un injustice; several nespappers in return, charged th'operatives wi folly, un wi a desire to become dictators. It wur a difficult matter for th'public for't come to a fair understandin o'th real question involved i'th dispute, un it wur th'bizness of a troop of hirelings insidiously to throw dust i'their sen, un to muddle their understandins. Th'question wur a very simple one. It wur, whether at Preston, th'operatives should wark for prices 30% or 40% below th'prices paid in other districts. (63)

He also championed the case of the Bolton bleachers during a long struggle for better conditions in 1854. In the Bowtun Luminary of 1856 he drew attention to a weavers' strike at Johnson and Company, Bolton. In "Th'Weighvur's Strike" he attacks the judicial system for the jailing of three striking weavers, with hard labour, on a charge of having left work without notice. (64)

William Billington seldom wrote as a friend of local employers. However, in "Blackburn to the Fore" he applauds their entrepreneurial skills which exemplify Blackburn's premier position in the cotton industry:

Our Osbaldestons, Bulloughs, Blackburns,
Whitakers and Crooks,
With their Slashers, Looms and Warping Mills
have reached remotest nooks;
They have sent machines to many lands
And goods to every shore,
And, for weaving over all the land,
Brought Blackburn to the fore. (65)

This poem is not dissimilar to Clarke's "I'Praise o'Lancashire" in which employers are seen in a more positive light than usual, for their enterprise:

There's not a foreign market, lads,
But what its Lanky-made,
Eaur Lanky lads an' their gaffers
Has built aw th'bloomin' earth;
An' there isn't a job that's wo'th owt
But Lancashire gan it birth (66)

Both poems perhaps say more about a local and regional sense of pride, exemplified by the success of the cotton industry, than illustrating deference to the masters. Patrick Joyce uses Clarke's poem to make a particular point, that is the limits of 'socialist' dialect:

This late dialect written by an avowed socialist..if class was muted here, then this was even more the case with dialect in its earlier hey-day. (67)

Joyce is basing his comments on a mis-reading of the poem, and more particularly he ignores the large amount of Clarke's dialect writing in which class is anything but "muted". Neither is the poem 'late dialect' at all; it was first published in 1896 and Clarke used it as a pot-boiler for various publications. (68)

Occasionally Clarke's social criticism in his sketches became more overt. As early

as 1892, in the Bolton Trotter Bill is philosophising about the cotton lock-out and the need to support the workers of Oldham. In 1905 a major strike broke out in Sunnyside Mills in Bolton, over the introduction of semi-automatic looms. This excerpt is taken from "Th'Patent Automatic Cemetery Looms - Bill Spriggs Sweeps th'Manager Eaut o'th Shed":

"Dang America!" said Bill Spriggs, "It's allus sendin its rubbitch oer here - to mak mooar work an less brass."

"That's just it" said Tub Bibs, "Well, th'model factoris has just geet a lot o'these patent automatic looms fro' America. They reckun as one weiver con monage eight looms, an they're makin 'em try. Some o'th weivers has turned eaut, an they're killin theirsels to mind these eight looms!"

"Eight looms"! said Bill Spriggs, "Why, they'll be wantin a weiver to manage a whole factory soon, an cleean t'masthurs boots i'th'bargain."

"Well, that's what they're doin neaw" said Tum Bibs, "Eight looms. Theirs one o' my dowters tried em for a week an hoo had to gie o'er. Hoo's welly near deead. We'n had docthur to her, an he says ther's nowt th'matter wi her except too much wark."

Bill, heavily disguised as 'Bill Mugg' gets a job sweeping up in the weaving shed to see things at first hand. He ends up sweeping the manager out of the shed but realizes more needs to be done:

"I nobbut wish I could ha swept aw them patent looms away as yessy as I shifted th'manager. But th'weivers ull ha to do that theirsels - an they con do it if they'll nobbut get howd o'th'trade union brosh an sweep away for aw they're woth. (69)

During the Sunnyside dispute, Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly carried a regular letter from 'Billy Pickinpeg' of 'Duck Fowt, Swan Lane' (Swan Lane is close to the Sunnyside Mills). The letters were written in dialect and record the progress of the strike:

I'm nobbut a plain-spokken sort o'chap, an I've never been to college. But I like fair play, an I can tell when I'm hurt, an when other folks is oather; an it's my opinion that th'Dobbil weivers has been put on recently. Well, if the hadn't, done yo think they'd have had nomooar sense than coom eaut on strike. Folks durnt goo on strike for amusement nowadays; an I durnt think they ever did. (70)

The strike was probably the most significant and prolonged dispute in the Bolton area since the 1887 Engineers' Strike which Clarke immortalised in his novel The

Knobstick. The Sunnyside strike was a major early event in the intensification of weaving through the introduction of new technology. (71)

There is no doubt that Clarke was, on occasions, hostile to established trades unionism. Writing in The Labour Prophet in 1897 (72) he suggested that the reason for the lack of interest being shown by cotton workers in socialism was being held back by the "strong trade unionism and good wages" of the cotton operatives. On another occasion, he used the Irish slang of 'Patsy Filligan' to tell his readers "What's Wrong Wid Trade-Unionism". The piece is in the form of a letter to the editor from Patsy Filligan, where he criticises the status distinctions, and pay differentials, enjoyed by trade unionists among what could be termed the 'labour aristocracy'. Patsy is a labourer, working with a bricklayer:

The other day I hired myself out to a bricklayer as a labourer, an I did all the heavy work while he did the 'skilled' as it is called; the result bein that he got eightpence an hour, while I got sixpence. An yet I required just as much dinner as he did, nay, truth to tell, more....I tell ye there's somethin wrong wid yer trade unionism when it has two men workin together an one barely gets enough to keep him, while the other is revellin in red herrins an other luxuries. (73)

If Clarke was an opponent of sectional distinctions within the working class, his main target of criticism remained the employers. One of Clarke's last published poems, in December 1935, was "Our Master and MP". It is in standard English, and is an appeal not to trust in politics an employer whom one does not trust as a boss. The poem describes the employer, Longhead, as being 'sharp as the devil's claw', 'mean', and very rich. He is also now the local MP, voted in by the same workers who, a few months earlier, were threatened with the sack when they came out on strike at his factory. Clarke comments:

Well not many months after
he put up for MP
and there wasn't any laughter
in our borough of the free.
For he promised the workmen glory
if the seat he did but win
and they swallowed all the story
and put the bugger in!

They made him legislator
thought at MP at his name's end
would turn a local hater
into a London friend!
So, things settle in their sockerts
and for better or for worse,
the man that picks our pockets
is entrusted with our purse. (74)

I don't think there is any significance in the fact that the poem is in standard English, other than the fact that it was probably written for one of the many national, socialist, publications which Clarke wrote for - for which dialect would be inappropriate. Few could suggest that class is "muted" here!

c) The Labour Aristocracy

Dialect literature needs to be read carefully for hints on how working people at the time perceived status distinctions which justified talk of a 'labour aristocracy'. The evidence from dialect literature suggests that although spinners were seen as the top of a hierarchy within the mill, this would not justify their being described as an 'aristocracy' in the sense that historians such as Foster have used the term. Given that Foster based much of his work in Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution on Oldham, he fails to get to grips with the culture of the mill. He counterposes a 'mass' with the 'aristocratic' spinners. The 'mass' rejected:

...everything associated with their work-time task-masters: discipline, subservience, abstinence. Its most characteristic expression was the public house - where no free-born Englishman need call any man his master. And protected by dialect, a defence the labour aristocrat had to do without, it needed no formal institution beyond the friendly society to handle the most unavoidable contact with the authorities.(75)

This description bears little relationship to the reality of life in the mills. The cotton spinners spoke the same dialect as their piecers, and were not known for 'abstinence'.

However, Allen Clarke does identify distinct strata within the cotton towns, the first being the 'middle class' - employers, professionals, and larger tradesmen. He goes on to say:

The second caste is composed of the best-paid clerks, book-keepers, managers, and the better sort of working folks; they live in small streets narrower than those of Caste One, have no trees, drink beer at small hotels, buy food and clothes at the smaller stores (or maybe the Co-operative Society), use the pit of the theatre, the middle and rear pews of the church, buy a newspaper or two, have a few cheap pictures on the wall...get books from the public library, perhaps buy a few of their own, and walk or use tram..(76)

He goes on to describe the 'third caste' as composed of "labourers and poorer workmen"; he does not say what the size of each group is, but the implication is that the second caste is the largest of the three, and would encompass spinners and their families, including 'aspiring' spinners, the relatively low-paid piecers. Clarke was writing about a later period than Foster - the 1890s rather than the 1840s and 1850s, yet not very much had changed. The spinners had consolidated their position after early threats to use female labour in the spinning rooms. Their unions were strong and they exercised a degree of control over their work situation, although it was less extensive than the archetypal 'labour aristocrat'. John Mason has argued that their main power lay in the strike weapon, as well as their position as sub-contractor for their piecers. (77).

There does seem to have been a perception among some dialect writers that an aristocracy of labour existed, but this was confined to the 'artisans' - the carpenters, engineers, and other skilled trades. Staton's sketch "Egg Beighlin - a New Plan Not Patented", describes a 'typical' spinner, called Johnny Badger, and the rivalry between him and a 'skilled hertizan' for the affections of Anna Mary, a winder at the same mill where Johnny minded a set of mules. Johnny is earning good money at the top of his profession:

Johnny Badger wur a spinner; un when he wurtcht hard, un his piecers did their duty i'that stayshun i'loife into which their dads un mums had ordert um, he could goo whoam ov a Setterday neet wi close uppo two peawnd in his pocket.

His rival is described as follows:

A yung chap uz workt at a nayburin' foundry, un thowt he wur a foine clivver mon, because he'd th'privilege o cawin hissel a 'skilled hertizan' un could live un throive witheawt th'smell o cotton under his nose daily. (78)

The story is of interest for its clear separation of spinner and artisan. Although the two rivals earn roughly the same wages, the 'skilled hertizan' is of a different, higher, status, which Staton proceeds to ridicule. The spinner is the genuine, salt-of-the-earth Lancastrian, unpretentious and hard working. The conditions of work of the spinner tended to limit any potential aristocratic tendencies: the extreme heat of the spinning room necessitating the wearing of loose, casual, clothing, and having to work bare-footed, were not ideal conditions to encourage an aristocratic mentality. (81)

William Billington wrote "Owd Bass Dick" about a poor orphan who makes good as a spinner:

Aw was browt up, an orphan boy, without a parent's care,
was lodge i'th parish workhouse, an was fed on pauper's fare
Nor stayed there long, when grown up strong, but, free in life, began
To try my skill in a cotton mill, I then became a man.

Aw felt mi independence - hev mainained it ever since -
Mid dust an boom i'th 'blowin room as happy as a prince
My heart did bound to th' beater's sound fro daylight unto dark
For joy I cried, an could hev died, so sweet seemed honest wark.

The poem celebrates 'honest wark' as the means to make a man. The song later shows Dick being 'fond o' music and being financially solvent:

Bass Dick is fond o' music, an is well up t'th' mark,
He plays no second fiddle to t'beat mon i Grimshaw Park
He pays his way - has nowt to say, but loikes a bit o loife -
A reglar brick is owd Bass Dick, God bless booath him an t'wife! (79)

Bass Dick is clearly seen as being a 'typical' character, "a reglar brick", and not

someone who sets himself above his friends and neighbours.

Dialect writing would seem to confirm the views of writers such as Patrick Joyce that the concept of a 'labour aristocracy' within the cotton industry is highly dubious, if it is understood as a quite distinct strata within the working class. The spinners certainly regarded themselves as being an elite, but this is best understood as a kind of 'head of the household' within the family of cotton working class: they were bound by a thousand and one social, including family, connections to other workers outside the ranks of the spinners.

d) Child Labour

The employment of child labour in Lancashire's mills and weaving sheds became an issue of controversy in the 1880s and 1890s. The campaign against the half-time system involved the two socialist parties, the S.D.F. and I.L.P., together with the National Union of Teachers, and other sympathetic individuals and groups. The textile unions stayed aloof, seeing the issue as an embarrassment (80). Clarke played a major role in the campaign, by arguing through the pages of Northern Weekly that the half-time system was immoral and against the interests of working class people. However, the earlier generation of dialect writers took child labour largely for granted.

Edwin Waugh did write one poem about child labour, and it stands out as the only positive affirmation of factory life that I have been able to trace in his writing. "The Little Doffer" is about a cheeky lad who comes for a job at another mill after being 'gi'n t'bag' (sacked) from the last:

A merry little doffer lad
Coom down to Shapper's mill
to see if he could get a shop
he said his name wur 'Bill'

"Bill what, mylad?" th'o'erlooker said;
"Arto co'de nought beside?"
Oh yigh, said th'lad, thy co'n me things -

Sometimes - at's bad to bide!

After more lively banter the song ends with the overlooker admiring the lad's cheek and giving him a job:

Said th' o'erlooker "I never see
sich a whelp sin I wur born!
But I'll try what I can make o'thee
Come to thi wark to-morn! (81)

Burgess' early factory poetry, particularly "Ten Heawrs a Day" and "Ther's Nowt Loike Spinnin' Shoddy" (both reproduced in full as Appendices 19 and 20), are powerful attacks on factory life for women, and for children. They were both written in 1874. "Spinnin' Shoddy" is based on Burgess' experience as a little piecer at various mills around Droylsden. A few lines will give a clear impression of Burgess' views on factory life:

An' when th' reawm's bin so whot aw cud hardly get mi woyn't,
An th'spinnin's bin so bad 'at aw've piect till welly blyont,
If aw'd happent let mi ends deawn an' made a nick or two,
Mi moinder 'ud ha' punst me till aw wer' black an'blue. (82)

It is his 'minder' (spinner) who is the source of direct ill-treatment, but the factory system as a whole stands condemned. The employers, managers, and minders are part of the oppressive system in different degrees. "Tean Heawrs a Day" was also based on direct experience. His father was out of work, and his mother was forced to work as a weaver at Newton Heath. Her youngest daughter, less than two years old, had to be taken to a friend's house in time for her starting work at 5.30 in the morning. The child died, partly through being exposed to appalling weather conditions. Burgess asks:

Shall tragedies loike these disgrace
The vanguart o'the human race?
An' England sacrifoice to greed
Loives at hoo will hereafter need? (83)

Burgess was not sensationalising conditions in the mills; his experiences were shared by thousands of others. While there were lighter sides to work in the mills and sheds, and

historians are right to point them out, it would be wrong to forget that life for a large number of people throughout the last century, was reflected in the poetry of Joseph Burgess.

Allen Clarke wrote a considerable body of work, both fiction and non-fiction, attacking child labour. His serialised novels in Northern Weekly, such as "The Little Weaver", "Driving", and "Lancashire Lasses and Lads" all feature attacks on the institution of child labour. His Effects of the Factory System is a direct assault on child labour, and played a part in the growing campaign against the half-time system of education. Ruth and Eddie Frow have outlined the campaigns waged by the Social Democratic Federation, and the Independent Labour Party, against the half-time system in the 1890s. Clarke managed to be members of both organisations at different periods, and stood as joint I.L.P./S.D.F. parliamentary candidate for Rochdale in 1900 (84). One of his most eloquent attacks on the half-time system was "Voice of the Half-Timers":

Dragged fro' bed an' early stirrin
Wheer aw'th' whizzin wheels are whirrin
Wheer great factory roars an hums
aw abeawt eawr dreary whoms
Up ant five ant day beginnin
Six o'clock we starten spinnin
Six o'clock we starten weivin
For a long day's toil an drivin
Summer breet or winter dark,
we are allus cheaned to t'wark. (85)

Sam Fitton was no supporter of the half-time system, but his attacks were more muted. In "Six o'Clock i'th'Morn" he describes the reality of daily life for thousands of cotton workers, getting into work at six in the morning. He ends with an appeal for political legislation to limit children's hours of work:

If Legislature cared abeawt
Its childer humbly born,
They'd let 'em sleep an heaver or two
At six o'clock i'th morn. (86)

At six o'clock i'th morn. (86)

An interesting, but unattributed poem, appeared in Teddy Ashton's Journal in 1897.

"Th'Hauve-Timer" was almost certainly by Clarke himself. It begins:

Poor lassie wan, do th'best theau con,
Although thy fate be hard,
A time there'll be when sich as thee
Shall have yore full reward.
At hauve-past five theau leeaves thy bed
An off theau runs to wark,
An gropes thy way to t'mill or t'shed,
Six months o't'year i't'dark.
Theau gets but little for thy pains,
But that's no fault o'thine;
Thy mestur reckons up his gains
An' lies i'bed while nine (87)

The poem contrasts the free and easy life of the employers' children, with that of the operatives'. Another poem, "Hawf-Tahme" appeared in The Schoolmaster in 1895, the journal of the National Union of Teachers, which was waging an energetic campaign against the half-time system. It was signed "A.B.C." which led Ruth and Eddie Frow to suggest it was the work of Clarke. (88) However, the spelling of 'tahme' was never used by Clarke, and I have never known him use "A.B.C." as a pseudonym before.

f) Last of the Hand-loom Weavers

The demise and ultimate extinction of the hand-loom weavers produced a considerable literature in Lancashire, some of which was in dialect. While Farnie, among others (89), has pointed out that the hand-loom weavers were no longer a significant force after the end of the 1840s, they lingered on, in specialised areas of weaving, right through to the end of the century in some areas. Schulze-Gavernitz commented that there were still around 50 counterpane weavers left in Bolton in 1890. By 1895 the last one had ceased working. (90) Richard Marsden identified a handful of hand-loom weavers surviving in Ribchester and Longridge in the early 1890s. (91)

picture of a group of surviving hand-loom weavers in Bolton was provided James Swinglehurst, in his pamphlet Summer Evenings with Old Weavers written in the early 1890s. (93) The work describes a series of conversations between the author, a young man in his twenties, and the retired weavers. Co-operation, trade unionism, Chartism and other subjects are discussed and argued about.

Allen Clarke's writings, including non-fiction works like The Effects of the Factory System as well as fictional works are full of references to the hand-loom weavers of the past, and characters like Chartist Grimshaw in his serial novel The Cotton Panic are examples of weavers surviving into the 1860s and after. Writing in 1905, Clarke refers to the real-life figure of 'Radical Grimshaw', an old weaver whom Clarke remembers in the late 1860s as a local 'character'. He goes on to say that:

Today these old hand-loom weavers are practically extinct; though one yet sees here and there an old man at work in the cellar under his house - "the last of the Mohicans". (94)

James Haslam, one of Clarke's circle of dialect writers in the 1890s, who went on to become president of the National Union of Journalists in the 1920s (95), was the son of a Bolton hand-loom weaver and frequently wrote about them. His most well-known novel is called The Handloom Weaver's Daughter. (96) Sim Schofield, the husband of Hannah - Laycock's daughter and the 'bonny brid' of his famous poem - wrote of surviving hand-loom weavers in the Moston area in Short Stories of Failsworth Folk which was published as late as 1905. (97)

James Taylor Staton used the surviving Bolton hand-loom weavers of the 1860s and 1870s to create one of the central characters of his writing, 'Bobby Shuttle'. Staton doesn't idealise the old weavers, or 'poverty knockers'. After describing the old days when some weavers "had th'habit o'makin bank notes into a sooart o' trade cockade, un fastenin um t'their hats by th'bands", he notes that now...

But heaw are the mighty fallen, un heaw are th'exalted browt low! A hond-loom wayver's position today is like Ailse-o- Peter's porritch - peculiar an not very toothsome". (98)

Although Bobby has to 'powler away at t' loom very lung heawrs fur very little money' he is prepared to support other workers when they need help. He sets off in Manchester, by train, to join the big trades demonstration. At Moses Gate he is joined by a collier from Little Lever who is a strong union man and supporter of Tommy Halliday, the Lancashire miner's leader who is speaking on the day:

"I'm on th'same errand" he said. "They tell me it'll be a gron affair. I come fro Little Lever. I'm a coaler, so I know wot demonstrationism and trade unionisin is. I know Tom Halliday too; yoa know, he's a Little Leverite. (99)

When he got off at Salford he resolved to find some more hand-loom weavers 'un if so, I met as weel join um'. He finds the office at which the demonstration is being organised and enquires about a hand-loom weavers' contingent. He comes away disappointed. One of the committee thought 'hand loom weyvin had bin snuft eawt sometime sin - I assured him he wur mistaken for he'd a specimen o'th'craft befoor him'.

He makes his way to the rally at Pomona Gardens - where there are several speakers' platforms. He hears Joseph Arch and Tom Halliday, being "doubly repaid for my day's expenses un faggin" by Arch's oratory. At last, he makes his way home, feeling "that day spent wi th' demonstrationists wur one o'th'red letter days o my loife."(100)

What is important about the sketch is his use of the popular character of Bobby Shuttle, representing 'old Lancashire' to elicit sympathy for a modern cause. Staton could have simply written a descriptive account of the day but he very firmly stands on the side of the demonstrators. What he is also expressing, through the often quite detailed accounts of the contingents, is an appeal to working class pride and skill.

Everyone likes to read about themselves and finding a reference, however small, to your union/craft being represented is an affirmation of the importance of your group. This is matched by Staton's care to ensure a good spread of working class occupations in his dialect sketches in Rays Fro' Th' Loominary.

James Haslam wrote as 'Treadles' and 'Buffer Seer' in Clarke's newspapers. His subjects are frequently old weaving characters, such as in the short story "Owd Nick, Th'Weighver". The story is set in the mid-1870s, when a group of hand-loom weavers survived in the 'Tum Fowt' (Tong Fold) area of Bolton:

He wove in a hondloom cellar at th'end of a lung row of heauses. In t'front of these were a batch o'cultivated fields...when Nick were t'best side eaut, I've see him ramble about these owd fields pluckin' daisies, buttercups and meadow-sweets for t'childer reaud abeaut. (101)

The literature of the 'last of the hand-loom weavers' helped perpetuate the 'myth' of the weavers, outlined in Chapter 1. Their survival right up to the end of the nineteenth century in certain areas made them almost living legends. Dialect writers saw them as a tangible link with the pre-factory days, and Clarke held out hopes that a future socialist society would see a return to their apparently idyllic way of life .(102)

Conclusion

The development of dialect literature in the second half of the nineteenth century mirrors in some respects political, social and cultural trends within the Lancashire working class. We should be wary about drawing too close a parallel since most of the writers I have looked at in this chapter had strong individual characteristics which make generalisation dangerous.

The work of Edwin Waugh stands out in the earlier period of dialect writing and the content of his writing - the absence of factory material and the large amount of

material on hand-loom weavers and artisans - poses major problems of explanation when it is remembered that the bulk of his readers were factory workers. Writing in 1898, Allen Clarke was to observe of both Waugh and Brierley:

There is one feature, or lack of feature rather.... neither of them did much, Waugh did a little, to help redress the industrial wrongs which so thickly surrounded them in their day and generation. And neither Waugh or Brierley is much known beyond the factory walls of Lancashire." (103)

Elsewhere, Vicinus points to the frequent use of rural or semi-rural subject matter - Waugh's "Tum Rindle" and "Besom Ben", Brierley's "Weaver of Wellbrook". (104) However, I think she is partly mistaken. Was Waugh appealing to a nostalgic sentimentality within recently urbanised factory workers? Or was he a literary pioneer of 'middle class values', a sort of Smilesian poetic advocate of self- help, thrift and temperance? I would argue that both Waugh, and Brierley, were primarily and self-consciously appealing to a newly urbanised working class which still had strong roots within the hand-loom weaving culture of the Lancashire villages in which both Waugh and Brierley had themselves grown up. The values within these communities were transformed, rather than destroyed, by industrialism. I think it is important to stress that many workers would have perceived these values as being under threat, in the same way that 'dialect' has been seen to be threatened with extinction since Tim Bobbin began writing in the 1740s.

As factory life became the accepted way of life in Lancashire, and memories of hand-loom weaving times faded it became less easy for Waugh and Brierley to continue appealing to the same feelings and sensibilities within the working class as they had done in the 1850s and 1860s. Writers like Staton confidently wrote, in dialect, about factory workers and their struggles. Margaret Lahee wrote sympathetically and with insight about women workers in Rochdale's mills. Waugh and Brierley, however, had got themselves into a groove that they could not escape from: they were seen as the poets of the moors, the 'old times' before the coming of the factories. They kept their

middle class patronage but their appeal to working class readers may have become less direct, though they were still in demand for recitals at social events. Other forms of entertainment like the music hall were using a corrupted form of dialect by the 1870s and 1880s and dialect writers like John Trafford Clegg were bemoaning the death of 'gradely dialect'.

Waugh died in 1890 - the same year that Allen Clarke began his literary career with the launching of the Labour Light. Others like Lahee and Burgess had broken the Waugh-Brierley mould but it was Clarke who made the decisive change. The reasons why he succeeded in developing dialect literature to encompass the struggles of daily life for Lancashire's factory workers are partly personal and partly related to the changed social and political climate in which he was operating. Clarke had a sketchy knowledge of some dialect writers, gleaned from his father's library. He knew Staton best of all, though he had not heard of Waugh or Brierley. He had read a couple of Sam Laycock's poems. He decided, on the advice of his printer, to include a few dialect sketches in his paper. Using many of Staton's techniques as well as his sense of humour, he popularised dialect writing amongst a new generation of industrial workers: using the factory as a key setting. He also 'borrowed' the location for his sketches: 'Tum Fowt' was first adopted by Staton in the his Bowtun Luminary. At first the sketches were simply light relief to the labour movement news, which had the added bonus of making the paper sell. Later he was able to combine humorous dialect sketches with pungent social criticism.

However, it was one thing for Clarke to write socially committed dialect literature; it was another thing getting it published and sold. Clarke was too radical for most conventional publishers of the day. However, he was sufficiently successful with his first publishing ventures to become known as a capable and popular writer. He built up a loyal readership, though initially it was confined to the Bolton area. His success with the Bolton Trotter established him as a writer in demand from many

different papers within the labour movement.

Here is a decisive difference between Clarke and Waugh. Waugh did not have an active, growing political working class movement to relate to in the Lancashire of the late 1850s. Waugh relied on the only form of support that was available - the middle class. Clarke was part of a growing, enthusiastic working class movement which had its own printing presses, newspapers, magazines and readership. Clarke became particularly identified with the Cotton Factory Times whose birth and evolution says so much about the confidence of the late Victorian Lancashire working class - above all, its awareness of a separate identity and pride as a class and as being 'Lancashire'. Clarke, more than anyone, could respond to, and feed that feeling of regional class identity.

Clarke was at the peak of his powers between the mid-1890s and the early 1900s. This was socialism's age of innocence, when left-wing politics resembled a religious crusade and a growing number of working class people were listening to socialist arguments. Clarke could successfully combine his dialect writing with a socialist message, and be listened to. He was as much a child of his times as Waugh was: both exercised commercial judgement as to what their main market - the respectable working class - wanted to read.

Where does all this leave arguments about employer hegemony, raised by Patrick Joyce? I think in both Work, Society, and Politics, and in Visions of the People he stakes too strong a claim for employer hegemony, resting too much on evidence from one particular town, which had its own very distinctive history and traditions, Blackburn, and to a lesser extent Ashton-under-Lyne - which was not a major centre of the industry. However, his stress on the centrality of 'work' in shaping everyday working class culture in late nineteenth century Lancashire seems accurate. In early dialect literature, work is notable by its absence: the factory worker readership of

Waugh and Brierley, arguably, did not want too many reminders of the reality of their daily lives. This changes by the 1890s. The growing predominance of factory work as a theme in late nineteenth century dialect writing confirms Joyce's telling phrase about working 'getting under the skin of life'. I would suggest that a clearer distinction should be made between 'employer' and 'work': the two cannot be treated as twins. It was 'work', and specifically cotton work, which dominated the working class of late nineteenth century Lancashire, and the role of the employer in this relationship was quite complex. In this approach, which squares with Allen Clarke's own comments about the 'factory system' as an impersonal force which holds both 'masters and operatives' under its sway, though with the employers enjoying some tangible benefits from it. It could be argued that the concept of 'hegemony' implies a human agency to exercise it. However, Marx's own analysis of capitalism suggests an impersonal force which both bourgeoisie and proletariat are, in different ways, dominated by. The capitalist class has to constantly invest and expand, or be wiped out by competitors. In the world of late nineteenth century industrial Lancashire it is difficult to identify genuinely 'free' agents who are not caught up in the factory system treadmill.

Joyce's comments on working class 'apartness', Work, Society and Politics are confirmed by the dialect literature of the time; the very use of dialect itself suggesting an inward-looking culture whose boundaries were set both by the limitations of class and geography. The 'dialect writing region' corresponded precisely to the confines of the cotton spinning and weaving areas of Lancashire: Preston was its northernmost limit, Wigan was the westerly extremity, the Pennines formed a natural barrier to the east and Manchester to the south, with the partial exception of Stockport.

There is a weakness, perhaps a matter of degree rather than substance, in Joyce's stress on the importance of regional, opposed to class, identities in his more recent Visions of the People. I would suggest this is a question of emphasis, and in his

legitimate desire to challenge reductionist models based around class, he puts an over-emphasis on identities based on other criteria than class. For example, this position leads him to misconstrue Clarke's poem, "In Praise o'Lancashire", which he uses to illustrate the limits of a class appeal, as we have seen above.

It is the treatment of 'work' which makes the second generation of dialect writers, Clarke, Fitton, William Baron and others stand out so strikingly from Waugh, Brierley, and Laycock. Regardless of the politics of the later writers, they all write about life in the mills and weaving sheds. The dialect writing produced between roughly 1890 and 1914 is an authentic expression of working class life. It does not hark back, by and large, to a romanticised past. It deals with the present. It helps to tell us something about attitudes towards mill work, and towards employers. Writers such as Clarke have an ambiguous attitude toward the 'factory system': in his 'serious' novels, and in his poetry, the picture is unremittingly bleak. In his dialect sketches, which were by far his most popular writings, the approach is quite different. He works on contemporary factory relationships: between spinner and piecers, tacklers and weavers, and provides amusing and close-to-life stories which were read by the very people whom he writes about. While it could be suggested that few people in the spinning room would read, or still less agree, with Clarke's prescriptions for a post-industrial society centred on land-based production, his accounts of 'Bill Spriggs' trying his hand as a tackler, or minding a set of mules, were read and appreciated by thousands.

His descriptions of 'everyday' working life in the weaving sheds and spinning rooms suggest a strong degree of circumscribed control by particular groups of operatives: there were entrenched distinctions related to occupational status which were infused with gender differences. In the spinning room it was 'the minder' who was in control during normal production: the manager, still less the owner (if there was single 'owner') was hardly present, except on special occasions or in emergencies. In the weaving shed, the male 'tackler' exerted considerable power over the predominantly

female weavers, and this is explored in greater depth elsewhere.(107) The Cotton Factory Times also uses dialect, and humour, to show glimpses of everyday life in the mills and sheds which suggest that circumscribed control over the labour process was exerted by particular groups of the 'operatives'.

Notes

1. Allen Clarke Effects of the Factory System London 1899.
2. Gareth Stedman Jones "England's First Proletariat:*Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution*" in New Left Review 90, March-April 1975.
3. See Paul Thompson The Nature of Work London 1983, Keith Grint The Sociology of Work London 1991, and the earlier work of Harry Braverman in Labour and Monopoly Capital New York 1974, which focussed attention on the importance of the labour process, and struggles for control over it. See also Richard Edwards Contested Terrain: the Transformation of the Workplace in the Twentieth Century London 1979.
4. The debate originated in V.I. Lenin Imperialism-the Highest Stage of Capitalism, but re-surfaced in the 1970s in John Foster's Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution London 1974. The thesis rests on capitalism's success in generating 'super profits' from imperialist expansion; these profits are used to buy-off a section of the working class within the imperial heartland who act as the agents of the bourgeoisie within the broader working class, aping their politics, and to an extent, their cultural outlook. For a critique see H.F. Moorhouse "The Marxist Theory of the Labour Aristocracy" Social History 3, No.1, January 1976. N. Kirk The Growth of Working Class Reformism in Mid-Victorian England, London 1985, challenges Foster's thesis from a neo-Marxist stance.
5. Patrick Joyce Work, Society and Politics: The Culture of the Factory in Late-Victorian England Brighton 1980.
6. See A. L. Lloyd Folk-Song in England London 1967.
7. See John Harland (ed.)Songs of the Wilsons Manchester 1866 and Brian Hollingworth Songs of the People Manchester 1977.
8. The literature on the hand-loom weavers is surprisingly thin. Duncan Bythell's Handloom Weavers London 1969 was the only full-length account until the recent publication of J.G. Timmins The Last Shift, Manchester 1993. E.P. Thompson The Making of the English Working Class London 1963, has a substantial section on them.
9. Samuel Bamford - Early Days London 1849, and Passages in the Life of a Radical Heywood 1839-1841 also John Higson Historical and Descriptive Notices of Droylsden Droylsden 1859.
10. John Harland and T.T. Wilkinson Ballads and Songs of Lancashire 2nd ed. Manchester 1878 p.147.
11. *ibid.*
12. Harland and Wilkinson *op. cit* p.188
13. Quoted in M. Jenkins The General Strike of 1842, London 1976 p.64.
14. Y. Kovalev Chartist Literature Moscow 1956 p.91.

15. Martha Vicinus The Industrial Muse London 1974 p.191.
16. Edwin Waugh Lancashire Sketches Volume 1 Manchester n.d c 1892
17. Martha Vicinus Edwin Waugh: The Ambiguities of Self-Help, Littleborough 1984.
18. Edwin Waugh Poems and Songs, 2nd series, Oldham 1889, p.97.
19. Edwin Waugh Poems and Songs, 1st series, Manchester n.d, c.1882 p.30.
20. *ibid* p.62.
21. in Edwin Waugh Tufts of Heather Vol. 1 Manchester n.d. c 1893 p.195.
22. See B. Hollingworth "Two Unpublished Poems of Edwin Waugh" in Journal of the Lancashire Dialect Society No. 21 1985.
23. Waugh (1889) *op.cit* p.121.
24. Samuel Laycock Warblins' Fro' An' Owd Songster Oldham 1893 p.127.
25. *ibid* p.197.
26. See Ben Brierley Home Memories and Recollections Manchester 1886.
27. Ben Brierley Spring Blossoms and Autumn Leaves Manchester 1893 p.128.
28. Bowtun Loominary from July 26 1856.
29. J.T. Staton Rays Fro' Th'Loominary Manchester n.d. c 1866.
30. Th'Lond-Tillers' Lock-Eawt: Billy Shuttle Wi'Th'Demonstrationists Manchester 1874.
31. William Billington Sheen and Shade Blackburn 1861 p.106.
32. *ibid* p.118.
33. William Billington Lancashire Songs with other Poems and Sketches Blackburn 1883 p.14.
34. Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly (hereafter TANW) April 2 1904.
35. Labour Light May 23 1890.
36. "Amongst the Agitators" in TANW August 26 1905.
37. Allen Clarke Voices Manchester 1896 p. 34.
38. Allen Clarke The Knobstick Manchester 1893 p.108.
39. *ibid* p.99.
40. Clarke (1899) *op. cit* pp 146-148.
41. *ibid.* p.148

42. Allen Clarke Lancashire Lasses and Lads Manchester 1906 p.11.
43. *ibid* p. 215.
44. See "Amongst the Agitators" above, which ran between May 20 1905 and September 23 1905. Also in discussion with Clarke's children, Charles Clarke and Dorothy Dewhurst in Blackpool, 1985.
45. Both sketches were first published c 1893 as part of the Tum Fowt Sketches. "Bill Spriggs as a Minder" was reprinted in Paul Salveson (ed.) Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Scrapbook Bolton 1985 p.5.
46. See Paul Salveson "Back to the Land: The Daisy Colony Experiment of 1905" in North West Labour History 1985.
47. Sam Fitton "Six o'Clock i'th'Morn" undated cutting from Cotton Factory Times in Cassidy Collection, Stalybridge Library. The selection of Fitton's poetry published in Gradely Lancashire Stalybridge 1929, edited by Ammon Wrigley, is highly unrepresentative of Fitton's writing, and Wrigley clearly exercised his own personal preferences in the choice of material. Fitton's work lies hidden away in the Cotton Factory Times and the local press of Oldham and Shaw.
48. These novels were serialised in Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly. "Tamsie: A Tale of a Hatting Town" ran from March 4 1899; "The Conductor's Sweetheart" ran from November 17 1900. An obituary of Plant appeared in The Record June 1925, p.9.
49. TANW November 14 1903.
50. Vicinus (1974) *op.cit* p. 191.
51. "Mirth in the Mill" ran regularly in the Cotton Factory Times during the 1920s and early 1930s.
52. Cotton Factory Times January 23 1920.
53. "Bill Spriggs as a Minder" in Salveson (1985) *op. cit* pp. 5-10.
54. "Bill Spriggs as a Tackler" was published many times, including in Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Readings Blackpool 1923. In "The Bully of Burlow's Shed", in Tales That Ought To Be Told, Bolton 1896, (reprinted in P. Salveson ed. Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Scrapbook Bolton 1986) the tone is more melodramatic. However, the bullying tackler is shown as an exception to the norm, rather than being typical.
55. Patrick Joyce Work, Society and Politics Brighton 1980 p. xv.
56. For a selection of 'work' postcards, see Allen Clarke Effects of the Factory System, ed. P. Salveson, Littleborough 1985.
57. The Knobstick was published in book form in 1893, but was serialised in the Bolton Trotter during 1892. The events described in the novel were based around the Bolton Engineers' Strike of 1887. See Mary Ashraf Lecture Notes on "The Novel of Engineers and Textile Workers", University of Halle 1976.
58. Waugh (1892) *op.cit* p.107.
59. Laycock *op. cit* p.209.

60. *ibid* p.302.
61. Ben Brierley "The Battle of Langley Heights" in The Chronicles of Waverlow Manchester 1885 p.50.
62. Staton may have originated the Lancashire habit, continued by Allen Clarke, of changing the name of his newspapers with bewildering regularity. His famous Loominary started life as The Bowtun Luminary un Tum Fowt Telegraph. It became Th'Bowtun Loominary un Tum Fowt Telegraph, then Th'Bowtun Loominary, Tum Fowt Telegraph, un Blegburn Lanterun. For a short time it was Th'Bowtun Loominary, Tum Fowt telegraph, un Lankishire Lookin Glass. After closing down in the early months of the Cotton Famine, it re-emerged in 1863 as The Lankishire Loominary un Wickly Lookin Glass.
63. Bowtun Loominary April 1 1854.
64. Bowtun Loominary July 26 1856.
65. Billington (1883) *op.cit* p.143.
66. Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Annual 1923 pp.13-4.
67. Patrick Joyce Visions of the People p.290.
68. The poem appeared in Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Annual for 1896, and went through several revisions during Clarke's lifetime.
69. TANW May 20 1905. See Appendix 23 for full version.
70. TANW January 6 1900. Appendix 24 for full letter.
71. For an account of the strike, see Zoe Munby "The Sunnyside Mills Dispute 1905-6" in P. Salveson (ed.) Bolton People's History Bolton 1985.
72. Allen Clarke "The Cotton Operatives and Socialism" Labour Prophet March 1897.
73. TANW April 7 1906.
74. Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Annual 1935 p.40.
75. John Foster Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution London 1974.
76. Clarke (1899) *op.cit* p.32.
77. John Mason "Cotton Spinning in the Industrial Revolution" in A. Fowler and T. Wyke (ed.) The Barefoot Aristocrats Littleborough 1987.
78. J.T. Staton Rays Fro'Th'Loominary Manchester c.1866 p.38.
79. Billington (1883) *op.cit* p.18.
80. Ruth and Edmund Frow The Half-Time System in Education Manchester 1970.
81. Waugh (1889) *op.cit* p.121.
82. Joseph Burgess "There's Nowt Loike Spinnin' Shoddy" was published in Burgess' Oldham Operative c 1884, and republished in J. Burgess A Potential

Poet? Ilford 1927 pp 58-60.

83. *ibid.* p.28.
84. Clarke's election address, in dialect, is reproduced in P. Salveson (ed) Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Scrapbook Bolton 1985 p. 41.
85. Allen Clarke (1896) *op.cit.* p.24.
86. Undated cutting in Cassidy Collection, Stalybridge Public Library.
87. Teddy Ashton's Journal January 23 1897.
88. R. and E. Frow (1970) *op.cit* p.75.
89. Farnie *op.cit* p.254.
90. G. von Schulze-Gaevernitz The Cotton Trade in England and on the Continent London 1895 pp. 104-6.
91. Richard Marsden Cotton Weaving London 1895 p.232.
92. G.Tupling Economic History of Rossendale Manchester 1927. Zoe Munby, unpublished Ph.D thesis, notes that there were still a handful of hand-loom weavers working in Macclesfield as late as the 1970s! Also E.G. Abram "The Last Lancashire Handloom Weavers" Leisure Hour November 1895. Geoffrey Timmins' The Last Shift, Manchester 1993, was published after most of the work on this chapter was finished, but reference is made here to it for the sake of completion.
93. James Swindlehurst Summer Evenings With Old Weavers Manchester n.d. c 1880.
94. in Clarke "Amongst the Agitators" TANW June 10 1905.
95. See short biography of Haslam "From Jennygate to Journalism" in Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Annual 1919.
96. James Haslam The Handloom Weaver's Daughter London 1908. It was first published in TANW as "The Mill on the Moor", during 1897.
97. Sim Schofield Short Stories About Failsworth Folk Blackpool 1905 p.178.
98. J.T. Staton (1874) *op cit* p.3.
99. *ibid* p.7.
100. *ibid* p.15.
101. *ibid* p.16.
102. in Teddy Ashton's Journal September 19 1896.
103. TANW June 25 1904.
104. Vicinus (1974) *op. cit* p.208.
105. Joyce (1991) *op. cit* p.290.

106. *ibid* p.258.

107. See Chapter 10 "Women" especially pp 430-3.

Chapter 8

A Phase of Distress: The Cotton Famine

The years of the Cotton Famine, between 1861 and 1865, burnt themselves deeply into the history of Lancashire, and the collective memory of its people. Although the cotton industry was the subject of frequent slumps, the length and severity of social distress in the 'Famine' years was exceptional, with almost half a million textile workers in receipt of relief in December 1862, or 24% of the entire population of the cotton manufacturing district. This chapter will look at the dialect literature of the period, and subsequent dialect writing on the Famine, in the context of more recent debates on the period, outlined below. It will go on to look at the writings of major figures such as Laycock, Waugh, and Billington, and the journalism of J.T. Staton, together with some lesser known poets including Joseph Ramsbottom. The conclusion will address the themes of debate over the Famine to assess whether the dialect writing helps to form any clearer picture of how working class Lancastrians responded to the crisis.

There are a number of aspects of the Famine which have been subject to debate. These include, firstly, the actual reasons for the Famine. Was it the result purely of a result of shortage of American cotton? Or was it more an example of a cyclical slump, compounded by the effects of the American war? Walton, supported by evidence from Famine, puts the period into a wider chronological perspective:

The 'Cotton Famine' itself was part of a cyclical slump whose causes were disguised by the American Civil War blockade, and there were 'major cyclical depressions' in 1877-9, 1884-5 and 1891-3, as well as less dramatic setbacks later. (1)

Secondly, to what extent did the Lancashire cotton workers support the

Northern cause in the Civil War? The traditional interpretations, represented by writers like Broadbridge (2) have been challenged by Mary Ellison, who presents evidence which suggests that support for the two sides was more evenly spread, and that support for the Southern Confederacy was particularly strong in cotton towns like Oldham. (3) Patrick Joyce comments that:

Far from a vindication of Radical faith in the operative class, a product of the mythology and condescension of latterday Manchester Liberalism....it is apparent that the operatives' response was dictated largely by the pattern of economic distress, and that support for the South against the hypocrisy of the North was at least as common as pro-North feeling. (4)

Thirdly, the period was viewed by several contemporary writers as an example of how the working class had learnt to accept temporary hardships and bow down before the inexorable workings of political economy (5). D.S.A. Farnie has written:

The unemployed bore their affliction with the phlegm of the Saxon and the stoicism of the peasant and earned lavish praise for their pacific and law-abiding discipline. (6)

Farnie goes on to question the extent of suffering during the period, and suggests it actually had some positive results, in so far as it strengthened family structures. Other writers suggested that the establishment of working class savings clubs gave working people 'something to fall back on' which carried them through the worst of the Famine years. (7) It was suggested that the period saw few examples of class conflict, and the gratitude of middle class philanthropists was gratefully accepted. The experience was seen to mark a watershed in the adoption by large sections of the Lancashire working class of 'middle class values'.

Patrick Joyce makes the point that the Famine years helped to mould a pattern of employer paternalism: generally, employers were not well-represented on local relief committees, so did not encounter some of the hostility of the recipients. Joyce suggests that employers were initially slow off the mark to help the unemployed, but

progressively came to recognise a social obligation reflected through a sense of emergent paternalism, particularly among larger employers.

Each of these issues, the causes of the war, pro-Northern or Southern sentiment, and employer paternalism and its extent surfaces in the dialect literature of the time. The writings of Samuel Laycock, Joseph Ramsbottom, William Billington, and other poets, if read critically, can provide useful insights into how working class people responded to the crisis situation rather than be used to add 'colour' to accounts of the Famine, as has been the case hitherto.

Edwin Waugh wrote little poetry on the Famine, but his journalistic investigations into 'the condition of Lancashire' at the time form a valuable source. (9) The writing of James Taylor Staton in his Lankshire Loominary (10) is also an important and little-used source of material.

In addition to the contemporary views expressed by the above writers, the works of later writers, above all Allen Clarke (11), are important for the creation of the 'myth' of the Famine, that all Lancashire workers supported the Northern cause. In this sense, whether they did or not becomes secondary. The function of the myth was to serve the political agenda of a later period, whether it was Radical Liberalism in the 1880s, or socialism in the 1890s and early 1900s.

What *were* the 'facts of the Cotton Famine'? (12). At the height of the distress, November to December 1862, 247,230 operatives were out of work, and 165,000 were on short time (13). However, the extent of the crisis varied from town to town, reflecting the localised nature of the industry in Lancashire. Towns like Oldham, which were almost wholly dependent on American cotton, suffered considerably more than Bolton, which relied more on Egyptian cotton and had a separate industrial base in engineering, and in bleaching (14). Blackburn was more dependent on cotton, and even its engineering industry was based on textiles. Gourlay's History of the Distress in

Blackburn showed that 89% of the working population were dependent on either cotton or engineering for their livelihood. In neighbouring Darwen, at the end of December 1862, out of 6297 workers normally employed in cotton, 1674 were on short time, and 1325 were unemployed. (15). Large numbers of workers were also laid off in local collieries and print works, resulting in nearly half of Darwen's work force being either out of work, or on short time, illustrating the dependence of the economy as a whole on cotton (16).

The response of many cotton workers was to emigrate. According to Farnie, 50,000 emigrated, to America, Australia, New Zealand, and elsewhere, representing 13% of the workforce in cotton manufacturing (17).

The numerous histories of co-operative societies give some indication of the extent to which workers' savings helped 'tide them over'. The author of the Oldham Equitable Society's history commented:

The Co-operative Societies, as a matter of course, suffered greatly... Their anxiety was acute, their burden heavy. The experience of Oldham was that of other towns depending upon the import of cotton for their existence. Those who had money invested withdrew the greater part of it for their present exigencies. (18).

However, the Bolton society managed to weather the storm more successfully. Its historian commented that while the Rochdale society's sales fell by one fifth, and capital by one tenth in 1862, the Bolton society's receipts hardly declined at all. (19). In Burnley, £4000 out of a total savings of £10,000 was withdrawn from the Post Office Savings Bank, and a further £8000 from the Burnley Savings Bank (20).

The Middle Class to the Rescue

It was estimated that by December 1862, almost half a million textile workers

were receiving some form of relief, or 24% of the total population of the districts concerned. In some towns, such as Ashton and Preston, the proportion out of work was even higher. Those workers who were able to stay in work suffered wage reductions, longer hours and an increase in fines for faults in cloth. The relief operation mounted was an example of middle class 'philanthropy' on a massive scale. In each town relief committees were organised, often with local clergymen, and employers and their families, playing a major role. The Central Relief Committee was headed by Lord Derby, and the Lord Mayor of London also organised a relief fund which raised tens of thousands of pounds. The 'working classes' suffering in the Famine were seen, not as idlers, but 'respectable' workmen who had been victims of a catastrophe beyond anyone's control. Hence, charity was deserved, though the charity was bestowed on the givers' terms. In many cases a basic amount of around 2s per adult was given, but this was often dependent on 'useful work'. Stanley Broadbridge describes the situation in Blackburn, based on a Factory inspector's report:

In Blackburn, according to the factory inspector Mr. Redgrave, the men were tried at all kinds of labour in the open-air. They dug deep into a heavy clay soil, they did drainage work, broke stones, built roads, made excavations for streets and for canals up to a depth of twenty feet.(21)

As well as getting a source of cheap labour for public works, the Relief Committees used the crisis as a means of 'educating' the working classes. Staff for the 'adult schools' were recruited from middle class sources on a paid or voluntary basis, with grants of £20 for every 150 'pupils'. John Watts, in Facts of the Cotton Famine, noted the 'safety valve' function of the classes.

By these means the minds of the adult pupils were kept occupied with disquisitions on popular science, or with social topics; or they were recreated with music and recitations, and thus kept from brooding on their own misfortunes.(22)

While men were being taught science, numeracy, and literacy subjects, women were mainly applied to sewing work and by January 1863 23,000 women and girls

were attending such classes. Mrs Ellen Barlee, a middle class philanthropist from London, described one school in Stockport:

I had heard and read much of the roughness of the factory hands, and was therefore agreeably pleased to find them far superior to any ideas I had formed. They are more capable in domestic, feminine acquirements than the world gives them credit for... The workers are paid 2s a week, and work for three days. In some of the districts soup is given them once a week.(23)

The women had the option of buying their products 'at cost', or the goods were sold to the public. As well as providing working class women with the skills of Victorian middle class womanhood, the Relief Committees gained additional income from their efforts. As a report to the Home Secretary noted:

It is a matter of the greatest gratification that so many will possess for the future in their homes a greater power for increasing their domestic comfort and of economising in their household expenses.(24)

Many members of the middle class saw the Cotton Famine as an almost heaven-sent opportunity to instill their values into the working class. The relief committees, adult schools, and sewing classes brought the middle and working class into much closer social contact than was normally the case when the mills were working.

Edwin Waugh Among the Lancashire Factory Workers

Edwin Waugh's account of life during the Cotton Famine, for Lancashire cotton workers, was commissioned by the Manchester Examiner and Times and later published in book form as Home Life of the Lancashire Factory Folk During the Cotton Famine, by John Heywood. These accounts are of considerable interest both as contemporary descriptions of the domestic life of the working class in the famine, but also for the light they shed on Waugh's own ideological position, and his use of dialect. His account is in standard English, and the dialogue of his characters in the local dialect

of the places he visited - Blackburn, Preston and Wigan. This use of language emphasises the social differences between Waugh, writing for a Liberal middle class newspaper, and the subjects of his writing. His image of being a homespun, down-to-earth countryman is replaced by that of the earnest, albeit sympathetic, outside observer. His escorts during his visits tend to be of a higher social status than the unemployed workers, usually members of the relief committees, or the Board of Guardians, rather than representatives of the workers themselves, such as union officials or community figures. He is clearly writing for a different type of reader from the one who devoured his dialect sketches and poems during the factory lunch break, or at working class social events. The direction of his writing is towards the educated, middle class Liberal whom Waugh was anxious to convince that the Lancashire workers were basically decent and respectable men and women who needed all the help they could get - and, in time, greater political rights.

One of his first descriptions is of a local quarry where many out-of-work textile workers were employed as stone-breakers:

I got into talk with a quiet, hardy-looking man, dressed in a soil-stained corduroy. He was a kind of overlooker. He told me that there were from eighty to ninety factory hands employed in that quarry. "But," said he, "it varies a bit, yo known. Some on 'em gets knocked up neaw an' then, and they han to stop awhoam a day or two; an' some on'em connot ston gettin' weet through - it mays 'em ill..... We'n a deal o'bother wi 'em abeawt bein' paid for weet days, when they couldn't wortch... at last th'Board saddle't that they mut be paid for weet an' dry - an'there's bin quietness sin.(25)

This exchange is of some interest in that it brings out the severe jolt to workers who had experienced "leet wark, an' a warm place to wortch in" and who now found themselves doing heavy, out-door labour. The trade unionism of the cotton workers did not disappear when they became out of work, for as the account shows, they were prepared to 'cause bother' when they felt they were being unfairly treated - in this case, not being paid when they were rained off. Waugh also describes, censoriously, bricklayers going on strike in the town, and weavers refusing to go on to three, instead of

two looms - with a reduction of price per piece. In Waugh's words, "some of the old blindness lingers amongst them".(26) During Waugh's visit to Preston, he also encountered strong feelings amongst textile workers labouring in a stone yard, who demonstrated their poverty - and anger - to Waugh:

"Look at these honds!" cried another; "W'n they ever be fit to go to th'factory wi' again?" Others turned up the soles of their battered shoon, to show their cut and stockingless feet"(27)

Apparently, the men Waugh spoke to had been under the impression that their superintendent, 'Radical Jack' had been telling visitors they were idle, and the men told Waugh that "if he ever tow'd ony moor lies abeawt 'em, they'd fling him into th'cut."

As Waugh was walking away from the scene, he passed "three old Irishwomen... watching the men work inside." He records one of them saying:

"Thim guardians is the awfulest set o'men in the world! A man had better be transpoorted than come under them. An' thin, they'll try you, an' try you, as if yo was goin' to be hanged."

Waugh commented:

The poor old soul had evidently only a narrow view of the necessities and difficulties which beset the labours of the Board of Guardians at a time like this.(28)

Yet Waugh's own descriptions of the Guardians interviewing applicants for relief suggests that the woman's opinions were not far off the mark. He attended a hearing of the Blackburn Guardians, and reported thus:

A clean old woman came up, with a snow-white night-cap on her head. "Well Mary, what do you want?"

"Aw could like yo to gi mo a bit o'sommat Mr.Eccles, for aw need it."

"Well, but you've some lodgers haen't you, Mary?"

"Yigh; aw've three."

"Well; what do they pay you?"

"They pay'n mo nought. They'n no wark - an' one connot turn eawt."

This was all quite true.

"Well, but you live with your son don't you?" continued the chairman.

"Nay", replied the old woman, "he lives wi' me; and' he's eawt o'wark too. Aw could like yo to do a bit for us. We're hard put to't."

"Don't you think she should be better in the workhouse?" said one of the guardians.

"Oh no," replied another, "don't send th'owd woman there. Let her keep her own little place if she can." (29)

Waugh meets several out of work cotton workers who prefer to starve rather than degrade themselves before the Board. During Waugh's visit to Wigan he meets with an old 'beamer' who has been out of work for many months. He is asked how he manages to 'make do':

"Well, aw can hardly tell - aw'll be sunken if aw can tell. It's very thin pikein' but very little does for me, an' aw've nought but musel'. Yo see'n aw get a bit of a job neaw an' then, an' aw scrat among th'rook like an owd hen. But aw'll tell yo' one thing, aw'll not go up yon, if aw con help it, aw'll not ("Up Yon" meant to the Board of Guardians - PS) "Eh, now" said the woman of the house, "aw never seed sich a mon as him i'my life. See yo, he'll sit an' clem fro mornin' to neet afore he'll ax oather relief folk or onybody else for a bite."(30)

In another house further down the street he meets a weaver who tells Waugh that "we'n bin force't to take relief at last", as a result of severe poverty, and the weaver's rheumatism. Waugh commented on the remarkable cleanliness of this, and other houses he visited which were the scenes of horrendous hardship:

I have seen many such places on my wanderings during these hard days - cottages where all was so sweet and orderly, both in person and habitation, that, but for the funereal stillness which sat on hunger-nipt faces, a stranger would have hardly dreamt that the people dwelling there were undergoing any uncommon privation.(31)

In Waugh's descriptions of working class life during the famine, the question of the war itself only comes up occasionally. An unemployed male weaver in Wigan asks Waugh how long the war will last:

"When is this war to end, thinken yo?"

"Nay, that's a very hard thing to tell."

"Well, we mun grin an' abide till it's o'er aw guess. It's a mad mak o'wark. But it'll happen turn up for best i'th end ov o'." (32)

The sense of resignation and helplessness in the face of world events comes over very powerfully in Waugh's writings. The out-of-work cotton operatives could take action over 'wet money', but the wider issues of the American Civil War and how the Famine was manipulated by some to make huge profits, and the ideological offensive mounted through the adult schools - goes without remark. Waugh is clearly expressing a middle class viewpoint about the Famine - the charitable works of the Relief Committees are held up as models of humanitarianism, and the role of the adult schools and sewing classes is approved without qualification. Indeed Waugh sees the Famine as demonstrating a 'new realism' amongst the working class, where they recognise the unity of interests between employer and worker, and appreciate the 'laws' of political economy. As a radical Liberal Waugh sees advantages for the working class - their new found respectability, evidenced by their quietude during the Famine, is proof of their suitability to vote and hold political office. The following scene finds Waugh walking through Preston with Jackson, a labour master on the public works schemes:

Jackson and I both remembered something of the troubles of the cotton manufacture of the past. We had seen something of the 'shuttle-gatherings', the 'plug drawings', the wild starvation riots, and strikes of days gone by; and he agreed with me that one reason for their difference of demeanour during the present trying circumstances lies in their increasing intelligence... The working men have a better insight into the real causes of trade panics than they used to have; and both masters and men feel more every day that their fortunes are naturally bound together for good or evil; and if the working men of Lancashire continue to struggle through the present trying pass of their lives with the brave patience they have shown hitherto, they will have done more to defeat the arguments of those who hold them unfit for political power than the finest eloquence of their best friends could have done in the same time.(33)

This is the prevalent ideological theme of relations between working class and middle class during the Cotton Famine: that, in their mutual adversity, came a recognition of joint interests. In exchange for behaving themselves, political concessions on the franchise could, and should, be made. It has been argued strongly elsewhere that far from suffering together, a section of the middle class did well out of the crisis, and extracted every last ounce of flesh from their own workers - for instance, by continuing to insist their employees paid rent on their cottages owned by the firm, or by extracting

it from their pay at high rates when they resumed work.(34) The Central Relief Committee insisted that "no portion of the relief afforded must, in any case, be granted for the payment of rent".(35) Waugh mentions several cases where families had to 'flit' to cheaper accommodation, or were facing eviction; however he does not give any reason other than the obvious poverty the tenants were in.

There were arguments over how relief was administered; in some areas the committees discriminated against the co-operative stores in favour of private traders. In Haslingden, for example, the relief committee over-stamped their relief tickets with the words "This ticket is not available at co-operative stores".(36) For all Waugh's Liberalism this goes un-mentioned, despite the large role the co-op played in his own town of Rochdale. It was here that the Board of Guardians imposed oakum picking as a 'labour test' for those applying for relief, to the outrage of Thomas Livsey, the ex-Chartist and radical Liberal who was well known to Waugh.(37)

The 'truths' of economics which Waugh speaks of found expression in a major re-structuring of the cotton industry during the famine, and Marx in Capital, Volume 1, gave several instances, based on factory inspectors' reports, of how Lancashire manufacturers were using the crisis to increase productivity by thinning-out labour and making technical improvements to the machinery.

The following report is from Gilmour's, a Manchester spinning firm:

In our blowing room department we consider our expense with new machinery is fully one third less in wages and hands... in the jack-frame and drawing-room, about one third less in expense, and likewise one-third in hands..But this is not all, when our yarn goes to the manufacturers, it is so much better by the application of new machinery, that they will produce a greater quantity of cloth, and cheaper than the yarn produced by old machinery.(38)

Marx noted that following the end of the Famine, and the ensuing boom, the number of spindles increased by over a million and a half, though the number of

workers decreased by around 50,000.(39)

Within the working class, it would be clear to many that these developments were taking place, and that while the cotton employers were on the one hand sending their wives and daughters to do charity, on the other they were using the crisis to shed labour and re-equip for a boom that would follow the Famine. Also, the considerable opposition to Britain's tacit support for the Southern states, and any working class support for the emancipation of the American blacks, is ignored. There is no doubt that the issue of support for Lincoln was a highly complex matter, with a number of differing positions within the working class movement ranging from support for Lincoln, through to suspicion and even hostility towards the way the North was using the slavery question in an opportunist way, with support for the South. Yet none of this finds any echo in Waugh's comments. What is found in his 'Cotton Famine' journalism is a celebration of working class decency and pride in the face of adversity and his only prescription is to 'bide awhile' and wait for better times. His song "Tickle Times" encapsulates many of the themes running through his prose:

But, when a mon's honestly willin',
An' never a stroke to be had,
An' clemmin' for want of a shillin'
- No wonder 'at he should be sad...

Waugh points out that those suffering unemployment are 'honestly unemployed', not scroungers. Yet for all the hardships, Waugh suggests, money is not everything:

There's danger i'every station -
i'th' palace as much as in t'cot;
There's hanker i'every condition,
An' canker i'every lot.

The song ends with the message that, out of adversity, something positive may appear and, however poor we may be, the pleasures of music - and nature - are still ours:

But, as pleasure's sometimes a misfortin',
An' trouble sometimes a good thing,
'though we'n livin' o'th'floor, same as layrocks,

We'n go up, like layrocks, to sing.(40)

Waugh's writings on the Cotton Famine give us an important first-hand picture of working class life, particularly in the home, during the Cotton Famine. One of its strengths is that he sees the 'ordinary' out-of-work cotton operatives and their families, rather than the spectacular and well-documented Stalybridge Riots, mass meetings over the Civil War and so on. Yet one has to ask how partial a picture he paints; clearly, in his own 'asides' on employer-worker co-operation, he has his own ideological motives in presenting a picture of working class respectability surviving, and even being strengthened in the face of adversity. If the ruling classes could only realize it, we hear Waugh suggesting, the working class would be fit to hold political power without the least threat to crown or constitution. The work of other Lancashire writers in this period will help us to assess whether this was purely Waugh's personal ideas, or part of a wider attempt to 'prove' how respectable the working class really were.

J.T. Staton and the Lancashire Loominary ; the American Civil War

Staton was pre-eminently a Bolton writer, and wrote primarily for a Bolton working class readership. In his paper, some of the political arguments over the American civil war come out much more strongly than in most other dialect writing, reflecting Staton's own radical background and beliefs. Staton however, was far from being an uncritical admirer of the Northern cause, though he was highly critical of British government policy and its hypocritical policy of 'non- intervention':

Fro th'beginnin oth Merriky war "nonintervenshun" has bin eawr universal cry. In perliment un eawt o'perliment, at public meetins un proivate gatherins... one doctrine has bin laid deawn, un declared to be orthodox an safe, un that is non-intervenshun.(41)

But for all that, Staton points out the 'two camps' which are actively supporting one side or the other:

We've a "Union un Emancipashun Society", that sticks up lustily for th'North,

glorifies its policy, un does its very best to show that th'Federals are a tip top lot o politishuns, paytriot, fillosophers, un statesmen, un rails at th'Confederates as a wicked, mon-enslavin, ungodly pack o'rebels...

Then, on th'other hond, we've an associashun for promotin an obtainin a recognishun oth independence oth Southern States, whose active bizness it is to make it appear that if th'Confederates insult un degrade humanity by mekkin slaves o'men un wimmin... th'Northerners are not, truly speighkin, a jot moor kind un Christian - loike to th'owners o'black skins.(42)

Throughout the article Staton remains objective and even-handed in his points. Whilst both sides have strong arguments, he seems to be saying, the fact that they are waging one of the bloodiest wars in history to put their case forward suggests both sides have a lot to answer for:

Their lessons have bin moor like those men who gloried in a good row un a up-un-deawn feight... crackt yed, black een, un bloody noses have figgurt as trophies oth triumph ov peace principles. (43)

In the following week's issue Staton deals once more with "Th'Spouters on th' Merriky Question" and maintains his non-commitment whilst attacking some of the tricks being used by the Federal side to gain support. In particular, he points out the bogus credentials of certain 'freed slaves' who are touring the country to gain support for the North, and apparently doing quite well out of it. He points to the case of 'Massa Pompey', one of the freed slaves touring the meeting halls. Staton tells his readers, "aw wur summat taen when aw discovert him to be a colort fizzishun ut awd seen un stood harkenin to ith Merkit-Place, Durham, ith Autumn uv 1861."(44) Staton comments that 'Massa Pompey' must have discovered that "th'profeshun uv a runaway slave wur a better payin' bizness". He also mentions another 'runaway' who used to speak at Victoria Bridge, Manchester, in support of the Northern cause. On one occasion his speech led to a full scale riot as supporters of North and South battled it out, "a regilar battle uv Rap-un-herd-Knock", as he describes it:

Th'Federal party made a rattlin' charge at th'Confederates, who retreated in owt but good order as fur as th'fish shops at th'Sawfurt side oth bridge... a stond wur made here by several, un as monny went deawn, not bein able to stond, for weighty reasons... Wot becom oth Black Demosthenes is moor than aw con tell. Praps he hurried off to th'general o some other divishun to get up reserves.(45)

Here, Staton pokes fun at the enthusiasm in which both sides were prepared to knock each other about in what is clearly shown as someone else's war. However, on the subject of slavery, Staton is quite unequivocal. Writing the following year, when the war is nearing its end, Staton attacks slavery and racism in ringing terms. However, he questions the honesty of the Federals in their up-holding of 'black rights':

Slavery is, undeawbtedly, a inhuman institushun. Some foak try to defend it, uv course, un to prove that blacks are naturally an inferior order o beens, gradely incloined to be lazy, un only to be kept at wark bi th'terrors oth lash. But, aw thir attempts are, in eawr opinion, complete failures; they're reosinin begins wi a lie, un eends wi a tirade uv assumpshun... Still, it may be axt whether sitch a war as is neaw gooin on in America is rashunal way o tryin to upset slavery; whether, in fact, it's loikely to succeed.(46)

Staton continues to question the North's commitment to anti-slavery in an extended editorial suggesting that before the war the Northerners treated 'their' blacks as badly as the Southern planters:

Th'Northerners are not, truly speighkin, a jot mooar kind un Christian-like to th'owners o'black skins... they'n help'd to put theer cheeons on, un rivit um, un have trated um as a very inferior order ov human beins... their newly awakent sympathy un cry for emancipashun is nobbut a roar uv empty seaud to humbug th'world wi.(47)

Some months later he returned to the subject, following a public meeting in Manchester addressed by a 'Mestur Sooart'. Staton quotes favourably from his speech, suggesting that the slavery issue has been introduced solely to aid the military campaign, and not from any desire to "put th'divvilish system deawn". The suggestion is made that if peace was concluded the following week, slavery would be forgotten about for a long time to come, given the war-weariness of the American people. The real issue of the war then is not slavery, but the retention of the Union:

Anyheaw, it's declared, very emphatically, that th'aboliton o'slavery is not, un never wur, one oth objects oth war; that fro th'fust, it's object has bin solely to restore th'union. Any appeal to eawr sympathies, then, i future mun be put on its reet honest basis.(48)

If Staton refuses to support the Federal cause, suggesting that they are attempting to

trick people by building up the slavery issue, he is far from being a supporter of the slave holding South. His attitude is that the slaves are being used as pawns in a war which should be settled by compromise, not cannon-fire.

During the period of the Cotton Famine, from the re-launch of the old Bowtun Luminary (which closed in 1862), as the Lankishire Loominary on October 3rd 1863, several other poems, mostly in dialect, appeared which touched on aspects of the Cotton Famine, mostly by little known or sometime anonymous writers. These, and the poems of Joseph Ramsbottom which were also serialised in the Loominary, will be discussed later.

Samuel Laycock - 'Laureate of the Cotton Famine'

Laycock wrote twelve songs during the Famine period, which were published in the local, North Cheshire area press (49) and also as broadsheets.(50) Laycock was working as a clothlooker in the Stalybridge area when he himself was thrown out of work in 1862. Many of the songs he wrote during this time were, in the words of George Milner, "learnt by heart and sung by the lads and lasses" in the streets of Stalybridge. (51) Some of these songs are still popular in Lancashire dialect circles today, particularly his "Welcome Bonny Brid" a father's greeting to his new born child, (reproduced in Appendix 11) and "Th'Shurat Weaver's Song", about the soul-destroying labour of trying to weave the low-quality Indian cotton which was substituted for American staples.

The main themes of "Welcome, Bonny Brid" are the hard times families were enduring, and the extra suffering a new member of the family would bring. For all that, the baby is welcome:

Tha'rt welcome, littly bonny brid,
But shouldn't ha' come just when tha did;
Toimes are bad.
We're short o'pobbies for eawr Joe,
But that, of course, tha didn't know,
Did ta, lad?

The song is simple, and touching; it avoids some of the worst excesses of sentimentality which characterises some dialect poetry in this period. As well as pointing out the hardships of the present day, he notes that suffering has been the lot of previous generations of working class families:

Aw've often yeard mi fayther tell,
'At when aw coom i'th'world misel'
Trade wur slack;
And neaw it's hard wark pooin' throo -
But aw munno fear thee - iv aw do
Tha'll go back.

The combination of humour with the story of real poverty, felt by many of the song's audience, gives the clue to its popularity. The song clearly exalts working class pride and determination to see the period through, in the hope that a better time for the children will come:

We've nobbut gotten coarsish fare,
But, eawt o'this tha'll get thi share,
Never fear.
Aw hope tha'll never want a meal
But allus fill tha bally weel
While tha'rt here. (52)

The song identifies with its audience, through the persona of the father. Undoubtedly, many workers would have found themselves in a similar situation, and the song helps strengthen their own resolve to 'cope'. There is no 'moral lesson' in the song other than a sympathetic portrayal of the ordinary working class family's struggle for survival, and unity of the family. The song could thus have a popularity within the working class regardless of whether the middle class ideologies saw fit to promote it. The Communist Party leader of the mid-1930s and post-Second World War years, Harry Pollitt, was fond of reciting the song at party social gatherings, and apparently learnt it from his mother, a cotton worker from Droylsden.(53) These 'survivals' are

important and indicate the deep roots which Laycock's songs struck in the working class of South-East Lancashire.

"Th' Shurat Weaver's Song" is a good description of the difficulties associated with the weaving of 'surat' cotton, and the sharp practices the employers used to lower their costs - through fines ('abatements', or 'bating'):

Confound it! aw ne'er wur so woven afore,
Mi back's welly brocken, mi fingers are sore;
Aw've bin starin' an' rootin' among this Shurat,
Till aw'm very near getten as bloint as a bat.

Every toime aw go in wi' mi cuts to owd Joe,
He gies me a cursin', an' bates me an' o;
Aw've a warp i'one loom wi'booath selvedges marr'd,
An' th'other's as bad for he's dressed it to hard.(54)

Laycock's own experience in the weaving trade is used to good literary effect in the song, though its technicality clearly, and intentionally, limits its appeal to a working class, textile-based readership. The themes of working class pride and dignity emerge strongly:

Iv one turns eawt to stale, folk'll co me a thief,
An' aw conno' put th'cheek on to ax for relief;
As aw said i'eawr heause t'other neet to me woife,
Aw never did nowt o'this sort i'mi loife.

He makes it clear he is not an isolated case, "there's lots o'poor factory folk getten t'fur end", and many will die if a solution isn't found. The cause of the crisis is clearly put down to the Americans, and their apparent unconcern for the harm they are doing to Lancashire:

Oh, dear! iv yon Yankees could only just see
Heaw they're clemmin' an' starvin' poor weavers loike me,
Aw think they'd soon settle their bother, an' strive
To send us some cotton to keep us alive.

The song focuses on one weaver, with his own particular examples of poverty - his shoes are worn through tramping for work, his "halliday clooas are o on 'em up

th'speawt" (pawned), and he is forced to sell his bed. This is intended to be typical of cotton workers generally:

Iv there isn't some help for us factory folk soon,
Aw'm sure we shall o be knocked reet eawt o'tune

The song ends with an appeal for help, addressed to those "'at han owt to give" in the tradition of strike ballads:

Come give us a lift, yo' 'at han owt to give,
An' help yo'r poor brothers an' sisters to live;
Be kind, an' be tender to th'needy an'poor,
An' we'll promise when th'toimes mend we'll ax yo no moor. (55)

Is Laycock appealing to middle class charity? To an extent, perhaps he is. However, it could also be argued that he is asking for support amongst workers who are still in work - the engineers, miners, railway-workers and others who were only affected indirectly. It is possible that the use of the phrase "poor brothers and sisters" suggests a class appeal, although he could equally be using the phrase in a broad humanitarian or christian sense, or as an appeal to the wider Lancashire community. Laycock's Liberal politics, these latter possibilities seem more probable. Who then, is "The Surat Weaver's Song" addressed to? I would suggest the song appeals to both the working class and to potential middle class sympathisers. The potential social criticism contained in the second verse - the 'batin', or fine systems, is to an extent lessened by the cloth-looker being personalised as 'owd Joe' - a human figure, rather than an anonymous, uncaring master.

In his "Sewin' Class Song" Laycock paints a jolly picture of life in the sewing classes for young girls:

Sin' th'war begun, an' th'factories stopped, we're badly off it's true,
But still we needn't grumble, for we'n noan so mich to do;
We're only here fro' nine to four, an' han an heawer for noon,
We noather stop so very late nor start so very soon.(56)

The song thanks the Queen, the Lord Mayor of London, and other upper-class figures

who have contributed to the Relief Fund, and mentions the numerous visitors including 'parson, cotton mesturs, too' who are no doubt gratified by the industrious factory girls. Similarly, in "God bless 'Em, It Shows They'n Some Thowt", Laycock thanks the middle class directly for supporting the relief appeals:

We'n gentlemen, ladies an' o,
As busy i'th country as owt,
Providin' for th'Lancashire poor;
God bless 'em, it shows they'n some thowt!

In the above poem there is a piece of implied criticism of others for not being suitably thankful of the charity bestowed on Lancashire, and Edwin Waugh is named directly:

He says nowt abeawt these bad times,
aw wonder, neaw, heaw he con howd. (57)

However, Laycock is not totally blind to some of the abuses of the day and in "Aw've Just Bin A Lookin At Th'Scholars" he makes some trenchant points about the contrasts between rich and poor, though he ends on a resigned note:

Heaw is it 'at folks are so hamper't
Wi' sich an abundance i'th'lond?
Heaw is it 'at some are i'tatters
While others are gaudily donn'd?
Heaw is it 'at some con be livin'
I'splendour, at foine marble halls,
While others are clemmin' an' starvin',
Wi nowt i'the'r seet but bare walls?

God's good, an' provides us wi plenty;
There's mate an' there's clooas for us o,
But these good things - they're hard to get howd on -
These blessin's 'at ceaselessly flow -
They seem to be stopp'd on their journey,
An' laid deawn at th'rich folks door;
Well, it's happen for th'best 'at it is so;
God help those 'at's needy an' poor! (58)

Laycock seems genuinely perplexed by the state of things during the Cotton Famine. As a Liberal he can applaud the charity being given by the relief committees, and the volunteers from the middle classes helping in the sewing classes and adult schools. Yet another part of Laycock, his own class background, is repelled by the

contrasts between luxury and squalor which he finds glaringly obvious. The biting criticism contained in the above lines is held almost to the end - then he falters, suggesting that 'happen it's for th'best' and the poor have only God to rely on!

Some of Laycock's 'Cotton Famine' lyrics are addressed directly to his fellow out-of-work cotton workers. "Cheer Up A Bit Lunger" is an example of his optimism that things will turn out all right, and all that is needed is a bit more fortitude:

Cheer up, then, aw say, an'keep hopin' for th'best,
For things are goin' t'awter, an'soon.(59)

Similar advice is given in "What's up Wi Thee, Tom?" where Laycock speaks to a friend, on a personal level, about the state of things and urges him not to lose heart, and offers him some help:

"Neaw, Tum lad, th'art cryin' aw see,
Come, cheer up as weel as tha con;
Tha's noan bin forgotten, tha'll see
There's folk as con feel for thee, mon. (60)

A similar theme runs through "There's no Good I'Ceawrin' I'Th'Dust", addressed to another friend, Dick, who he tells that times will 'mend again sometime' and there'll be plenty of work to be had.

So clearly Laycock is addressing his own class in terms which would find approval amongst the middle class - hold on a little bit longer, be thankful for what your betters are doing for you. Yet there is more to Laycock's Cotton Famine poetry than this, and some of his poems and songs are directed towards doing something to remedy matters. In "Aw've Hard Wark To Howd Up Mi Yed" he criticises people who suggest that the hardship in Lancashire is being exaggerated - and tells them to come and see for themselves:

Th'big men, when they yer eawr complaint,
May treat it as 'gammon' an' 'stuff',

An' tell us we use to' mich paint,
But we dunnot daub paint on enough,
Iv they think it's noan true what we sen,
Ere they charge us wi tellin' a lie,
Let 'em look into th'question loike men,
An' come deawn here a fortnit an' try.(61)

If Laycock's thankfulness to the middle class is a prominent aspect of his writing, the praise is not totally unqualified either. In "Aw've Turned Mi Bit o'Garden O'er" Laycock muses about the joy of his garden, but brings the reader back to reality when it emerges he is working on a public works scheme in the open-air:

For oh, it is a hungry job,
This workin' eawt o'th'door;
Th'committee should alleaw for this,
An' give one rayther moor.(62)

Laycock's poetry is based on his own experience of life in Stalybridge during the famine. It is worth noting that the Ashton/Stalybridge area was the scene of the most serious disturbances during the famine, when riots took place over the distribution of relief.(63)

Phases of Distress: Joseph Ramsbottom's Cotton Famine Poems

Little is known of the man who wrote Phases of Distress, a collection of poems on the Cotton Famine, other than that he lived from 1831 - 1901, worked in a dye-house for some time, became a clothier and ultimately a businessman. Unlike other dialect poets who made their fame in this period (particularly Laycock and to a lesser extent Billington), he does not appear to have written much else after the end of the Famine, other than commercial articles for the Manchester Evening News. Brian Hollingworth notes from his obituary in the Manchester Guardian that at the time of his death he had almost completed "a history of the labouring classes".(64)

There are eighteen poems contained in the small volume of Phases of Distress, and Ramsbottom begins by adopting an uncompromising working class standpoint in

"Poem":

Let those sing o'queens an' kings,
An' men grown great i'th'wold'ut may;
To humbler folk aw'll pitch mi sstrings,
Ut's mooar to do an' less to say.
Mi counthry words aw couldno set,
No tune mi heart ot sing a song
Than th'praise o'great folk, an' forget
The lowly poor aw're born among. (65)

The message is less diffused than Laycock's, who tried to appeal both to middle class philanthropists and to a working class readership. It is much more direct, less ambivalent. In "Philip Clough's Tale", an out-of-work cotton worker is forced to demean himself by oakum-picking with less respectable members of society:

Eh! dear, what wary toimes are these,
There's nob'dy ever knew 'em wur;
For honest-wortchin' folks one sees
By scores reawnd th'Poor-law office dur.

The poem continues:

Aw hate this pooin oakum war,
An' breakin' stones to get relief;
To be a pauper - pity's mark -
Ull break an honest heart wi grief.
We're mixt wi th'stondin paupers, too.
Ut winno wortch when wark's to be had;
Con this be reet for them to do,
To tak no thowt o'good or bad? (66)

Unlike Laycock's unemployed worker who still has the pleasure of turning 'his bit o'garden o'er', Ramsbottom's character has nothing to compensate poverty:

Aw've gan mi little garden up,
Wi' mony a pratty fleawr an' root;
Aw've sowd mi gronny's silver cup
Aw've sowd mi uncle Robin's flute (67)

The character questions whether good times will ever return again, or if they do, he may have already gone under. There is none of the 'cheer up lads, time's 'll mend' we find in most of Laycock's poems. The songs are harsher, more convincing than many of his more famous counterparts. This is not to deny similarities of theme, and feeling,

in some of the poems. Whereas "Philip Clough's Tale" offers virtually no hope, "Good News" holds out the chance of some relief because:

...folk i'Lunnon yon are beawn
to send us brass to help us here. (68)

Ramsbottom's "After Thowt" is about the regret of an unemployed worker that he didn't put by enough money to help him through the crisis, unlike his neighbour, Tom Jackson, who has been a model Victorian workman by putting aside enough to keep him from the pauperism facing the narrator:

While Tom's wortched hard an' saved his brass
Aw've wortcht an' squandert mine away;
No chance for th'better world he pass -
Aw ne'er took thowt beyond a day.
Thro' these hard toimes content he'll live,
From' ev'ry care o'want he's free;
An' mony a helpin' hont he'll give,
While me an' mine ull paupers be. (69)

The poem is not an example of pure individualism, as the end makes clear. Although Tom is lauded for being thrifty, he does not sit back in his own comfort and ignore others - he helps his fellow workers who are suffering. Nonetheless, Ramsbottom is clearly demonstrating the virtues of a major part of the Victorian moral armoury - thrift, though he places it in the context of communal survival rather than an individualistic one. In reality, there were few working men like Tom left with any savings by the end of the Cotton Famine. Working-class friendly societies found themselves in serious difficulties because the vast majority of their members were forced to withdraw all their savings. (70) Ramsbottom seems to accept that he is being somewhat unrealistic in thinking that the ordinary cotton worker, with an average income, could manage for very long no matter how hard he had saved. In "Takin' Stock", the worker is doing his accounts - and concludes that before long his last penny of savings will be gone. His looms have been progressively reduced, and he is now working only three days - probably earning little more, or even less, than he would get

on relief:

When folk ut's sav'd a bit o'brass,
By careful scrapin', mun stond still
An' see it wear away, by th'mass,
They'll own it gwas agen their will;
An' bit by bit, as one may say,
Mi little stock wur wearin' done;
Aw'd reckont up to th'very day
When every penny ud be gone. (71)

The pride and dignity of many of Laycock's characters is equally present in many of Ramsbottom's, the most obvious being 'Prawd Tum', in "Prawd Tum's Prayer". The hero, a proud working man, is facing the worst, with all his hopes dashed by unemployment. He contrasts the delights of nature when he utters his prayer -

Abeawt i'th broad, green fields aw've come
Aw want a twothri words to say

- with his own situation, where the children are starving, his wife in tears as the home is stripped of furniture. He is ashamed to go to relief ('dow' or dole) because of the sneers and abuse he would receive:

Why, Tom o'Joe's is gone for dow,
For o'so hee he held his yead;
Exalt yoarsel, yo'll be browt low,
Is what we'n awlus seen and read.
When Bob o'Mat's his case made know,
Wi stingin' words he'r sorely vex;
"Prawd folks mun rep sich things they'n sown;
They'd crush is wi a Bible text." (72)

Here, Ramsbottom seems to be suggesting that some of the censure for being unemployed comes from within the working class - hence the use of dialect in the last two lines. The poem contrasts the once happy home with his situation now - the children's songs and joking, the "prattlin' romp upon my knee" he cannot stand now, for the sight "o' their pale faces bothers me". At the end of the poem Tom is brought almost to death:

We're sunk as low as low con be.
An' soon we'st drop into th'grave.

The narrative turns into a direct question to the readers: suggesting that they have a moral obligation to help. If not, they should accept that people will starve:

Bo theaw con stop us wi a breath;
If t'dustno thinkit reet to save,
Taytch us to welcome comin' dyeth.

He is using the poem as an appeal to the general public's conscience, through their Christianity:

Theaw knows heaw keen are famine's strings,
Theaw knows aw've done o aw con;
An' while theaw cares for o these things
Theaw'll surely help a sthrivin mon. (73)

'Preawd Tum' in the poem comes over as a sympathetic figure - the archetypal respectable working man, who cares for his home and family, and now faces destitution. Rather than go begging and risk the scorn of his better-off neighbours, he appeals directly to God to help him.

Ramsbottom also comments on the adult schools, in "Gooin t'Schoo". The narrator in the poem is a male worker who has been stopped 'these last eighteen months, or mooar'. He has his sense of pride, but feels it being squeezed out of him. At one time, if someone was seen wearing cast-off clothes they would have been derided:

"Eh! thoose are thank yo, sirs, aw see."
Bo sheawts and jeers like these are o'er,
Neaw nob'dy's beawn to mak a stir,
If worthchin folk yo meet by th'score,
Oitch one ull wear a "thank yo, sir". (74)

The dependence on middle class charity is clearly painful - he does not blame the middle class, and is grateful for their charity, particularly their adult schools:

Their help has bin great help to me,
It's that alone ut sent me t'schoo;
It's that ut tow't me th' A B C,

For o' aw'd turnt o'forty-two. (75)

The character reflects that some good, after all, has come from 'these weary toimes' with his learning to read and write, and pass the knowledge on to his family in the evenings, by reading the New Testament. Although times are bad, and there is no sign of end of it, he looks forward to a time when things have improved and he can look back on the Famine days:

A gradely plague it's bin to me
It's bin a gradely blessin' too. (76)

In "A Feighrside Chat", the same theme that 'something has come out of it' re-emerges in the form of a chat between a working class housewife and a visiting charity worker, 'Missis Baker'. Whilst the men of the house have learnt to read and write, the women have benefitted by being able to learn knitting and sewing. The housewife compares the time before the schools when people walked round with "knees an'elbows eawt", whereas now:

Ther'll mony a mother's heart grow leet,
To see her dowthers sew i'th nook;
Ther'll mony a feyther's een grow breet,
To see his lads pore o'er their books. (77)

The last two poems are about emigration, a reflection of Ramsbottom's sense of despair coming out perhaps more strongly than in some of the poems. The first of the two, "Farewell", has a family broken in two by the emigration to Queensland of the young couple, leaving their parents at home. At the parting, the father speaks to his children, as they prepare to leave their grandparents for ever:

Yoar dad's beawn t'tak yo o'er th'sae,
An' lyev yor gronny here a whoam;
Yo'll want her then for mony a day,
An' yo may want - hoo conno come. (78)

The following poem, "The Mother's Dream", is set some months after "Farewell", and the mother dreams that the family are not enjoying life in Australia as much as they

might have thought:

Aw've seen 'em i' their Queensland whoam,
As plain as e'er aw seed em here;
Th'place may be reet enoof for some,
Bo Will ull find no comfort theer.(79)

The mother imagines her daughter in law is ill, and 'sadly autthert, too, for sure' and Will wears 'a weary, wasted, look'. The poem ends with, once again, a hope in the almighty to put things right, if that is what fate decrees:

Him we mun thrust an' munno grieve,
An' that He'll taytch em heaw to live,
An' help 'em too aw'd fain believe.(80)

Emigration was of course a solution to the distress, and was canvassed by both the middle class and trade unions (81) during the crisis as one way out, Australia being the favoured place to go. The Northern states of America also encouraged cotton workers to emigrate and work in the growing North American textile industry (82). In Ramsbottom's two poems emigration is shown to be a doubtful solution, involving the breaking up of the extended family, a dangerous sea voyage, and no guarantee of happiness when you arrive at your new home. He is, however, careful not to be too moralistic. As in most of his poems he remains an observer of the effects of the Famine on working class people, albeit from within the working class. He does not have ready-made solutions, and neither does he self-consciously attempt to use his poems to 'sing people out of their misery'. Indeed, some of the poems, such as "Philip Clough's Tale", and "Prawd Tum's Prayer" are very sad pieces with little to cheer the reader. There is a general hope that God, or some other provider, may help. This should be contrasted with much of Laycock's poetry where he is consciously trying to 'cheer people up', and thus avoids painting too bleak a picture. There is always some help just round the corner, things are never quite as bad as they might be. Ramsbottom's poetry has little of this optimism.

William Billington and the 'Surat Weighver'

William Billington's Cotton Famine poems are by far the most socially critical of the main dialect writers studied here. Billington was the most radical writer of this period, and never attempted to gain any sympathy from the middle and upper class, whom he disliked intensely. On the question of poverty, the relief committees, and the American war Billington adopted a radical political standpoint. A useful initial comparison with Laycock's poetry is "Th'Surat Weyver", almost identical, in title at least, to "The Shurat Weaver's Song" of Laycock. According to Skeat, Billington sold over 14,000 copies as a broadsheet, during the Famine. (83)

Billington uses the anonymous, impersonal "they" in his treatment of the masters, suggesting an entrenched class division:

Ids neeah aboon a twelmon gone
Sin t'Yankee war brooake eat;
Un t'poor's traade herd to potter on
Tell t'rich ud potter eat;
We'n left no stooan unturn'd, nod one,
Sin t'trade becoom so flatt,
Bud neeah they'n browt us to id, mon,
They'n *med* us weyve Surat! (84)

Billington compares transportation favourably with the rigours of weaving surat cotton:

Ids just laake rowlin stooans up t'broo,
Or twistin' rooaps o' sand:
Yo piece yo'r twist, id comes i'two,
Laake cobwebs i'yor hand.(85)

In the poem, the Americans are condemned for being responsible for the situation, and Billington thinks he would like to get hold of the 'Yankees' and 'hang 'em i't' Surat!' It should be noted that "yankee" is used as a generic term for 'American', rather than the more restrictive meaning of 'Northerner'. The poem was written in 1862, before the slavery issue came to the fore. A later poem, as we shall see, finds Billington adopting a more positive attitude to the North. Perhaps this is an indication of more

general changes in working class attitudes in Lancashire towards the war. Be that as it may, the poem has absolutely none of the optimism, or appeals to middle class charity characteristic of Laycock's poem. The ending is about as gloomy as could be imagined:

Aw wonst imagund Deeoth's a very
Dark un dismal face;
Bud neeah aw fancy t' cemetery
Is quaaate a pleasant place!
Bud sin wey took yar Bill to bury,
Aw've offen wish'd Owd Scrat
Ud fotch o t'bag-o-tricks un lorry,
To hell wi o't'Surat! (86)

Billington's "Cowl Winter Is Comin Once Moor", written later in 1862 (October) is slightly more optimistic - in the sense that Billington is trying to build up people's spirits to get through the extra hardships that winter will bring. The appeal is collective, rather than based on individual fortitude:

There's theawsands besides me an' yo
As once hed life's blessin's istoor,
Neaw shiverin like sheep among snow
When winter is comin once moor. (87)

The poem is not a simple message to 'bear up and face the coming hardships'. It has a strong political edge to it, contrasting the rich who ignore the sufferings of the poor with the honest working men who can only survive by their ability to work; yet this is denied them:

There's chaps wod has plenty o' brass
As con heyt an' see honest men clam,
Bud changes may yet come to pass,
Their cake isn't etten to th'hem,
For fortune's a whirligig witch
Wod sometimes will torn up the poor,
An' deawn into th'dust wi' the rich,
An' let them feel winter once moor. (88)

Billington sees a political potential within the starving cotton workers, 'changes may yet

come to pass' - and the rich may be made low. As we have seen earlier Waugh also hoped political changes would emerge from the Cotton Famine - but as a result of the rich seeing the workers were suitably responsible to be 'given' political freedom. In Billington's writing, no favours are expected of the rich - rather they will be brought low by the efforts of the working class whom they have exploited and allowed to suffer in the famine.

In "Aw Wod This War Wur Ended", dated 1863, Billington shows a change of opinion towards the war, expressing overt support for the North. It begins with a catalogue of the hardships suffered during the Famine, and the narrator had nothing to fear from the bailiffs because the house is now stripped bare:

Neaw aw fear noather dun nor bum,
Wi o' their kith an' kin -
They'll fotch nowt eawt o'th'heawse, by gum!
Becose there's nowt left in.
Aw'm welly weary o' my life,
An' cuddend, if aw'd spend id,
Ged scan for th'kids, mysel' an' th'wife -
Aw wod this war wur ended! (89)

Despite the tone of resignation in the poem, it ends on a strong political rallying cry which is curiously out of place with the rest of the verses:

Some factory maisters tokes for t'Seawth
Wi' a smooth an' oily tongue,
But iv they'd sense they'd shut their meawth,
Or sing another song;
Let liberty nod slavery
Be fostered an' extended -
Four million slaves mun yet be free,
An' then t'war will be ended. (90)

It is almost as though another person intervenes in the poem, urging his fellow worker to support the anti-slavery cause to bring about an end to the war, having heard his catalogue of hardships and tone of despondency. Billington wanted to make a strong political point in the poem, whilst chronicling the real hardships which were being endured. The Lancashire factory masters are attacked - for their support of the South

and, by implication, slavery. (91)

Billington appears to have written less than Ramsbottom or Laycock on the Cotton Famine. Unlike them, especially Laycock, he did not become famous as a result of his writings. The razor-sharp attacks on the bourgeoisie hardly made him a suitable working class intellectual to patronise. During much of the Famine period, Billington was forced out of Lancashire to try and sell his writings, particularly the standard English collection Sheen and Shade (92), in other parts of the country. Given the success of "Th'Surat Weyver's Song" in selling so well in the Blackburn area, it is likely that other Cotton Famine poems were similarly produced as broadsheets, though as far as I am aware no others have survived.

Other Dialect Writers on the Cotton Famine

In addition to the major writers referred to above, several other working men wrote occasional dialect poems about the Cotton Famine - no doubt inspired by the success of Laycock. Some of these were printed in the local press, specialist 'dialect' papers such as the Lankishire Loominary, and also as broadsheets.

In the broadsheet category was 'E. Moss' (probably Elijah Moss of Ashton) "Eawr Factory Skoo". It is very similar to the poems of Laycock and Ramsbottom on the adult schools and sewing classes. It confirms that these schools did have some degree of popularity amongst the working class, if we assume that writers like Moss - himself a worker - represented some strand of wider working class ideology. In this poem the familiar themes of gratitude, patience and fortitude, and a desire to see the war ended come across:

Eawr pashunce and eawr fortitude, is known throo eawt the world,
Un th'banner with the word "Distress" is everywhere unfurl'd,
Let Yankees raise ther flag o'peace, un bid God speed the plough,
We'll show um then i'England whot we larnt at th'Factory Skoo. (93)

A more original poem appeared in Staton's Lankshire Loominary, dated Bolton September 1864. It is entitled "The Cotton Mill" and signed "by an Operative": Its form recreates the noise and rush of a busy cotton mill, ending with a reference to the hated surat cotton, and going from full-time work to unemployment:

Hum, whirl, click, click, clatter,
Rolling, rumbling, moving matter;
Whizzing, hissing, hitting, missing,
Pulsing, pulling, turning, twisting.

Buzz, bang, going, coming,
Standing, creeping, walking, running,
Piecing, breaking, starting, stopping,
Picking, mixing, fixing, copping.

Push, rush, cleaning, oiling,
Slipping, sweating, screaming toiling;
Fetching, taking, spoiling, making,
Saucing, swearing, bagging, bating.

Here, there, thi way, that way,
Bad-end, nar-here, fur-on, up-there;
Break-it-out, wind-it-off, hurry price-up,
Get-em-up, quick, or awst lia to stop.

Steam, dust, flying choking,
Stripping, grinding, brushing, joking;
Full time, short time, no time - so that
Enough's in a mill without Surat!

(Bolton, September 1864) (94)

In the same publication a poem written in standard English by a regular contributor, Joseph Charlesworth, appeared in mid-1864 called "A Sigh For Home - From the Scene of War in America". This is the lament of a Lancashire emigrant to America, who now finds himself surrounded by a nightmare of 'rapine and bloodshed', and bitterly regrets ever leaving his native country:

O why did I leave my blest shore,
Dear England, the home of the free? (95)

It has already been noted that many of the songs and poetry of the cotton famine

were sold, and sung, on the streets - giving them an obvious popularity. Another feature of the period was the large number of singing groups which congregated in the towns and cities, hoping to gain a few pence from those better off. In the history of co-operation in Darwen the author looks back on the Famine years and remembers a song, sung by school children coming home from class:

We're warkin' lads fro' Lancasheer,
An' gradely decent fooak,
We'en hunted wyvin far an' near,
An' couldn'd ged a stroak
We'n popt both table, clock an' cheer,
An' sowl boath shoon an' hat,
An' borne wod mortal mon cud beear
Afoore we'd weyve Surat.

The chorus went:

For this cotton panic is the worst
That's ever bin befooar.
Booath poor an' rich sincerely wish
As t' Yankee War wur o'er. (96)

In another co-op history, of the Oldham Equitable, there are similar references to the Cotton Famine, and numerous quotes from Laycock's poems in which the author says:

Nowhere are these hardships and sufferings, and the fortitude and heroism they brought forth, so powerfully brought home to us as in the verses of... Samuel Laycock. (97)

Another broadsheet which appeared during the Famine was "Short Time Come Again No More", or, "Hard Times Come Again No More". In Harland and Wilkinson the following extract is given:

Let us pursue in life's pleasures, and count its many tears,
While we all sup sorrow with the poor;
There's a song that will linger on forever in our ears,
Oh, short time come again no more!

The chorus was:

It's the song of the factory operative,
Short time, short time, come again no more;
For we can't get our cotton from the old Kentucky shore;

Oh, short time, short time, come again no more! (98)

In Allen Clarke's novel The Cotton Panic 'short time' becomes 'hard times' with the following alteration to the chorus:

Tis the song, the sigh of the weary,
Hard times, hard times, come again no more,
Many years have you lingered about my cabin door,
Oh, hard times come again no more! (99)

In the novel one of the characters also refers to Laycock's poems. 'Whistling Will' travels Lancashire singing for bread. Reciting a part of "Welcome Bonny Brid" he says: "That poem touches tears in th'een of aw who heard it, because there's hardly a house in th'shire but what's havin th'same experience." (100)

One of the 'Lays of the Cotton Famine' reproduced in Harland and Wilkinson's Ballads and Songs of Lancashire is "Hard Times - Or, Th'Weyvur To His Wife" by 'A Lancashire Lad' (James Bowker). It follows the now familiar path of contrasting poverty with the joys of family life - together, we will pull through. America is referred to in hostile terms:

I'm mad at them America foos, as neve hes enuff
O'quarellin' an' strugglin', and sich unnat'rel stuff.

The weaver sees abundance around him - and wishes they could have some share:

Ther's lots o'hooams areawnd us whear wot they waste i'th'day,
'Ud sarve for thee an'th' choilt an' me, an'some to give away;(101)

At the end, despite their poverty, their love for each other will see them through

the crisis:

An' times though hard, I cannot think 'l change for thee or me,
For if we're tru an' reet, an' as honest as we're por,
We's never hev no wos chap nor poverty at th'dooar. (102)

In Staton's Loominary the issue of emigration was raised in a poem by Eli

Howarth, in "Gooin' To Queenslond - A Dialogue". It will be recalled that Ramsbottom also wrote, generally unfavourably, about emigration as a solution to the distress caused by the Cotton Famine. In Howarth's poem the dialogue is between an old friend, Siah, and Jack - a cotton spinner with a family suffering hard in the Famine. The landlord at The Crown pub has suggested that he and Jack emigrate to Queensland, and Jack is taken with the prospect. Siah thinks he has supped too much at 'the Crown':

Nay, Siah, nay! awm as sober's a judge;
But aw wur thinkin, my lad, it wur time for me t'budge
Now work to be gettin, un nowt to be etten;
Un th'woife, hoo looks up i my face with a smoile,
Wi hur een brimmin o'er - Oh! mon, aw feel sore,
For aw know, though hoo lowfs un looks happy aw o er,
Hoo's starvin aw th'whoile

Siah argues that Queensland isn't the answer - there's poverty there as well as in Lancashire, prices are high. True, argues Siah, if you're young, strong and single it may be possible to make a good living - if you work hard for it:

No deawbt, but i'Queenslond a poor mon con rise,
If he's weel stockt wi pluck, un get favvurt wi luck,
But he munnot be wed, un ha childer, loike thee...

Jack is not equipped, as a cotton worker, for hard labouring work. A man with family responsibilities should not take such a risk as leaving his roots:

But aw think when a mon is weel panniert wi care
He's no reet to roam
It's too far on ith day to forsake thy owd teawn -
Just leov emigration to th'brewer at th'Creawn,
Un thee stop awhoam!

(Bowtun February 11th 1864) (103)

Clearly emigration was a very hard and difficult solution to adopt, and Lancashire dialect writers, with their deep sense of locality and community belonging, would be naturally inclined to argue against it. However, it is worth noting that working class

opinion was far from being united on this. The cotton unions saw emigration as a potential solution to a glutted labour market, with opportunities for workers to be better treated in foreign countries. Presumably, Australia was the main country in mind, given the war in America. Trade unions would naturally benefit from a restricted labour market in Lancashire when an upturn in the industry came; a shortage of skilled labour caused by workers emigrating would force wages up. Employers on the other hand would prefer to retain a pool of labour which would not allow unions to exploit a situation of labour shortage. However, it is unlikely that dialect writers would have formed an agreement with employers on this matter! More likely, the interests of the two happened to coincide.

Looking Back on the Cotton Famine :
Langford Saunders' Hard Times and Allen Clarke's The Cotton Panic

The experience of the Cotton Famine had a profound impact on the lives of the cotton workers who lived through it, and the memory was passed down to future generations. In Lancashire Humour and Pathos, Langford Saunders looks back on his own, and other cotton workers' experience of the time in an article called "Hard Times - Remembrances of the Cotton Famine".(104) He gives his analysis of the causes of the distress, blaming the factory masters for exploiting the dislocation in the supply of cotton caused by the American war to drastically increase prices. Saunders describes the use of the substitute 'surat' cotton, quoting Ramsbottom's poem "Th'Operative's Lament", a slightly altered version of "Philip Clough's Tale" which is interesting for its differences from the published version in Phases of Distress. Whereas the published version ends with a question:

Shall e'er aw taste those jeighs agen,
Or e'er live thro' these days of' woe? (105)

In the version Saunders reproduces the end is:

Aw ne'er shall taste those jeighs again -
Aw'm sinkin' wi' my weight o'woe. (106)

Saunders points to the humiliating treatment meted out to the operatives when they went to the Guardians for relief after working on surat:

When these were driven to apply for relief to the Guardians, and were taunted with idleness or malingering, they would retort, "Look at my honds!" and they would show them mutilated, bleeding, or indented with cuts, in proof of their inability to continue working the material. (107)

Saunders does not paint an entirely hostile picture of the masters. Some of them recognised their responsibility to provide help to the workers 'who had been instrumental in giving them their opportunity of obtaining wealth'. He describes the relief societies, the work of the masters' wives and daughters in organising the sewing classes and soup kitchens, and notes that "all classes were brought closer together by common suffering". (108)

Saunders was working at the time, which, with his wife's earnings as a weaver on two looms, brought them in 18s a week. His own personal experiences confirm the poetic descriptions of poverty and misery which Laycock, Ramsbottom and Billington described. However, the cheer in the face of adversity - such as the birth of a child in Laycock's "Welcome, Bonny Brid" - is not evident in the following case which Saunders recounts:

We were sitting in Tom Cross's house early one night when Jim Hitchin lifted the door latch and walked in. His face was as pale as one could imagine a man yet alive to wear... I was going to speak to him, when I saw him look across the table to where Mrs. Cross stood. "It's come, Emma," he said Mrs. Cross knew what he meant. "Hast it?" she retorted. "What is it, Jim?" "Another lad," he answered, and he sank down in a chair beside me, and he rested his elbows on his knees, and with his head in his hands, he cried bitterly. (109)

The remainder of the story is about Jim Hitchin's poverty, how Saunders helped him out with a small loan, which gave him enough to keep going until work finally came. It is an example of working class self-help in microcosm: Saunders finds out, years after,

that Jim Hitchin has made good in life, and is lined up for the next mayor. After twenty years he gets his loan back - with added interest!

Although the narrative is in standard English throughout, the dialogue is in dialect, for example where Jim Hitchin soliloquises on his situation after the birth of his son:

"I durn't know what to do," he said, "nobry seems to have owt. I yerd today as Molyneux's were startin' moulders, an' I went. They promised me a job, but it'll be a month afore they con get ready. Hew we're gooin' to live for a month on nowt aw cannot tell. (110)

The story as a whole combines a careful analysis of the Cotton Famine, with a literary description of Saunders' own experiences in semi-fictionalised form. He combines a sense of utter desperation during the Famine, with, in the case of Jim Hitchin, poverty leading to success by the medium of the financial help given by a fellow worker - Saunders. The figure of Tom represents the continuing 'down-to-earth goodness' of the Lancashire factory worker, whilst Saunders gets a little bit further up the class ladder, without entirely losing his roots.

The conclusion to be drawn is that the Famine was a temporary set-back which had the positive result of bringing the best out in people - through the challenge to surmount the distress, and through people helping each other.

During the same period that Saunders was writing, Allen Clarke produced a serial novel on the Famine, called The Cotton Panic. Appearing in Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly, it ran for several months during 1900 and 1901. Clarke begins the novel with an introductory piece, philosophising on how the destinies of widely differing nations and peoples are intertwined, using the example of the American war. He then goes on to relate the story of his own life, and those of other Lancashire people:

This terrible time of starvation is not forgotten by those who endured it... Amongst the children born in that period of poverty and suffering was the author of this story; who presents this picture of Lancashire's 'hard times' in the hope that its like may never be known again. (111)

Most of the novel is set in Preston, one of the hardest hit towns in the Famine, and the character of 'The Whistler' is introduced, typifying the 'workless minstrels' Waugh describes. He meets a stranger - who turns out to be an American Mormon. Clarke uses a combination of humour and pathos in the exchange between the two, starting with the stranger's question:

"I know the scarcity of cotton, owing to the war, has stopped the cotton trade in Lancashire. Are you a cotton operative?"

"I used to be. But I'm nowt at present. However, I'll be a skeleton soon, if this cotton panic keeps on. I'm a musician; an whistlin's my forte. Everybody calls me Whistlin Will, though my gradely name is Will Redford." (112)

The novel refers back to Chartism, and the riots in Preston when soldiers shot into the crowd - and later introduces an 'old Chartist' - Chartist Grimshaw. Political agitation and demonstrations against the relief boards feature prominently in the story, and when Will discusses events with his friend Jimmy:

"It is true that th'folks has bin riotin' for bread at Ashton under Lyne?"

"Ay, it's true; and they've bin riotin' at Stockport an' Dukinfield, an' other places too. But worst do were at Ashton. Th'folk were clammin' desperate, so they broke into th'relief stores and helped theirsels."

"An I durnt blame 'em," said Will.

"But th'police did," said Jimmy. "They've locked eighty one folks up, an twenty seven on em women."

"An what'll they do wi em?" asked Will.

"Give em hard labour," said Jimmy.

"That's noan jannock," said Will. "Folk shouldn't breik th'law." said Jimmy.

"There's no law to a starvin mon," said Will, "an no law should dare to punish him." (113)

Clarke's sympathy for the unemployed, including their resort to illegal methods, is also brought out through the figure of 'Chartist Grimshaw', modelled on 'Radical Grimshaw', a well known figure on the streets of Bolton when Clarke was a boy. Talking with Whistlin' Will about Chartism and the present day 'troubles' he says:

"Tom Livsey was a gradely champion of the working classes," said the old Chartist. "He did great work against the Corn Laws. I recollect a good bit in one of his speeches. After he'd shown up the evils of the Corn Laws, he said,

'But o, how much more could be said against the present trade system? We all know that the cart-horse has to work to keep the hunter; so you, if you like, may be content to work from morn to night to keep your master in state. but will you do it?' The crowd shouted, 'No, we'll be hanged first.' "Yet the crowd soon forgets; and keeps on being the cart horse to support the idle hunter. As long as this is so there will be discontent, rebellions and riots. The history of the working classes would make strange and terrible reading. As long as I can remember there's always been struggle." (114)

'Chartist Grimshaw' expresses his disillusionment at the lack of wider political awareness amongst the working class at that time, compared with his Chartist days. The two characters see a procession of Sunday school children march past, celebrating Preston Guild week, though 'the faces of many of the children were pinched and pale; they made a pathetic sight.' Chartist Grimshaw observes that working class people are not even prepared to fight for their own children:

"If the sight of a procession like this won't stir men to battle for the bettering of the world, then men are cowards that nothing will stir to fight. How selfish folks must be when they won't even strive to get benefits for their children, content to say "What's been good enough for me will have to be good enough for my childer. I've had to slave an' sweat, and they must do th'same." Such folks are fit neither for earth, heaven, nor Wigan. (115)

Clarke uses Grimshaw as a representative of the 'educated' working class, who is rooted in the community, yet can express a wider, more politicised view than the narrow, self-centred attitudes of many of his fellows. He adds an interesting aside on Grimshaw's use of dialect:

Sometimes Chartist Grimshaw talked ordinary English, sometimes the undiluted Lancashire dialect, and sometimes a mixture of both. Like most educated working men in Lancashire he could speak either English or dialect fluently, using either according to the company he happened to be in. (116)

The novel is anti-war, rather than pro-Northern, in its overall sympathies. Chartist Grimshaw expresses his hatred of slavery, but there is little sympathy for Lincoln and the Federal cause. In the narrative, Clarke echoes Langford Saunders' comments about Lancashire's middle class making wealth out of the crisis, by selling the raw cotton back to America at massively inflated prices:

Many a Lancashire 'gentleman's' fortune was founded in the cotton panic, and founded on the agony of the people. Of such men what shall be written? Only this, of each and all of them, "He made money", - the most execrable epitaph, and the meanest memory for any man. (117)

These two later literary works on the Famine period - Saunders' Hard Times and Allen Clarke's The Cotton Panic are useful indicators that the period remained a major event in the folk memory of the Lancashire working class, and also their comments reflect an awareness of the heightened exploitation which cotton workers suffered, whilst many of their masters got rich at their expense. Clarke writes from a socialist perspective, using his novel to cram in a wide range of events in working class history, from Peterloo and the Chartists, to the actual events in the Cotton Famine itself. He is writing from an overtly propagandistic standpoint - saying war is evil, and its effects are felt all over the world; and that the main force for progress in society lies in the working class, particularly through the leadership of men like 'Chartist Grimshaw' who are both from, and for, the workers, and deeply rooted in the history and culture of their class. Saunders is not a political writer in that sense - though he is clearly aware of the sharp practices which went on, and the extent of the human suffering through which he lived.

Conclusion

The contemporary writings on the Cotton Famine suggest that the working class response to the Cotton Famine was far from being uniform. The writings of Waugh, Laycock and Ramsbottom undoubtedly bring out the poverty, and at times despair of the situation, yet there is little indication of the crisis bringing about a more critical awareness of society, and a determination to change things. The enemy, as Walton observed, was perceived to be external and the room for radical political intervention was limited. (118) Waugh's writings, for a Liberal paper, the Manchester Examiner and Times, clearly have a moderate political intent - demonstrating that the working

class has 'kept its head' even in the most trying conditions, and hence is worthy of political concessions. Despite his own moderation, a series of working class grievances expressed in the arguments over payment for wet weather, strikes over pay, and dislike of the relief boards comes across. In these writings, he is primarily writing about, but not for, the working class of Lancashire. Laycock on the other hand is appealing to a more complex readership, and the same is true to some extent with Ramsbottom. Laycock's poems and songs were highly popular both amongst Lancashire workers - who bought them as penny broadsheets - and amongst the middle class who approved of the message of forbearance and optimism which formed the underlying message of some of his songs. Although Ramsbottom starts off by saying he is writing for his own people - meaning the working class of Lancashire - the sentiments of most of his work do little to challenge the power structure of the time, although the poems are certainly less optimistic and cheerful than Laycock's.

Only in the writings of William Billington do we find a strong radical viewpoint coming through, combining the misery and sadness of Ramsbottom's poetry, with an overt challenge to the establishment. Yet even in Billington's writing, his attitude towards the North is slightly ambivalent, with his earlier poem showing less enthusiasm for Lincoln than the later "Aw Wod This War Wur Ended". J. T. Staton, who is the nearest politically to Billington, shies away from giving any support to the North, whilst being opposed to slavery in an uncompromising way. The work of other contemporary writers also suggests that the working class response to the American war ranged from indifference to the issues involved, to a general hostility towards 'the yankees' as a whole. It is important to remember that 'Yankee' is used as a general term for 'American', not 'Northern'. This is important in assessing Mary Ellison's work, where at times she takes the more restrictive interpretation of 'Yankee' and draws incorrect conclusions. One would also expect some evidence of overt support for the Southern case in dialect poetry from the case made out by Ellison. Although her research is detailed, it is also highly selective, tending to rely on the local Conservative

press to give evidence of local attitudes.(119)

It is important to avoid drawing hard and fast conclusions from this examination of Lancashire working class writing on the Cotton Famine. All the writers mentioned had their own ideological outlook and the cultural pressures of writers who had to find a publisher and a readership. None of these writers were direct ciphers of some pure 'working class ideology'. However, most of them were writing to a greater or lesser extent for a working class readership and would therefore tend to put forward ideas which would be broadly in line with current thinking. The poetry of Laycock and Ramsbottom expressed a popular message which would find no offence amongst middle class patrons, nor among working class readers. Staton, who was never interested in middle class patronage, nonetheless expresses similar ideas and also publishes the work of Ramsbottom in his paper. The tradition of working class political radicalism embodied in the Chartist movement finds its only echo in the writings of William Billington. He enjoyed local popularity in the Blackburn area through sales of his broadsheets, but was shunned by middle class publishers. Whilst Ramsbottom and Laycock were celebrated in Lancashire as working class 'laureates' of the Cotton Famine, in both working class and middle class circles, Billington was forced to tramp round the country selling his poetry, outside Lancashire.

The responses of working class writers to this period was as complex as the reaction of the working class as a whole. Taking into account the individual writer's ideology and the conditions of production (publishers' attitudes, and readers' views) the body of working class writing gives some indication of the themes running through working class responses to the Cotton Famine. These themes can perhaps be summarised as follows.

Firstly, there is a sense of crisis and desperation in which 'respectable' workers are, through no fault of their own, thrown into poverty. Secondly, the dignity and pride of

many working class people and their outrage at being treated as 'common paupers' comes over strongly. This finds frequent critical comment on their treatment by high-handed middle class Boards of Guardians, and to a lesser extent, by relief committees over issues such as the labour test, conditions of outdoor work, and the actual comments made by the Board when they go to claim relief. A third feature is a strong sense of gratitude towards certain members of the middle class for the charitable work they engaged in, particularly the adult schools and sewing classes, as well as the financial donations given by both local, national, and international agencies. Fourthly, there is a general feeling of indignation that there are such extremes of wealth and poverty existing at such a time. A fifth observation is that the American war is generally seen as an event which only concerns them as far as the supply of cotton. The actual issues are either not considered, or seen as being hypocritical (such as the North's espousal of the anti-slavery issue). Support for the North appears to be a minority cause within the working class, though pursued more energetically by progressive, mostly middle-class, Liberals. Support for the South is not in evidence either, in any dialect writing that I could find.

An examination of the 'Cotton Famine' poems poses certain questions about the arguments advanced about employer paternalism. As Langford Saunders suggested in Hard Times, the Famine probably did bring 'the classes closer together'. Many mill-owners did keep their mills running at a loss, or subscribed to relief funds, even if others were selling off their supplies of raw cotton at an immense profit. Patrick Joyce has suggested that the Famine may or may not have led to greater class harmony, but it certainly did not result in greater class hatred.(120) The evidence from contemporary dialect literature suggests that he is right.

This was an exceptional period. It was one of the few real opportunities for the owners of larger enterprises to have any contact with their workers (often through the medium of their wives and daughters) during the relief operations. This is the real

irony of arguments over the 'employment link', that really it only had any sort of material reality at the time when there was mass unemployment. When the mills were running normally 'the master' and his family would be an unseen force, and the nearest a cotton spinner, weaver or card-room operative would get to seeing the employer would be the personage of the overlooker or occasionally the mill manager. The Christmas dinner or occasional trip to Blackpool were scant opportunity for developing employer hegemony. However, the opportunities afforded by the Cotton Famine were much greater, and these were indeed eagerly pursued by large sections of the middle class through the distribution of relief and the organisation of educational classes of a suitably 'instructive' nature. However, the extent to which working class people simply 'took the relief and ran', and got out of the adult classes what benefitted them, such as literacy, and craft skills, is debatable. Once the mills re-opened the available evidence, particularly that shown by Kirk, (121) suggests that industrial conflict steadily re-asserted itself as unions bargained for increased wages during the boom which followed.

Notes

1. John K. Walton Lancashire: A Social History 1558-1939 p. 201. See also D.S.A. Farnie The English Cotton Industry and the World Market 1815-1896
2. S. Broadbridge The Lancashire Cotton 'Famine' 1861-65 Communist Party History Group 1961. p.4.
3. Mary Ellison Support for Secession. Lancashire and the American Civil War Chicago 1972.
4. Patrick Joyce Work, Society, and Politics Brighton 1980 pp 150-1.
5. John Watts The Facts of the Cotton Famine Manchester 1866, also W.O. Henderson The Lancashire Cotton Famine Manchester 1936.
6. Farnie op.cit p.157.
7. For a discussion on working class savings see comments in Walton op.cit p.285.
8. Samuel Laycock Warblin's Fro' An' Wod Songster Oldham 1893; Joseph Ramsnottom Phases of Distress: Lancashire Rhymes Manchester 1864; William Billington Lancashire Songs with Other Poems and Sketches Blackburn 1883.
9. Edwin Waugh Home Life of the Lancashire Factory Folk During the Cotton Famine Manchester n.d. c 1867.
10. James Taylor Staton, ed. The Lankishire Loominary. The paper started as Th' Bowtun Luminary, then became the Th' Bowtun Loominary, and finally Th' Lankishire Loominary.
11. Allen Clarke "The Cotton Panic", serialised in Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly, 1900-1; James Langford Saunders Lancashire Humour and Pathos Manchester 1911.
12. cf Watts op.cit. The effects of the Cotton Famine are well documented in Henderson op.cit, and contemporary accounts including Watts, as well as local descriptions of the distress.
13. Thomas Ellison The Cotton Trade of Great Britain London 1886.
14. Farnie op.cit p.159.
15. W.Gourlay History of the Distress in Blackburn 1861-5 Blackburn 1865.
16. S.A. Nichols Darwen and the Cotton Famine Darwen 1893 p.82.
17. Farnie op.cit p.157.
18. Charles Walters History of the Oldham Equitable Co-operative Society Limited 1850-1900 Manchester 1900 p.43.
19. F.W. Peoples History of the Great and Little Bolton Co-operative Society Manchester 1909. For Rochdale, see George Jacob Holyoake The History of the

Rochdale Pioneers London 1893 pp98-106.

20. W. Bennett History of Burnley Volume 3, Burnley 1951 p.122.
21. Broadbridge op.cit p.9.
22. Watts op.cit p.202.
23. quoted in N Longmate The Hungry Mills,1972, p.180.
24. *ibid* p.183.
25. Waugh op.cit p.6.
26. *ibid* p.19.
27. *ibid* p.30.
28. *ibid* pp.29-30.
29. *ibid* p.15.
30. *ibid* p.15.
31. *ibid* p.161.
32. *ibid* p.164.
33. *ibid* p.162.
34. *ibid* pp.124-5.
35. Broadbridge op. cit. p.5.
36. *ibid* p.5.
37. *ibid* p.8. Walton op.cit p.242 also suggests that co-operators were discriminated against in the Burnley area.
38. Rochdale Observer June 14 1863.
39. K. Marx Capital Moscow 1954 pp.434-5. W.O. Henderson, in The Lancashire Cotton Famine 1861-1865 Manchester 1934, shows that in 1861 in England and Wales there were 28,352,152 spindles. By 1868 this figure had risen to 30,478,228 (p.126).
40. John Harland and T. T. Wilkinson Ballads and Songs of Lancashire, Manchester 1875, p.503.
41. J. T. Staton ed. The Lankshire Loominary Un Wickly Lookin Glass (LL) October 10th 1863.
42. LL October 10th 1863.
43. LL October 10th 1863.
44. LL October 17th 1863.

45. LL October 17th 1863.
46. LL June 11th 1864.
47. LL October 10th 1863.
48. LL October 1st 1964.
49. For example, The North Cheshire Herald published "It's Hard to Ceawer I'th Chimley Nook" on 3rd January 1863, and The Ashton Reporter published "A Thorn Grows Near The Rose" on February 20th 1864.
50. Laycock's son, Arthur, estimated as many as 40,000 of his broadsides were sold in the North of England. See Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Annual 1911.
51. G. Milner, "Introduction" to Samuel Laycock Collected Writings, 2nd edition, Manchester 1900 p.4.
52. Samuel Laycock Warblin's Fro' An' Owd Songster Oldham 1893 p.4.
53. See John Mahon Harry Pollitt London 1976 p.28.
54. Laycock (1893) op.cit p.51.
55. *ibid* p.52.
56. *ibid* p.47.
57. *ibid* p.55.
58. *ibid* p.61.
59. *ibid* p.63.
60. *ibid* p.60.
61. *ibid* p.45.
62. *ibid* p.57.
63. See Samuel Hill Bygone Stalybridge, Stalybridge 1907, for a local account.
64. Brian Hollingworth, Songs of The People Manchester 1977 p.154.
65. Joseph Ramsbottom Phases of Distress - Lancashire Rhymes Manchester 1864 p.1.
66. *ibid* p.24.
67. *ibid* p.26.
68. *ibid* p.28.
69. *ibid* p.39.
70. *ibid* p.49.
71. *ibid* p.59

72. ibid p.61
73. ibid p.69.
74. ibid p.88.
75. ibid p.89.
76. ibid p.91.
77. ibid p.94.
78. ibid p.99.
79. ibid p.103.
80. ibid p.105.
81. "Emigration v. Pauperism" was issued by the Cotton Spinners Union c 1862. Copy in Tameside Local Studies Library, Stalybridge.
82. Hollingworth op. cit. p.98.
83. ibid p.145, W. W. Skeat and John Nodal Bibliographical List : English Dialect Society London 1873.
84. William Billington Lancashire Songs with other Poems and Sketches Blackburn 1883 p.25.
85. ibid p.26.
86. ibid p.26.
87. ibid p.12.
88. ibid p.12.
89. ibid p.28.
90. ibid p.28.
91. See Broadbridge op. cit. p.6. Also Samuel Hill Bygone Stalybridge, Stalybridge 1907, pp 82-5. Hill suggests that most local manufacturers supported the South, and that the workers were either neutral or pro-Northern.
92. William Billington Sheen and Shade Blackburn 1863.
93. Hollingworth op. cit. p.109.
94. LL October 8th 1864.
95. LL October 8th 1864.
96. C. J. Beckett Darwen Industrial Co-operative Society Souvenir Darwen 1910 p.23.
97. Charles Walters History of the Oldham Equitable Co-operative Society Limited

- 1850 - 1900 p.46.
98. Harland and Wilkinson op. cit. p.49.
 99. Allen Clarke, in Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly October 6th 1900.
 100. ibid October 6th 1900.
 101. Harland and Wilkinson op. cit. p.512.
 102. ibid p.514.
 103. LL February 27th 1864.
 104. Langford Saunders Lancashire Humour and Pathos Manchester 1911.
 105. ibid p.211.
 106. Ramsbottom op.cit p.27.
 107. Saunders op.cit p.216.
 108. ibid p.214.
 109. ibid p.227.
 110. ibid p.227.
 111. Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly (TANW) October 6th 1900.
 112. TANW October 6th 1900.
 113. TANW October 6th 1900.
 114. TANW January 5th 1901.
 115. TANW January 5th 1901.
 116. TANW January 5th 1901.
 117. TANW January 12th 1901.
 118. Walton op.cit pp.242-5.
 119. Ellison op.cit. For example, the main newspaper consulted in Bolton is the Tory Bolton Chronicle rather than the Liberal Journal. The Liberal Rochdale Observer is little used, whereas the Rochdale Spectator is relied on heavily.
 120. Joyce op cit p.152.
 121. See Neville Kirk The Growth of Working Class Reformism in Mid-Victorian England, 1985 pp.165-166.

Chapter 9: War, Imperialism and Patriotism

It has been argued that during the nineteenth century the British working class underwent a major ideological change, from the radical internationalist ideas of Chartism, through to the pro-imperialist jingoism of the Disraeli era. Lenin wrote that:

It must be observed that in great Britain the tendency of imperialism to divide the workers... to encourage opportunism among them, and cause temporary decay in the working class movement, revealed itself much earlier than the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries; for two important features of imperialism were observed in Britain in the middle of the nineteenth century, viz vast colonial possessions and a monopolist position in world markets. (1)

He went on to quote the well known comments of Engels to Marx about the British working class becoming "more and more bourgeois", (2) and many years later, in 1882, Engels wrote to Kautsky suggesting that British workers "Merrily devour... the fruits of the British colonial monopoly". (3) Lenin argues that it is specifically the labour aristocracy which gained most from imperialism, and becomes in an ideological and economic sense petty-bourgeois. Further, this 'aristocracy' held a position of political hegemony within sections of the proletariat, or,:

A section of the proletariat permits itself to be led by people who are bought by the bourgeoisie, or at least are in their pay. (4)

These positions have been rigidly defended in recent years by historians such as John Foster (5) who argues that from the 1850s the working class increasingly came under the spell of 'false consciousness', an inability to see their 'real' class interests, and instead inhabited a world of sectional interests which precluded the development of a collective class consciousness. While Foster says that the process of developing into 'false consciousness' is far from being solely a result of bourgeois ideological offensives, nonetheless the decisive element is the bourgeois strategy of 'liberalization'. One of the examples of 'liberal society in action' is reactions to the Crimean War, showing:

...the degree to which imperialist assumptions were by then embedded in both main labour groupings. (6)

He cites examples from both Liberal and Tory working men in support of the war as evidence of Oldham's 'brash imperialism' in mass politics.(7) Particularly interesting is the quote from John Schofield, a former radical of the 1830s, attacking Bronterre O'Brien's opposition to the war:

Mr. O'Brien had told them that their conditions were as bad or worse than Russian serfs, but he would ask him to point to a page in history where Russian serfs could meet and discuss public questions as they were doing that night - where Russian serfs could eat white bread and good and wholesome food... (8)

Foster says that this is "an excellent example of false consciousness at work: the blocking out of a class analysis...the way he (ie Schofield - PS) rephrases the dispute in nationalist terms - the free Englishman against the Russian serf."(9)

However, I would argue one of the weaknesses of Foster's attempts to understand working class politics and culture during this period is his reductionist class analysis which fails to appreciate the importance of radical- democratic traditions of 'the free-born Englishman', instead reducing the complex ideological issues down to the highly misleading (and analytically useless) concept of 'false consciousness'.

A study of nineteenth century dialect literature may help shed light on working class attitudes towards the empire, and the wars associated with it. The 'language of patriotism', as Hugh Cunningham has argued, was an ideological battlefield in the last century, with the concept of 'patriotism' being largely the preserve of the radical movement, up until the emergence of the revived Tory imperialism of Disraeli, with its strong populist tendency. While Cunningham argues that 'patriotism' became the preserve of the imperialist right by the 1870s, I would suggest it remained a much fought- over term. While there are examples of left-wing nationalists who moved to the right, such as Blatchford and Hyndman, there remained a strong patriotic undercurrent

within late nineteenth century socialism which remained anti-war and anti-imperialist. For some years, the anthem of English socialism was Carpenter's "England Arise!". This sentiment found echoes in some writings of Lancashire dialect writers, including Ben Brierley, Samuel Laycock, Allen Clarke and Hannah Mitchell. Some historians have suggested that the traditional interpretation of jingoism as a partly working class phenomenon also needs re-examination: Richard Price's study of the Boer War suggests that the mobs which disrupted socialist meetings as being 'pro-Boer' were largely petty-bourgeois,(11) and Standish Meacham has argued that:

Working class lads who joined the army did so, not out of zeal, but because they could find jobs nowhere else. And working class families, if they cheered with the rest of the country upon the occasion of the relief of Mafeking, celebrated because relatives they knew were part of the fight, and because for them the fight had become a personal one. (12)

This chapter will look at the themes of war, imperialism and patriotism through working class Lancashire dialect writers, over the period from 1850s, when Foster argues imperialism became part of 'mass politics', through to the 1920s. This covers the period of the Crimean War, the Indian Mutiny, Zulu Wars, the Boer Wars of the late 1870s and turn of the century and the First World War itself. There are four distinct political positions adopted by dialect writers during this period, which will be examined. The first is the post-Chartist radicalism of J. T. Staton which expressed similar ideas to those of the pro-war Schofield, which Foster quotes above. In relation to the Crimean War Staton argued that British democracy was preferable to Russian serfdom, and that the war should be fought as a battle against tyranny, but won with a minimum of flag waving or war mongering. The second, and by far the strongest of all four positions in terms of the frequency in which it appears, is a radical-liberal anti-war attitude, which runs from the 1850s right through to the 1920, with its most well-known standard-bearers being Laycock and Brierley. The socialist anti- imperialism of Allen Clarke and Hannah Mitchell forms a third position, which owes much to the traditions of radical-Liberalism. Finally, a small number of dialect writers adopted openly

imperialist positions, mainly William Baron and the later writing of William Billington.

The Bowtun Luminary and the Crimean War

J.T. Staton's weekly dialect journal commented at length on the course of the Crimean War, perhaps because many Bolton soldiers would have been at the front, and local interest would be correspondingly high. Unlike his usually sardonic remarks on current issues, the treatment of the war is serious on most occasions, but on the fall of Sebastopol, he permits himself a bout of rejoicing:

Enoof for us that Sebastopol no lunger belongs to Roosha; that hur peawr ith Black Sea is vanist for ever (th'feighur, let by hur own honds, has utterly consumed it); that eawr brave soldiers are released fro trench duty; are no lunger exposed to eendless dangers; an are at liberty to give th'enemy a smasher in another quarter. We con afford to rejeighce, un make merry, un throw up eawr caps, un sheawt 'Hrreaw! justice an liberty for ever; un deawn wi Muscovite tyranny.' (13)

Here are many of the themes of Staton's attitude to the war: the fight against 'Russian Tyranny', the heroic role of the ordinary soldier, the idea that Britain is the embodiment of justice and liberty. Staton sees the possibility of political freedom for Poland and Hungary if a decisive defeat is inflicted on Russia, and attacks those who want a 'negotiated peace':

It isn't so mitch because they hate war, nor yet because they're ill off to see owd Inglon agen attendin to nowt but its trade un commerce, that they want us to shake honds un be friends; but because they're freetunt that if we push on a bit fur th'Poles un th'Hungarians may find an opportunity to be up an dooin, un that matters may come to an isshue fearful for th'Heawse o Hapsburgh un Romanoff to even think abeawt. (14)

This is clearly a long way from any jingoistic imperialism, relishing war for imperial glory and territorial conquest; rather he sees the liberating effect a Russian defeat would have, as Marx also did at the time.(15) He followed up this statement with a denunciation of "Rooshan Englishmen" such as Cobden, who wrote articles condemning the war. He is attacked not for being 'against war' in principle, but for his own tactics

in objectively supporting Russian 'tyranny':

When a chap comes forrard an raises his melancholy though musical veighce ogen aw war on principle - when he objects to it, because it brews a deal o mischief, and tumbles on to us greight skipfuls o sufferin an evil - when he stons up un condemns it becos he believes it be quite contrary to Christianity... we con underston such a mon, un though we may chaonce not to agree wi him, still we con afford to respect him... But when a chap in condemnin war does nowt but abuse his own countrymen... then we cannot gradely underston such a mon, un its vast little respect ut we con afford t feel for him. (16)

Although Staton's attacks on Cobden are severe, he acknowledges that Cobden has played an honourable part in the past, and wonders why he is "befriendin a system that aw their past political loife has been opposed to". Staton concludes that their reason for condemning the war is primarily economic, because of the destruction to trade it has caused:

Aw their low seems to be centred i'calico, cotton, un bear's graise - their sympathis aw bestowed on th'common enemy to free institushuns, an aw that's wuth livin for. We're therefor reet in cawin um Rooshan Inglishmen. (17)

Later that year, Staton discussed the peace terms which were being suggested, with Austria as mediator - he was highly suspicious of Esterhazy and his autocratic government. However, he thought that Palmerston knew what he was doing and was prepared to trust his policy of using Austria in the interests of ending the war:

We're no friends to war, un never wur on principle; we'n nobbut advocated it as a necessity; un we should rejeighce to see it ended in th'nashunal satisfacshun. (18)

A few weeks later he returns to the peace proposals, again hoping that they will form the basis of a settlement. However, he takes care to distance himself from the 'un-English' pacifism of Cobden and Bright:

Witheawt agreein wi aw th'nonsense un un-English palaver uts bin put forth by Cobden un his Bright gang o Wot-nexters, we sincerely, un seriously hope that a peace - a safe, honourable, an lastin peace - may be speedily concluded un that eawr brave soadiurs un lion-hearted tars may coome whoam ogen to

th'buzzum o'their families un friends. For we'n no interest i'war, except sitch as a chap met feel ith acshuns oth police when his heawse wur attacked bi burglars. Its bin a cheice uv evils, un we're still convinced that in choosin war, we gien preference to th'leost. (19)

For all Staton's support of the war, and his determination to see Russia humiliated, he is careful to avoid patriotic blandishments, and stirring appeals based on blind anti-Russian prejudice. The enemy is Russian tyranny, not the Russian people; equally he makes it plain that war is an evil, and not something to relish except as a last, defensive resort. The people who suffer most are the ordinary soldiers and sailors, and their families at home. Brave as they are, the common soldiers will be glad to get back, alive, to their families. When the war was finally over, Staton editorialises on the 'peace' which has been restored, on how some regret it:

Nobuddy con love war for war's sake, we should imagin in a Christian country loike Inglund. But yet there are chaps ut have expressed regret at th'war being browt to an end. Not that they're heroes theirsels, not that they're prepared to tak up arms, to leov their native country. That's a brid ov another colour... They imagine, un perhaps reetly, that th'proice o'food has been raised up un kept bi th'war: un they'n un interest in it beein kept up consequently it matters little to um heaw mony's kilt; heaw mony' whoams are turn'd into heawses o'mournin, heaw mony widows un orphans are med; heaw mony tears ars shed... so that they swell their money bags wi their gains, un become, leek ultures, fat wi th'harvest o'war... (20)

Finally, Palmerston is given the half-compliment of being "rayther a warloike sort ov a chap" - if the peace agreement is acceptable to him, Staton's argues, it should be acceptable to everyone.

Within Staton's writings there is what appears to be an element of Palmerstonian patriotism: a stress on "owd Inglund" and the bravery of its soldiers and sailors, a patriotism which can sanction war if the nation feels unjustly treated - and go on to win major territorial gains. During the Crimean War, Staton was able to support Palmerston in an imperial war. In this, he was not alone. As Hugh Cunningham has argued, referring to popular hatred of foreign oppressors:

It was Palmerston's achievement to extract every ounce of political advantage from this rhetoric. Foreign despots would be denounced, and the people of England, in the shape of Barclay and Perkins' draymen, would give them their due if ever they dared set foot in the land of freedom... In the Crimean War he could draw on a tradition of Russophobia founded on Russian oppression of Poles and other subject nationalities. (21)

Palmerston was able to mobilise many of the strongest political motifs of Chartist radicalism for an imperial war: firstly, the radical patriotism of the Chartists in the sense of England being 'the mother of freedom', with a democracy, however limited, and free speech, however curtailed, and secondly the internationalism of the Chartists particularly in relation to the Poles and Hungarians who enjoyed considerable support for their national liberation struggles. The Russian tsar typified all that was most anti-democratic and reactionary in the world, holding his own people in serfdom, and subjugating heroic nations like Kossuth's Hungary. Staton's writing on the Crimean War is an excellent example of how Chartist radicalism was skilfully used to pursue a war of imperial conquest.

It was, however, challenged. We have seen Staton's attacks on Bright and Cobden for their anti-war policy. Their opposition may have been partly motivated by economic considerations. But also, their opposition could be seen as part of the radical-liberal tradition of pacifism which had antecedents in the Jacobinism of the 1790s, and more recently in strands of Chartism.

At the same time that Staton was arguing in his Bolton dialect in support of the war, two fictitious weavers, 'Robert un Ben' were discussing the situation in nearby Rochdale, home of Cobden and Bright. O Konversashun Between Two Rachde Flannel Weyvurs Obeawt Th'War was published in the form of a short pamphlet during the Crimean War. The author remains anonymous, but provides us with an interesting 'Introduction' in standard English, telling us that the conversation takes place in a hand loom weaving shop, at one of the usual daily gatherings of weavers to discuss the state

of things.

It is from one of these daily gatherings that the following conversation has been taken, and which shows to some extent the feeling of many in the humble walks of life, in reference to the present war. Without attempting strictly to adhere to any acknowledged form of dialect, the writer has given the words in the simplest manner, as they are generally pronounced in common conversation, amongst the working classes in Rochdale. (22)

The introduction suggests the work of either an educated working man, or a sympathetic lower middle class person. Margaret Lahee is one possibility - she was a radical, and made a point of getting to know working class life when she moved from Ireland to Rochdale. However, her normal use of dialect is more refined than this, suggesting the likelihood of it being some other local writer - perhaps an associate of Tom Livsey, the leading figure in Rochdale working class radicalism for many years, and a man fond of using the dialect himself.

Robert is the spokesman against the war, with Ben as his foil; the main argument to begin with is over the Hungarians and Poles - whilst Britain is supposedly helping Turkey, the real oppressed nationalities are ignored:

Aw say ogen, ut iv we elp'n one kunthry wi aught to elp onuther. Eaw leets wi didn't elp th'Ungarians un th'Poles when they're bein thramp'l't on un robb'd wi Austhry un Rusha? (23)

Robert goes on to tell Ben about all the political refugees from Eastern Europe who are travelling through Rochdale on the train for Liverpool, where they will emigrate to America. Many have also set up home in Rochdale itself - 'Merrick' (Marek?) who runs a store, "un that chaps ut sells cigars ith Wauk", with Robert adding "un some ill they'n bin u't". Robert goes on to argue that if we had joined forces with the democrats in Hungary and Poland, Russia would have been powerless to advance into Turkey, or anywhere else, given the powers ranged against it. Ben replies that Robert has been listening too much to "what John Bright says", but in reply Robert says that while he does not agree with all Bright says, he is right in his attitude to the war. Vast amounts of money, and human life, are being wasted in pursuit of a war supposedly to

help Turkey, but in reality a war between England and France against Russia. Robert ends with a hope that the government will get out of the conflict quickly - and next time find something better to fight about!

Aw guest we're in it neaw, un eaw sees no signs o getting eawt on't in a hurry noathur, but let's ope ut er government ul get eawt on it uz soon as it kon, un ot next time they gwon to war, theyn av summat gradely to feight for, un ut'll be o some benefit to ur own kunthry. (24)

The piece suggests that working class opinion was divided in its attitude to the war; clearly the author was attempting to use dialect to get a message over to 'waverers' like Ben that the war should be opposed, and that Britain's real interests lie with the democrats like Kossuth, rather than Turkish pashas. The clumsy dialect coupled with the highly literate 'Introduction' suggests that it could be the work of a middle class writer, only half-successfully attempting to describe the speech of working class people - but equally it could be the work of a local working class intellectual trying to 'justify' a radical anti-imperialist stance by using a dialect which he is familiar with in normal conversation, but less so as a literary form. Part of the "Introduction", concerning hand-loom weaving practices, suggests the writer has a good knowledge of weaving life referring to customs of lighting the stove fire in the middle of the weaving shop. The writer does draw a slight line of demarcation between himself and John Bright - not believing all he says, but being in agreement over the war - a position which many Chartists may have followed.

The identity of the author can only, then, be surmised. The piece does however suggest that working class radicalism, represented on the one hand by Staton's reluctant support for the war, and the flannel weaver's opposition on the other, was severely split on the issue - but neither side exulted in the conflict. As Staton commented when peace had finally been agreed:

Whoile th'war lasted it monopolised public attenshun un swallowed up every other considerashun. Politics wur shelved, un important questions put back. We may neaw, heawever, begin to look abeawt us, un to start wonst mooar

i'good yernest to strive after thoose reforms which wonst bespoke eawr sympathies un commanded eawr exershuns; un we hope it may be a long toime before England has ogen to resort to war. (25)

However, it is debatable whether politics did resume 'as normal' - the political ground had shifted considerably during the war, providing a basis for future imperial adventures, not least within the working class. The radical anti-Russianism of Staton could co-exist and ultimately succumb to right wing versions of 'patriotism' which steadily became dominant in British politics. Staton himself did not, however. Shortly after the Crimea debate, he was writing about the reactionary 'Kalvary Dragons', and supporting strikes against 'tyrannical' employers.

A Soldier's Life: Staton's Anti-Militarist Satire

If Staton glorified the common foot soldier, and 'jack-tar' of the Crimean War, he did not extend his sympathies to the local yeomanry. Both before and after the war he wrote some biting satire about the part-time soldiers of the middle classes. In his "Yeomanry Lyrics" he wrote a series of songs celebrating the 'heroism' of these local troops:

Bowtun yeomen! quit yoar beds,
Rub yore een an scrat yore yeds:
Warriors wake! yoar captain treads
His mornin march alone
Neaw's the heawr an neaw's the day;
Hark to th'trumpets hideous bray
Caws to lofty deeds away,
Arouse ye at the tone.

Glorious troop! immortal fame
Awaits each valiant soldier's name
Defyin feor an bravin shame

Poo off yore caps un sheawt,
Un when some lowfin face yo see
Towards yo turnt wi scornful glee,
Let this yoar warlike answer be:-
"My Mother knows awm eawt". (26)

The local yeomanry were frequently ridiculed in columns of the Bowtun Luminary for their sham bravery and 'playing at soldiers'. In the same issue as his 'Yeomanry Lyrics No. 2' - "Fareweel Bowtun", Staton refers to the provision applying to the Yeomanry force that 'it wur Unconstitushonal to send um abroad on military service'. Staton makes the comment that:

A wag as knowd heaw yezzily their courage would evaporate ith presence of an enemy proposed that to the clause preventin their leovin th'counthry, should be added these words: "EXCEPT IN THE CASE OF AN INVASHUN." (27)

Elsewhere he pokes fun at the 'dressing-up' the Yeomanry go in for - and contrasts this with their reluctance get involved in a serious battle:

Its noice to wear a jacket red,
Wi yallow aw turnt up,
To swagger wi a helmet on,
Un smook, un swear, un sup,
Loike soaldiers aw are noted for,
Un carry a lung surd;
But when it comes to feightin love,
It's shockin pon my word. (28)

The opinion amongst many radicals was that the Yeomanry were less intended to act as a defence force in case of attack, than to be a military force ready to put down strikes and unrest. After the end of the Crimean War, Staton returns to the subject of the yeomanry - or 'Kalvary Dragons'. He goes back in history to the role played by the part-time soldiers, and asks what good they have ever done:

Th'fust toime ut ever they distinguisht theirsels wur at Peterloo. Then, as drunk as pigs, they rode in among an unoffendin creawd o'their fellow counthrymen un counthrywimmin, cuttin un slashin witheawt reason un witheawt mercy. Unm wot had their victims done?... They'd done nowt but simply met on Peteloo fielt to yer Harry Hun expound his political doctrines un to let a fit o leet on th'dark monstrosities oth owd tory system. (29)

Staton goes on to mention their role in Bolton during the 1842 disturbance, when "they wur cawd upon to keep th'empty-ballied un ragged backt pert oth populashun quiet". All that was achieved, says Staton, was to stir up more trouble than had already

existed, with the 'kalvary dragons' distinguishing themselves by slicing off an innocent man's nose in Nelson Square. Staton goes on to say that the soldiers are 'opposed to th'extenshun o politcal reets to th'people, un awlus wur' and accuses many of them of being Orangemen, the most reactionary sort of Tory. He concedes that they might be tolerated if they could repulse a foreign attack - but then concludes that if Britain was so attacked they would run away in terror. All they provide is the occasional comic relief at their 'playing soldiers', but he says "we live'n i'toimes neaw when playin at soadiurs is i'bad odour" - no doubt a reference to the reality of the Crimean War, with its attendant horrors, which had just ended. The soldiers who won that war were mainly working class recruits, not the middle classes who formed the 'kalvary dragons'. Staton's attacks on the yeomanry were clearly popular: he reprinted several of his 'milisha sketches' as pamphlets, and readers wrote in with their own anecdotes of yeomanry stupidity.

Staton's attacks on the yeomanry remained a feature in the Bowtun Luminary for as long as he edited the paper; when it was re-named the Lankishire Loominary (note spelling) and ownership fell into the hands of John Heywood's, the Manchester publishers, the satire became more muted. However, the strength of his attacks, and their evident popularity, suggests that working class support for the state's forces was far from unquestioning in the 1850s, and was conditional on being seen to be just: whilst Staton argued that the Crimean War was a necessary war, he forthrightly condemned the soldiers who were recruited to control the local populace.

Radical Liberalism and Imperialism

Conflict with Russia again rose to the surface in the late 1870s, with Britain supporting Turkey against their mutual enemy. Ben Brierley, writing as "Ab o'th'

Yate", wrote a number of sketches on the subject in his Ben Brierley's Journal. He satirises the patriotism which only comes to the fore when plied with sufficient amounts of ale:

There's no knowin th'feelin' o'satisfaction there is in an Englishman's breast till there's a war note seaunded. Then he lets eaut. But it taks a gill or two for t'set th'patriotic pump gradely agate o'workin'; an when he's bottomed th' quart he'd give o'he has of hos own, an other folks too, for th'sake of his counthry. What peawer could stond up again beef-an-ale-fed England? (30)

Ab gets into conversation with 'Fause Juddie' who is carried away at the thought of a glorious war, but Ab cautions restraint and suggests that the Turks and Russians are both powerful nations, which in the past have been armed and supplied by Britain:

It's just here George - fifty yer sin we hadno begun a makkin guns, an buildin war ships for other nations. But sin then it's bin a big trade for us. Like makkin machinery for 'em to cut us eaut i'makkin calico, an' other things, we'n bin makkin machinery for 'em to leather us wi. (31)

Ab's lesson is that if you teach someone to fight, don't be surprised if someone comes along and punches you in the face as a result. The lesson is driven home by Dick Chaddick giving Jack o'Flunter's lessons in fist-fighting. Jack becomes so proficient that when Dick Chaddick throws down a general challenge in the pub, his student accepts the challenge and gives him a good hiding.

In the same period Brierley wrote two other pieces on the war scare: "Feight or No Feight? The Cobbler of Alderburn on the War, and Love and War: A Tale of the Times." Both satirised the war fever which was building up in 1878. The scene of "Feight or No Feight" is set in a pub tap-room. A stranger arrives telling the company that war is likely; the patriotic fervour runs cool when they are told that conscription of all adult males is likely, and Jack-o-Sim's reflects:

We didno think we should be co'ed on to feight... We'n allus bin used to send others off to feight for us, an we'n done th'sheautin. That makes o'th' difference. It's pleasanter singin' "Rule Britannia" in a tap room than in a fielt

wi bullet's whizzin abeaut one's yead." (32)

Elsewhere, the issue of fighting someone else's battle (Turkey's) further dampens their enthusiasm, and Rasper suggests that if people knew the reality of what war meant, there would be even less shouting done about it:

It's a lung time sin we'd any war i'this country, so we dunno know what it is. If we seed a teawn or two in a blaze, an hunderts o'folk lyink buttons apart, we should change th'tone of eawr singin abeawt th'war. (33)

The residents of Owldeburn resolve to hold a public meeting about the war, and many patriotic voices are raised in favour of defending queen and country - until someone gives the alarm that "the Russians are coming"! Exit most of the patriots, with a handful of the local weavers remaining to defend the community. The defenders are the only ones who realise a trick has been played and the Russians aren't really advancing on Owldeburn. They march off to the nearest pub, with one of the company reflecting that "we shall yer nowt no moore abeaut th'war for some time".

The last sketch, "Love and War", is headed with the motto "Let those who make the quarrels be the only men to fight". The story is of a young man, Giles Summertop, who decides to enlist after being plied with drink in a local pub. When he realises what he has let himself in for as he sobers up. His love for Jinny comes before the nation's call, and he has second thoughts. Although he has not the money to buy himself out of the army, he marries Jinny to avoid being called up. (34)

Brierley's attitude towards the war suggests the sort of unenthusiastic position which the late Victorian working class had towards imperial adventures, that it was someone else's war. As Standish Meacham suggested,

If the soldier died, he died not for king and country, as his superiors constantly tried to convince him, but because he had the rotten luck to be at the wrong place at the wrong time. (35)

Brierley is attempting to put forward the realities of war - towns ablaze and corpses in the streets. He does not over-dramatize this, but puts his anti-war message across in the common sense dialect phrases of the pub cronies. The ones who get carried away with the war fever are ridiculed, and are shown to run for cover at the first sign of real trouble. The war which was being whipped up in 1878 was, as Brierley made plain, someone else's war: let Russia and Turkey fight it out if they want to - it's none of our concern. The internationalism of the earlier generation of Staton is no longer there - the main concern is survival in the immediate locality, and getting or keeping a job during the hard years of the late 1870's. In Ben Brierley's Journal a poem called "Hard Times" appeared which brings together forcefully the problems of working class life at the time:

It's very hard biding these times.
These times ov hee rents an low wages-
Ou o'tune like jinglin cracked chimes;
Among th'human kind ov o ages,
An' o'through that greatest o'crimes;
That war which i'th'East fiercely rages. (36)

The criticism of the Tory government under Disraeli is implied, rather than overt in Brierley's writing, though the condemnation of war is strong enough. In Samuel Laycock's verse however, the attack can be even sharper, with the supposedly unassailable figure of 'John Bull' getting a hard knock:

Neaw, aw love a good owd song,
One 'at raps at vice an' wrong,
An' raises hope i'th breasts
O'th'good an' pure, John Bull;
But aw hate thoose tricks o'thine,
Steppin' o'er thi naybur's line,
Robbin' other people's gardens -
Oh, forshame! John Bull.
If there's one thing that aw hate,
It's thy cunnin' an' decate,-
Th'way tha'rt shufflin' wi th'nayburs
Ole areawnd, John Bull.
Sich loike conduct pains mi moind,

An mi heart may seem unkind,
But aw never can excuse
Sich faults as these, John Bull. (37)

Laycock, in his later years, was a much more political poet than either of his contemporaries, Waugh and Brierley. While Brierley was a Liberal councillor, Liberal party politics are generally absent from his work, even if Liberal attitudes and beliefs are present. Laycock, however, wrote a number of openly propagandistic pieces for the Liberal Party, and poems such as "John Bull" were part of the Liberal attacks on the Tory government, using heavy irony to make his point. The following extract is from "Shut up! Yo Liberals!":

Wheer would Cyprus have been when th'preawd Russians wur near,
But for Englishmen's guns, English bibles an beer!
Wheer would India's grand jewels an' camels have been,
Iv hoo hadn't had an Empress made eawt ov a Queen!
Then ther's th'Zulus; it pains one to read their sad story,
But eawr breet English bay'nets can peint 'em to glory.
Look at Ireland - that spot o'contentment an'quiet
Wheer there's ne'er sich thing as a murder or riot! (38)

Laycock was aware that the Tories had been able, through Disraeli's Tory populism, to win the support of sections of the working class. Now, when they are in power, the 'John' whom he addresses in "What's To Do 'At Tha'rt Lookin' Soa Sulky, John?" has had time to reflect on what his vote has brought:

Tha wanted these Tories to govern;
They're governin; neaw doesta see;
Soa dunno run thi own wark deawn,
Tha's sent 'em, so let 'em a-be.

The poem ends with a forceful attack on the 'Tory working man', gulled by drink and imperial adventures, and not allowed to 'think':

It's noa business o'thine to be thinkin':
Leov that to thoose 'at have brains;
Thee get on wi thi workin an drinkin',
Worship th'tyrant at forges thi chains.
Shoot thi nayburs to mak 'em respect thee;
Never mind abeawt doin' what's reet;
Tha cannot booath serve God an'Mammon,
So tha's no need to try, mon. Good neet. (39)

The poem is an unusually direct attack on working class Conservatism, an attempt to shock some of his readers out of their established ways of thinking: particularly severe are his strictures on imperialism, and the way colonial peoples are exploited:

They send us their rice an'their cotton.
To keep these frail bodies i'tune;
Let's give them some peawder an'bullets,
To prepare 'em for th'mansions aboon! (40)

The imperialists' mis-use of Christianity is one of the most noteworthy of Laycock's attacks on imperialism - rather than seeing missionaries as somehow a neutral, or even potentially positive influence, they are identified as a part of the total imperialist structure, as bad as the bullets and liquor which are part of the strategy to subjugate nations. "John Bull An' His Tricks" returns to this feature of imperialism - the combination of physical force and attempted religious conversion:

Iv tha's th' sense ov a jackass tha'll tarry awhoam,
An' keep th'own garden i'fettle;
But tha'd rather be eawt with thi Bible an'gun,
An'robbin' some other mon's kettle. (41)

Laycock was a Gladstonian Liberal, and stuck by the 'Grand Old Man' during the Home Rule crisis of the mid-1880s. Laycock felt particularly strongly about the oppression of Ireland. Two poems in Warblin's Fro' An Owd Songster address the question of Ireland directly. The first, "Cheer Up Irish Brothers" is a message of solidarity, telling the Irish people that there are friends in England who are trying to help them:

Cheer up a bit, poor Irish brethren,
Tho it's hard work to do so awm sure;
One's surprised yo'n kept up as yo' have done,
Wi th'hardships yo'n had to endure.
What wi soldiers, police an'coercion,
Imprisonment, buckshot an' fines:
An' land agents sneakin' areawnd yo',
Yo'n certainly very hard lines.

Well, try to hold on a bit longer;
Stand firm, neaw 'at help seems so near;

We're feightin yore battles i'England,
An' shall win 'em, yo'n no need to fear. (42)

This message of optimism contrasts with the bitter satire of "Ireland's Vice-Royalty Underpaid" - an attack on the suggestion that the viceroy should have a pay increase, and the wider role of British imperialism in Ireland:

Well, it's shameful to ha sich a salary as that!
It isn't enuff to provide for a cat.
Of course this affair is noa business o'mine,
If it wur aw should throw th'job up an' resign.
To' mitch did yo' say? Why, surely, yo joke;
Twenty theawsand for mindin' five million o'foalk!
Just think o'th'big meetin's he has to disperse;
An' then look at th'numbers he has to coerce! (43)

As has been argued elsewhere (44), Laycock's anti-imperialist radicalism should not be taken as reflecting a socialist standpoint: he is firmly committed to an alliance between working class and middle class, including the Liberal factory masters such as Hugh Mason of Ashton. It could be argued that there is a contradiction in being anti-imperialist and yet supporting capitalist enterprise which inevitably, in the case of the cotton trade, is imperialistic. Laycock would argue that he believes in 'fair' trade: a Lancashire cotton industry dealing equitably with a strong and independent India which is free to trade with whoever she wishes. Yet his anti-imperialist poetry seems so radical that many Liberals themselves would have squirmed at the strength of the attack on 'John Bull's Empire'. Perhaps, if these poems were isolated examples in his total work they could be passed over. However, he returns to the themes of violent imperialist exploitation so often they need to command much greater attention than they have so far received in commentaries on Laycock. He is the strongest working class critic of imperialism in this period, the 1870s to 1880s, and the lack of recognition of this must lie partly in his regional status. Being a dialect poet he set self-imposed limitations on the potential readership of his poetry within a geographical area. However, through his dialect he was able to reach a wider range of working class (and of course middle class) readers and listeners within Lancashire than if he had been yet

another earnest writer of standard English verse. Further, I would argue that his use of dialect in his attacks on imperialism give them the added edge of apparent down-to-earth common sense. If dialect helped to cushion the stridency of his anti-imperialism, perhaps it made the message that much more easy to get across to the likes of his Tory-voting 'John'.

Edwin Waugh, though sharing a common political outlook with Laycock and Brierley, seldom commented on 'imperial' questions, though his "Irish Sketches" indicate a keen awareness of Irish affairs, and Irish culture and traditions. His standard English poem, "Old Ireland Shall Blossom Again"(45) is the nearest he gets to a denunciation of English rule in Ireland, but has nothing of the political bite contained in Laycock's two Irish poems.

Liberalism and War: Lawton and Taylor

Before the Labour Party became the mass party of the working class, there was often a particularly close link between co-operation and Liberalism. Two writers who personified this link were David Lawton ("Th'Owd Weighvur") of Saddleworth, and J.T. Taylor, of Oldham. Both were involved in producing their local co-operative society journal and wrote a considerable amount of work in dialect. They were of a slightly younger generation than Brierley and his contemporaries, though Lawton had met Laycock on several occasions. Lawton's writing stretched through the period from the early 1870s until his death in 1918. Taylor had his first work published in 1873, and died in 1926; however his health prevented him from doing much literary work after 1918. Both were writing during the First World War, and a consideration of their work on this period may be useful in detecting changes in attitudes (if any) towards imperialism amongst Liberals. Lawton wrote some standard English poems about the war, and "A Prayer For the Time - Just Before the Great War, 1914". This poem is a plea against war - the first few lines will give the main theme of the poem:

Save us from war, O God, hold back the pride,
The jealousy and hateful greed of those
Who rule the nations; stay ambitions' tide,
With all its dreadful train of untold woes. (48)

If the poem is a plea for humanity to pull back from the abyss, with equal blame for the intending conflict attached to all sides, the writer's view changes during the war. In a dialect sketch, "Th'Owd Weighvur's Kersmas chat Wi' King Edward's Ghost" Lawton begins by attacking royalty for its part in the conflict.

"Whot dusta think abeawt yore handiwark, yo kings and kaisers. Awm talkin to thee as representin o th'ten or a dozen sitchlike 'at we han i'Europe, wi' yore diplomacy, yore larnin', an' o yore foseness generally. Come neaw, dusta think 'at onny dozen chimney sweepers could ha' made a bigger mess o'things iv they'd tried?" (49)

The King's ghost tries to defend himself, suggesting most of the blame lies with Germany. He argues:

Would it be reet to let 'em run roughshod o'er everything an' everybody, just becose they happent to be a bit strunger nur common? Is might to tak th'place ov right? What sooart ov a place would this world be to live in iv that idea were to rule? It winno abide thinkin' at, mon." (50)

The conversation continues, with the weaver lamenting that after two thousand years of Christianity, the world was reduced to a holocaust. The king replies that:

Christianity's noan to blame at o. It's never bin tried gradely yet, but happen it'll get a bit ov a chance after this. (51)

The conversation ends on a note of optimism - that out of all the suffering something better must come, in spite of kings and kaisers: at that point, the weaver wakes up to find it was only a dream after all. In another standard English poem, written in April 1916, he contrasts the British spring with the carnage in the fields of France and Belgium; while in England 'buttercups and cowslips bloom', the scene is different over the Channel. This is the last verse of "In British Fields":

'Tis Spring in France and Belgium, but their hills

Are battle-scarred, their fields with blood are red;

The scream of shells and roar of cannon fills
The air, and on their plains lie thousands dead.
Alas! ambitious minds the truth forget
That men above all else are brothers yet. (52)

In Lawton's war writing there is a sense of deep unease and uncertainty about whether the war is 'right'. In the dialogue between the weaver and the King there is a genuine sense of debate and discussion, rather than a straightforward putting of a clear political line by one or the other speakers. Although the weaver seems to be convinced by the King's arguments, there remains lurking doubts - over who is to blame, and the role of the 'great men' in the conflict of the kings and kaisers. The sketch was written in December 1915 when the reality of war had begun to sink in. The tone of "In British Fields" is less optimistic: the only thing to cling on to amidst the carnage is the fact - forgotten by the generals and statesman - that 'men above all else are brothers yet'.

This sense of unease and uncertainty comes over in Taylor's prose sketch "War An' Music" - the narrator is walking with a friend who has a son at the front. His friend hears thunder and instinctively thinks it is the sound of artillery. The two men arrive at the church service, with the man still in a state of shock about the thunder:

Aw looked at my programme to see what we were goin t'have, but my companion seemed to be lookin' reawnd an'harkenin' for summat. Aw daresay it wur th'guns. He'd come'n to hearken th'music, but it wur th'music o'th'guns that reach'd his soul. (53)

The service continues, with sincere tributes to the dead, but his friend seems far away. At the end of the service he goes out of the church, chatting with other friends as they leave - but his companion has left:

When aw went eawtside my companion had gone. Aw seed him a couple o'days after, but his een had a far away look. He'd had a telegram. His lad wur killed. (54)

The short sketch puts over simply and directly the reality of war in its effect on one man, without over-dramatising or belittling the suffering. Whilst there is an implicit

sense that the war has to be fought, the sooner it is over the better for all. During the service an old Welsh hymn is sung which suggests peace between nations, not war:

It made yo' feel at peace wi'everybody. Thee wur no war, no enmity, no guns firin'. Thee wur nowt nobbut low, sweet, plaintive music. (55)

In an earlier poem, written at the same time of Victoria's Golden Jubilee, Taylor describes a dialogue between 'Mally and Joe' about the celebrations. This is a most unusual poem for a Liberal writer - it was common for Liberal dialect writers such as Brierley and even Laycock to write sympathetically of the monarch. If imperialism was criticised, it was the generals, politicians and capitalists that were to blame: the Queen was a benign figure above party strife. Here though, whilst the Queen is not attacked as such, the older woman puts a damper on young Joe's royalist ardour, after he suggests how much better off working people are after fifty years of her reign:

For what we have eawr thanks are due
To noather King nor Queen;
The people their own architects
An' builders too have been.
If ony gratitude is due
For princely blessin's given,
Let th'Queen acknowledge what hoo owes
To us, an' God in Heaven. (56)

Another poem, "Toryism" is a defence of the Liberal tradition against Tory reaction, the party that is always 'sheawtin eawt for war' to the detriment of British industry. "Eawr Spiritied Policy" is a re-assertion of the Liberal internationalism of Laycock written in the mid-1870s when Britain was contemplating aiding the despotic Turkish regime:

Aw'm gradely fain that Owdham folk
are on their feet again
Contendin' for humanity,
And liberty of men.
Aw'm glad to yer them lift their voice
To swell the leawd protest
Against these cruel, horrid crimes
That shook each human breast. (57)

Taylor was referring to the 'Bulgarian atrocities' which Gladstone condemned in parliament, and which became a major issue in popular politics.

Both Lawton and Taylor are minor dialect poets, neither having received anything like the recognition of Laycock, Brierley or Waugh. However they are important in that they carried the Liberal-radical tradition of dialect writing through into the twentieth century. Whilst being able to write on the traditional homely, or down-to-earth concerns of everyday Lancashire working class life, both were committed to ideals of democracy and internationalism; this found strong echoes in their literary work. Whilst their attitude to the First World War was ambivalent, much the same can be said of most socialist writer's attitudes towards - but both avoided the raucous jingoism and anti-Germanism which found strong echoes in working class circles.

Socialists, Dialect, and Anti-Imperialism: Ambiguities and Contradictions

Socialist dialect writers like Allen Clarke and Robert Brodie were contemporaries of some of the writers discussed above, though younger. There are common themes in their writing, as well as divergences - they use satire to ridicule pro-war workers, and in Clarke's Tum Fowt Sketches there are clear echoes of Brierley's "Walmsley Fowt" sketches quoted earlier (eg "Ab O'th'Yate an' th'War"). However, there is a stronger class analysis brought into the sketches, and an awareness of economic issues lying behind political ideology. Clarke's writing during the First World War is particularly interesting for its highly ambivalent, indeed almost schizophrenic attitude; this was perhaps partly an attempt to maintain a critical attitude but not to lose his mass readership, but I also sense there was a genuine uncertainty which many socialists must have felt at the time, given the massive weight of propaganda ranged against them, and the imperialist pronouncements of respected figures like Blatchford and Hyndman. This part of the chapter will focus primarily on Allen Clarke and his circle - Brodie,

Tyrer, and Fred Plant - and conclude with a short section on Hannah Mitchell's story "Armistice Day".

As well as writing a considerable amount of literature - both humourous sketches and 'serious' novels which attack imperialism - Clarke also defined his political attitude to imperialism in a number of editorials in his Northern Weekly, and during the course of an argument with his former close friend Robert Blatchford. In 1902 he wrote an editorial on "Empire and Imperialism", arguing that:

The British Imperialistic policy is the policy that seeks to keep all our great possessions in our grip and to add as many more to them as possible or convenient. Imperialism is simply individualism writ universal... it is the lust for power and possession; its corner stone is covetousness and its apex avariciousness... An imperial policy means more or less war; it means the subjugation or extermination of small independent nations; it means conscription or something equivalent; it means lower wages for the workers; it means, sooner or later, revolution. (58)

This was immediately after the Boer War, which we shall look at in more depth shortly. Two years later Clarke strongly attacked Robert Blatchford for his policy of re-armament and 'defending the empire'. Clarke suggested that Blatchford was pursuing a militaristic policy which would lead to conscription, and then war. He was criticised by some of his readers for presenting a misleading picture of what the Clarion editor was saying, but responded with even firmer criticism:

Blatchford is certainly advocating Militarism, and that, sooner or later, means Conscription... As I understand socialism, socialism and militarism are antagonistic. Socialism means brotherhood - brotherhood towards every man, towards every nation... No sound socialist can be an Imperialist... to support militarism is to support the system which Socialism is seeking to overthrow. (59)

Clarke extends his critique to the whole idea of empire, suggesting that if we did lose India and South Africa we would be no worse off: "we have no more right to them than any other thief has to stolen goods". Even if Germany did conquer England, workers would only be exchanging one master for another, and does it, he asks, make a slave any worse off because a different master holds the whip?

Shortly after, Clarke published "An Open Letter to Robert Blatchford" in his Northern Weekly. The letter compliments him on the work he has done for the socialist movement, and argues, in a comradely manner, that he is disastrously wrong in his imperialistic views:

You say that working men have a stake in this country, and that it is worth fighting for. Said you so in Dismal England and other writings? Have you not pictured this land as blasted by the landlord, cursed by the capitalist - a veritable hell on earth to the toilers? And would you advise men to raise armies to defend hell and keep it going? (60)

Blatchford was not convinced, and the pro-imperialistic policies of the Clarion became stronger as British government policy towards Germany became more hostile. Ultimately, the paper went into decline, perhaps partly a result of Blatchford's imperialism which would have been unpopular with his large I.L.P. readership.

How did Clarke put across his anti-imperialist views in his literature? His main vehicle was the Tum Fowt Sketches, with a long-running series on "Th' Kock'Krow Club An Th'War", which satirised the campaign against the Boers. Clarke made his position on the war clear in an editorial at the outbreak of hostilities in 1899, when he compared the Boer war with the class war at home:

I suppose the bottom of the coal bother is wages. I guess that the colliery owners, like the nasty boers, won't let the colliers, that is the Uitlanders, have all their own way... I propose that Joe Chamberlain, on some pretext or other, picks a quarrel with the colliery owners and says he'll nationalise the mines at once if they don't agree to give their workmen better wages... And when Joe has done this, I hope the colliery owners, like Kruger, will be stupid and that our soldiers will be sent to bombard their villas and charge their wine cellars and give the colliery owners themselves a little bit of dum-dum in the chest if they make any silly opposition. (61)

Clarke goes on to suggest that the army might like to shell a few cotton mills - "the tall chimneys would make champion targets", and after that they could bayonet a few landowners and property owners. Clarke adds that the Tum Fowt Debatin Menociation are sending a company out to South Africa, to do their duty:

Bill Spriggs will be captain; and the company will consist of henpecked members of the Kock-Krow Club. It is said that war will be nothing new to these wed warriors, but, on the contrary, rather a relief from matrimony. (62)

After humorous escapades 'on manoeuvres' in the Lancashire countryside, the Tum Fowters arrive in South Africa - so they think; they are no further than Chorley in fact. As the company march down a country lane, they see a farm labourer in a field, who resembles Kruger, they decide to arrest 'the Boer leader':

Aw at once th'Tum Fowt regiment closed on Owd Kruger in a circle... and Bill Spriggs yelled: "Yo'd better surrender beaut any bother. We're aw arearound yo, an there's no get-eaut..." "What are yo meitherin' abeaut?" said Owd Kruger.

"What's this game meean? Hast come fro' Whittingham (the local asylum -PS) or wha?"

"We're British soliders," said Bill Spriggs, "an we arrest yo, yo rebel, in th'name o'th'Union Jack. God Save th'Queen, an th'Prince o'Wales, an aw th'rest o'th'Royal Family."

Owd Kruger smiled an said, "It's a trick isn't it? It's th'fust of April."

"It doesn't matter what day it is," said General Spriggs. "Aren't yo agan th'Empire an this war?" "Ay, an aw other silly war!" said Kruger. "What does th'English want to steil th'Boers country off 'em? Why don't they stop awhoam an mind their own business?" "Yer the bloody blasphemer!" said Captain Jerry. "He's defyin us. I'd shoot him as he stonds, only it would be better to take him alive." "Done yo surrender Kruger?" axed General Spriggs. "Yo may as well give in..." "What are yo talkin abeaut?" said th'mon. "Go whum an get sober. Goo an play yore pranks wheer yo'n had yore drink. I've yerd o'war fever turnin' folk crazy - but yo'r th'fust lot of idiots I've seen that's had their brains turned by it. I suppose aw England's gone mad." (63)

The sketch skilfully avoids too direct an attack on the war, using the 'sensible' figure of 'Kruger' to put the anti-war position across, to the daft Tum Fowt loyalists.

However, after delivering 'Kruger' to the authorities, Bill Spriggs finds out that the real Kruger is still alive, and offers his services to the Town Council, along with his 'war-hoss', Giner - otherwise Saut-Bob's donkey. Bill gets on a train at Bolton, hoping to reach 'the front' - which turns out to be the 'front' at Southport beach. On the train, he is told that the war is over, and his services won't be needed after all, by a 'patriotic' butcher:

"Pretoria is ta'n" said th'chap.
 "Wheer they ta'n it?" said Bill.
 "Th'British flag is flyin' o'er it, said th'chap.
 "Th'British lion is reposin with it. It's added to th'Empire. Kruger's run away."
 "Never!" said Bill. "Surely we're not too late?"
 "Th'war's o'er," said th'chap. "An I'm rayther sorry. For I've been makkin a find thing eaut o' my Patriotic Khaki sausages: givin a penny in th'peund to th'war fund. I'm an Imperialist pork butcher, an I never were so busy sausage makin in aw my life before. Whenever a chap within ten miles o'my district were kilt i'th'war I sent his widow a peund o'Khaki sausages to console her, an th'papers said it were very thoughtful on my part... If yo'r gettin off at Wigan, just ax for my Patriotic Khaki Sausages..." (64)

Again, Clarke attacks the war-profiteering and the exploitation of grief in a humorous, but devastating way - the 'khaki sausages' may seem ridiculous, but in the hysteria of the Boer War, even the election became 'Khaki'. Clarke manages to attack the war, yet without putting himself too far out on a limb: hundreds of Lancashire soldiers avidly read these sketches in South Africa, and sent regular letters into the paper, such as this extract from a letter from Private J Beconsall, Estcourt, South Africa, dated May 12th 1900:

I have never heard how Bill Spriggs went on with the Modder River Battle. Just one favour if you can do it. Could you send us a few Lancashire readings (Spriggs) out here. There are about 50 Lancashire chaps and a lot read The Northern Weekly, but we have not brought out any Lancashire readings. They would suit us to read at our Saturday night concerts. (65)

Not all of the Spriggs sketches on the war were political - many were simply humorous tales of their goings-on. Nonetheless, the two sketches quoted earlier are clearly critical of the war, as were Clarke's editorial comments, such as that of March 24th 1900, headed, "Why I am For Peace". He argues that the war is unjust, and the primary blame for it lies with England. Clarke is careful to avoid accusations of being un-patriotic, or pro-Boer:

In the discussion of this war I seek not to exalt the Boers nor debase the English. I only wish to ascertain what is the truth and then do the justice that is the logical outcome... I am as proud of England for her great and good deeds as any man; but I grieve for her mistakes... I am proud of England's Factory Acts, but sorry that she works her children half-time at a younger age than

Germany allows. I am proud of England's victories over the aggressive Napoleon, but sorry for what I consider her mistake in being at war in the Transvaal. (66)

Clarke's honesty in confronting the issue in a way which did not offend the Lancashire soldiers' sensibilities but put a firm anti-war position across helped the paper survive the war hysteria. However, criticism was made, and some hostile letters were printed which prompted supportive replies. Clearly, many of his readers did not support the war, though some did. An indication of this was taken from a competition for suggestions on "What Should Be Done With Kruger". (67) The replies ranged from: "Shoot him!" from Hannah Jackson of Mossley, and the gruesome "rub his body with emery paper until the skin came off his back, then rub salt into the wounds" from A. Partington of Moston, through to: raffling him, giving him a good bath and a square meal, and sending him to Bet Spriggs. Bessie Owen of Moston suggested he should be exhibited at Blackpool, whilst Francis Mary Thompson of Kirkham suggested:

Do unto Kruger as we should like to be done by when we get old. Let his closing years be happy ones, free from all cares of this life.

A 'Constant reader' of Blackburn suggested that he should be brought to England "and given the same chance as we English workingmen". "Kipling" of Bolton was moved to poetry:

What shall we do with Kruger?
What shall we do with Paul?
Give him his liberty, country and rights,
And stay our cannon ball.
Give him an English hand-shake too;
Bow and do it meekly,
Then, ere a chance we throw away,
Show him the Northern Weekly.

Most of the published replies suggested doing various humane things with him, though John Whitehead's suggestion of sending him piecing in a cotton mill was, in Clarke's opinion, the cruellest suggestion!

As well as the Tum Fowt Sketches on the war, Clarke and his friend Fred Plant wrote a serial novel, A Soldier And His Sweetheart, dealing with South Africa. The novel relates industrial trouble at home to the war, and to the common suffering of both Boer and English soldiers. It projects a future, when the war is over and the reality of what happened comes home to people:

The war was over; the strike was over. Spindleton was at work, England was at work; working to pay off the cost of war. The money cost, great as it was, could be made up again by men. But who could make up for the loss of life and joy? Many of the returned soldiers were out of work, degenerating into tramps and vagabonds. Some of them were far worse off than those who had fallen in battle. The crowds who had cheered the men in khaki setting off for the front, the people who had even turned parliamentary elections into khaki affairs, had sunk back into their normal condition of indifferent ignorance. (68)

One of the heroes of the novel is Harry Threlfall. He is a cotton worker and trade unionist who joins the army and plays a distinguished and humane part before getting killed. Referring to this incident, "A Sympathiser" wrote in to the Northern Weekly describing how he saw a young man burst into tears on a tram whilst reading the story:

What the young man's sorrow was is not for me to say; sufficient to say that the story must have brought to his mind the remembrance of some friend or brother who perhaps had suffered the same fate as befel Harry Threlfall. (69)

Clarke's attitude to the war combines sympathy with the working class soldier fighting in a war which he knows nothing about, other than seeing it as an escape from factory drudgery, with a deep hostility to the 'makers' of the war: the capitalists, politicians and generals, the petty-bourgeoisie and others who profit out of the carnage. He appears to have kept most of his readers during this period, despite some criticism of his anti-war stand. It is useful to compare Clarke's writings during the Boer War period with those of the First World War. I will suggest that they show an at times contradictory attitude which reflects the massive pressure to support the war effort; Clarke's lack of a 'dogmatic' socialism - such an asset in much of his politics and

writing - became a handicap in resisting the war propaganda effort.

Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly finally ceased publication in 1908; he then went to work for the Liverpool Weekly Post, which he stayed with up to his death in 1935. During the latter part of 1914 and the first half of 1915 Clarke brought out his Teddy Ashton's Lancashire War Journal - a continuation of the old Northern Weekly, with the numbers of each issue following on from the last issue in 1908. Clarke had complete editorial control over the new journal, whereas he was subject to the pro-war editorial policy of the Liverpool Weekly Post in his writings for that paper. However, in his war writings for the "Post", he criticises proposals to introduce conscription and (70) suggests a radical alternative: that all men between 17 and 45 be trained in arms; and that they elect their own officers from volunteers amongst them. Shortly after though, he is saying that:

Having gone into the war, the thing to do is to use every effort to defeat the foe. We need men - more than we dreamed. (71)

Later, he argues that though the war is necessary, no advance for humanity will be made by it. It will be a setback which will force people to face the alternative of "starvation or socialism". (72) In the following year he defended workers who took strike action during the war and contrasted their conditions with the massive profits made by capitalists. (73) He suggests that strikes are an effect of a problem - war profiteering - and not a cause. Some months later he held out the hope that "some day the women of all civilised nations may unite to abolish war." (74)

Clarke's editorial comments in his War Journal were often at variance with his comments in the Liverpool Weekly Post where he maintained a position of support, however critical of profiteering and other abuses. In the War Journal he changes his positions considerably over a relatively short period. In the "Editor's Gossip" of November 13th 1914 he says:

I most sincerely hope that the Kaiser and his armies will get a thrashing from which they will never recover, and I believe they will. But, because we are fighting Prussian militarism and its evils, I am not going to lose my balance and tolerance and denounce and try to hate everything German... Let us hope that after they have had their thrashing the Germans will have done with their militarism, and take steps to prevent their rulers ever plunging them again into such a mad and monstrous war as the one now raging... (75)

Shortly afterwards Clarke argues that all Germans, including those who are naturalised Englishmen, should be interned "where they can do no harm" (76) He continues to criticise the elitism and discrimination within the army: the way 'common soldiers' are under-paid and discriminated against, which weakens the war effort. However, by April 1915, Clarke's attitude hardens against war considerably. In an article entitled "Asking For Bread and Offered Medals" he attacks the aristocracy for carry-on with their 'Derby Day' whilst "working class children are suffering, many starving because of the war". Far from 'bringing down class barriers' the war has simply upheld them. He goes on to attack pro-war labour leaders:

Where are the asinine labour leaders, and braying demagogues, and aristocratic scribes...who wrote that the war would bring about such a beating down of caste, of barriers between class and class, such a wonderful development of fellowship and brotherhood... We've got it haven't we? You see it almost every day in the treatment of soldier's wives and widows. (77)

This criticism, though severe, does not perhaps go much further than his earlier criticism of soldiers' ill-treatment. However, he goes on to say that the war has destroyed the socialist movement and led to a reversion to savagery:

The leaders of labour and the trade union leaders have duped and diddled their followers... The war - as some of its high supporters and promoters hoped it would - has knocked the bottom out of the labour movement, and split the skull of Socialism. The one is now only a leaky tin can; the other is a corpse... Well, we can only expect all these woes and tribulations in war-time. War upsets everything. It is a reversion to savagery, and can only result in more or less barbarism and brigandage all round. (78)

We do not know how this was received either by his readers or by the authorities who were busy suppressing other anti-war socialist papers. However, the last issue came

out a few weeks later, on May 1st. Clearly, Clarke's own opinions on the war changed dramatically, as expressed in his editorial comment. How was this expressed in his literary writings, both in the Liverpool Weekly Post, and in Teddy Ashton's War Journal?

In the Liverpool Weekly Post some 'Tum Fowt' sketches appear, which generally take a non-political subject, such as "Poncake Tuesday - Merriment and Marlocks". (79) However, he wrote a sketch for the Weekly Post entitled "Tum Fowt Tribunal" - a humorous account of a military tribunal set up to try 'conscientious objectors'. In the sketch both the objector - a foppish young man, and the tribunal members, are satirised. Members of the tribunal consist of "Colonel Bludgore, Sam Spindle, Factory Master, Tommy Dod, retired Pork Butcher, Silas Crapeband, funeral furnisher and corpse shifter". (80) The suggestion implicitly made is that the tribunal is composed of people with vested interests in the war, who make sure they take no part in the fighting themselves. However, there is a further suggestion that honest working people should, whatever criticism they have of the war, be at the front with their mates.

In the War Journal Clarke's literary comments on the war again show contradictory tendencies. As noted in more detail in the following section, he published the aggressively imperialist and pro-war poems of William Baron for a time. However, he also published the semi-pacifist sketches of John Tyrer (Jack Fro' th'Lone Eend). On November 13th 1914 Clarke published a short standard English poem "Two Little Hands" which echoes the British war propaganda machine of the time: the poem is about a young child whose hands are cut off by "the Prussian swine":

For those little hands, that never more
Will nurse a doll or open the door,
Britain's hand must wield the sword
Till God's hand smites the Prussian horde! (81)

Repeating the Boer War sketches, Tum Fowt sets up a company of its own to fight the

war - 'Tum Fowt Volunteer League'. The sketch of November 6th 1914 takes a swipe at the young 'gentlemen' who prefer to fight the war at home than in the trenches; as Bill Spriggs describes them:

We're nobbut a collection o'them what's too owd to jein th'reglars, as weel as some that's young enough to jein th'Reglars, but thinks eaur League a safer outlet for their patriotism than Kitchener's Army - "Here, we won't have that," said young Dick Pulley, who has a snug berth in the office of the factory where his father is manager. (82)

The sketch goes on to attack the middle class ladies who spend their time distributing money from the 'Relief Fund' to war widows and soldier's wives. Bet Spriggs describes one example:

This here specimen that I'm tellin yo abeawt - that I durnt suppose has ever lifted a duster in aw her idle loife, let alone ever stood o'er a dolly-tub and mauled wi a week's washin', or done a day's bakin'... well, hoo said to Mrs Marriott, "Heaw mony childer han yo?" An hoo said it in sich a way as if it were a disgrace to have a babby...(83)

Bet Spriggs goes on to mention "Dan Kopple, th'landlord o'Dumplin Row" who has just raised his rents threepence a week. Bill Spriggs has the last word:

Th'mon as raises poor folks rent just neaw is a wuss enemy than th'Garmans. Get thy rowlin' pin eawt, Bet. But we'll not go to th'Kaiser just yet. We'll begin wi th'foes aw hum. We'll goo an see Dan Kopple. Let's tackle th'enemies on eaur own door-step fust. (84)

While the above sketch severely attacks the abuses which became common during the war, and comes close to suggesting that the 'class war' should have precedence over the 'imperialist war', Clarke still hedges his bets. The sketch could easily have been acceptable to a pro-war, working class readership. Previously, Clarke had used the Tum Fowt Sketches, to put across a rationale for the war, and at the same time attacking profiteers. Bill Spriggs puts forward his justification for the conflict in straight-forward terms:

"I'm a chap as believes i'peace, I am," said Bill. "I think war is a mug's

game. But at th'same time I'm like Lijah Gillibrand o'Chorley. Lijah were a good mon an tried to live as a Christian. He avoided feightin. But one day he met Nab Nolly, what were a bit of a bully, an a consaited customer, a bit like th'Kaiser. Lijah were passin wi a civil 'Good mornin', when Nab geet howd fo his arm and says "Here, tha reckons to be a Christian doesn't ta?" Lijah quetly said as he tried. "Then," says Nab, "if I hit thee on one cheek, theau'll turn t'other, will ta?" (85)

Lijah allows Nab to smack him on one side of the face, and then the other; after that he gives the bully such a smack that sends him flying. Lijah adds, when accused of being un-Christian by his tormentor:

It's true that th'Scripter says turn t'other cheek, but it says nowt abeaut not givin a chap a good hidin after yo'n turned th'cheek does it? I did aw th'Scripter tells me, an then I gan thee what tha deserved... (86)

The sketch ends with the Tum Fowters commandeering the provisions of "Owd Split Raisin" who has been increasing his prices, with Bill Spriggs ending with the warning that anyone else raising prices in Tum Fowt will suffer a similar fate:

Sich folk... that has no mooar patriotism abeaut 'em than to try an mek their country's peril an excuse for pickin their neighbour's pockets. (87)

Much of the War Journal, from its beginning to final demise in May 1915, was taken up with a serial novel - Three Lancashire Lads At The Front, sub-titled "A Tale of the Present War". In the last chapter, Clarke writes of those who had done well out of the war - the farmers exploiting child labour, the merchants, manufacturers and middlemen, 'the hyenas with no patriotism but in the pocket'. He writes of trade unionists 'skinned by the high price of commodities' who are told that it is unpatriotic to ask for higher wages:

Thus did labour learn how Britain was fighting for glorious liberty against German despotism - as the papers and orators said - while unscrupulous Army contractors and other gentry of that noble kidney were making fortunes out of huts and rotten food supplies. (88)

At home in Bolton, two women are discussing their sons' situation 'at the front', and

news from other neighbours. Harry Threlfall is going back to the front next week after recovering from an injury, and his attitude perhaps typifies what many felt at the time, as Mrs Tyldesley relates:

Harry's goin back next Friday. He's not eager, though he's not feart. But no man would want to goo back if they'd seen what he's seen, he says. Any chap what has seen th'horros, an says he is longin fert goo back, is either a liar or an idiot, says Harry. He'll goo back an do his duty if he has to, but he's noan rushin for th'early doors... (89)

A central character in the story is 'Mr Middleton' - an elderly herbalist-astrologer who acts as a moral reference point for the events which occur. Mrs Tyldesley idly comments that neither side appears to be winning:

Neither side seems to be gettin any forruder at present," said Mrs Tyldesley, "though accordin to th'papers we be doin wonders."

"Both the German press and the British press are not only keeping things back, but not telling the truth," said Mr. Middleton. "Each side thinks it patriotic - or policy - to lie in order to impress and encourage the respective nations... Our boasted liberty of the press no longer exists. We're losing the very freedom for which we are said to be fighting. We are under a dictatorship and treated as children..."

"Are you against war?" said Mrs. Tyldesley.

"Every thinking man is," said Mr. Middleton.

"Ay, we're all against war in a general way," said Mrs. Tyldesley "for it's a shockin an' silly game. But are yo against this war?"

"I am neither for it nor against it," said Mr. Middleton. "I am a mere spectator of planetary events and human evolution. But as I am an Englishman, and think the allies have more of the right of their side than the Germans - as I believe they are fulfilling a star-destined purpose - I hope the British will win - and I am sure they will."

"That's some comfort, so's how," said Mrs. Tyldesley... (90)

The less-than-committal answer of Mr Middleton undoubtedly reflected Clarke's own feelings about the war; invariably in his novels one character represents the author's viewpoints. Whilst Clarke may not have modelled himself directly on the astrologer character, and not necessarily subscribed to the idea of being 'a mere spectator of planetary events', his attitude towards the erosion of democracy, the lies, and also the guarded hope that Britain is that bit more in the right than Germany, all reflected Clarke's own views.

The final work of Allen Clarke to be considered is a one act play entitled "The Enemy" which appeared in his War Journal on January 1st 1915. The play again reflects his contradictory attitudes during the war - one of the negative characters is a naturalised German businessman, who puts on an obviously 'sham' patriotism, while profiting from the war. The main action centres around a weaver, Annie, and her sweetheart, George. George is seriously considering enlisting, to fight 'the enemy'. Annie suggests that the enemy isn't necessarily obvious:

The profit-monger is the enemy - and to birds of that feather there is neither English nor German, there is only dividend. (91)

Annie's sister, Lily, goes missing - then her body is brought on stage on a stretcher. She has drowned herself because of bullying and harassment by the 'patriotic' Trigley. George stares at the body and announces: "I'm not going to 'list. But I'm going to have a go at the enemy." (92)

Other anti-war writings appeared in the War Journal, particularly the work of John Tyrer. In "Does Feightin Settle Disputes - A Countryside Confab", two working class women discuss the war. Liza is of the opinion that some other way to settle disputes between nations should be found; Betty replies:

"There's allus an excuse, Liza, when tha'rt feightin for what's reet," said Betty, "though awm much like thee, awm noan one for feightin; an it meks my blood beil when aw think o'th'way human gein's hev binkilt an' heaped i'greit rucks to be brunt to save buryin 'em. It's a bonny spectacle for th'twentieth century state o'civilization, isno'it thinks ta?"
"Well it's noan gradely", chimed in Liza, "an if fooak would nobbut think, these things could be monisht different." (93)

The women agree that the best solution would be for the Kings and Emperors to get together and abolish all guns and artillery. They would be allowed to keep a few soldiers 'to swank wi' and they could 'hev a little stick apiece when drillin or walkin eaut'.

The homely Lancashire humour of Betty and Liza is a good put-down of war-mongering and the militarist pomp of Kings and Kaisers. The sketch aims at making the reader think about the issues rather than provide a dogmatic answer to the 'war question'.

Allen Clarke's wife, writing as 'Eliza Chorley', contributed a small number of sketches which use dialect to the War Journal, based around events at the imaginary 'Rindle Fold'. In the sketch of October 23rd 1914 the women of the 'fold' discuss the war and the call-up of some of their men. They agree that the Kaiser is the main cause of the war, but Mrs Donald adds:

"Ay he's as crazy an' nowty as they make'em, even for royalty, is that theer Kaiser. says Mrs. Donald, "but men's aw foo's of a ruck an noan fit to howd th'reins or they'd ha set abeaut preventin war long since. For there's no need for it. Heawever, th'jug's brokken neaw, an th'milk's spilt - an blood too."
(94)

The sketch uses the same incident which Clarke wrote about in his poem "Two Little Hands". While the women are still discussing the war and the call-up of reservists the local doctor appears with a young girl refugee. She is a victim of the German soldiers; her hands have both been cut off. The women forget their grumblings about who should be called up and who should not when they realise the wickedness of the Germans - "Thus into the green peace of Rindle Fold came a touch of the red reality of war".

Allen Clarke's close friend Arthur Laycock was called up during the war, and wrote poems to his family from "somewhere in France" about his eventual return and the dawning of 'the day' - either socialism, or peace, or both. He was writing from first hand experience when he published "War's A Grand Game" in his Christmas Sketches in 1918. Although the war had ended when the poem was published, it was almost certainly written whilst the war was still raging and stands firmly in his father's

tradition of opposition to war:

War's a grand game for thoose 'at stond.
Spectators viewin' the bloody strife.
Inactive, raisin not a hond,
Nor riskin self, nor barterin life.

War's a grand game for thoose 'at shout,
Insensate, jingoistic songs,
Not knowin what the war's about,
Or thinkin' owt o "rights" or "wrongs"

War's no grand game for thoose 'at mourn
For father, husbond, brother, son,
Who never more will see return
The man who fought neath foreign sun.

Let's end war's game an' learn to fight
Wi th'nobler weapons god has given:
Throw out th'Dule's gospel "Might is right"
Make peace on earth as tis in heaven. (95)

Arthur Laycock's religious socialism comes across strongly in the poem. He was an active member of the ILP, and became Blackpool's first Labour councillor. The poem celebrates a radical Christianity which represents timeless moral standards of decency and truth. The poem also makes the point that war is used by the ruling class to divert attention from social wrongs at home, and the 'reformer's voice is stilled'.

Allen Clarke's friend Robert Brodie attacked the 'invasion bogey' which was sweeping the country in the early years of the twentieth century - and fuelled by Blatchford's anti- German articles and speeches. In "Th'Invasion Bogey", writing as 'Billy Button', in Northern Weekly he depicts two working class men - Tummy Harrop and the narrator - discussing Lord Roberts' invasion scares, and his warning of the need to re-arm. Brodie pokes fun at the use of 'patriotism' to draw attention away from social problems:

"Lord Bobs an his tribe i'th'Heause o' Lords knows that if they con nobbut get folk freetunt o'some invasion they'll aw tak to sowdjerin, an like patriotic countrymen feight to a finish to defend eaur country."
"Eaur country?" said Tommy. "Why, heaw much on it belongs to thee or me? He knows that if him an aw th'big men con nobbut get folk takkin interest i'national defence they'll forget aw abeaut th'land laws, th'unemployed an aw

them measures o'reform. It's aw very weel us workin folk talkin abeawt Empire an larnin to shoot, while we help to keep a lot of dukes, lords an government officials."

The narrator mentions the factory workers who join 'volunteer' leagues and spend their spare time being ordered about by the same boss who orders them about at work. He then suggests that the best plan would be to arm the unemployed so that they could be used as cannon-fodder and save money on poor relief; but Tommy Harrop suggests they might decide to turn their guns on 'th'big capitalists' like the Russian workers recently did. Brodie suggests that the way forward is to create a 'Merrie England' which would do without war and re-armament:

Let's feed aw th'hungry, an find clooas for aw th'naked; an when Britain is made in every sense a Christian nation then every mon will defend his country eaut any coaxin or conscription. If we han to feight for eaur country let's make it worth powder an shot. Th'Owd Book says "Righteousness exaltheth a nation" an it seems to me that if we done eaur best to carry eaut that injunction we'st never be without a safe an sure defence. "By th'mon!" said Tummy, after I'd done. "That's Socialism isn't it?" (96) (Reprinted in full as Appendix 25)

Brodie very skilfully welds two themes into the argument - the hypocrisy of the re-armament craze, and the motives behind it, and the issue of a renewed socialist England which is the embodiment of morality. This latter theme is modelled on the type of 'Christian Socialism' preached by Caroline Martyn, many members of the Labour Churches, and hundreds of ILP activists. Genuine love of one's country involves a commitment to "feed the poor, clothe the naked" - a political, moral, and religious imperative. Brodie's ironic use of the term 'patriotism' does not prevent him from putting forward a message which integrates nation, class and religion.

Hannah Mitchell shared the 'ethical' socialism of Clarke, Laycock, and Brodie. She used dialect sketches to put across her political views in Labour's Northern Voice. "Wot Aw Think o'Armistice Day" was her reaction to what she saw as insincere displays of grief, with full militaristic trappings. In her capacity as a Labour councillor, she was officially invited to the 1925 Armistice Day celebration, and writing as 'Daisy

Nook' she records her reactions:

Aw had a ticket sent me for th'platform an aw went deawn to show respect for th'lads as went under i'th'war, and to put up a bit ov a prayer ov my own, as there should be no more wars.

She is shocked at the military displays, and the marching backwards and forwards. The Bishop of Manchester then appears to lead the hymn singing, 'an we sung "Abide With Me":

But aw felt as iv there were summat noan reet abeawt it aw, for there were guns an bayonets enoof to kill aw th'teawn i'th'Square.

At the end of the service she is leaving, and one of the officials asks if she has enjoyed the ceremony:

"Have aw hek as like," aw said, "it's noan my idea o'celebratin' th'Armistice Day. Aw think we owt to goo to Church an ask forgiveness for goin' to war at aw an' promise as we'll ne'er do it again. An' then goo aht an find aw th'poor lads as went to feight an come back to find no wark an no heawses, an' as naythur meit nor clooas for their wives an childer this bitter weather." "You're mad" he said. An' happen he were reet, but awm noan mad enoof to mistake a military parade for a memorial service. (97)

Clarke, Laycock, and Mitchell share a similar perspective of having a strongly moral attitude towards the war, which is seen as fundamentally evil and un-Christian. All are aware of the class issues involved but these are overshadowed by the enormity of the human carnage. Clarke criticises the war-profiteers, and how the labour movement has been immobilised by the war; Laycock points to the ignoring of social problems in the war hysteria; Mitchell comments on the fate of soldiers who have returned home to no job. The actual war itself, and the death of millions, is a far greater moral outrage though. Mitchell was writing after the war had ended, and Laycock at the very end of the conflict. Clarke's writings, covering the whole period, help us to understand the conflicting feelings many socialists undoubtedly felt during the First World War, where the issues were not always perceived as being black-and-

white. This will be discussed further in the conclusion.

Pro-Imperialist Attitudes Amongst Dialect Writers

The vast majority of Lancashire dialect writers, from the 1850s through to the twentieth century, were cast firmly in the mould of Liberalism and unlikely to be strongly disposed towards imperialist attitudes. Celebrations of Queen Victoria, particularly in the Jubilee of 1887 and 1897 were quite common, and could co-exist with Liberal political perspectives, such as James Leigh's "Lines Suggested by the Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1887", which celebrates the 'engines of the war eaur army an navy con boast' and propounds a robust patriotism:

Wi are preaud of eaur own native land,
An preaud ov its sovereign Queen;
An' there's scarcely a mon, I believe,
But what would feight lood up to th'een,
In defence of the land he adores;
An' woe be to them who should dare
To invade eaur English shores. (98)

Even the staunchly anti-imperialist Samuel Laycock could write effusive lines for the same Jubilee, in "Jubilee Song", written significantly in standard English to add to the seriousness of the tone:

God bless and praise our Empress!
May his choice, richest blessing
Fall in showers on Queen Victoria,
On her Jubilee!
England's Queen, India's Empress,
Widow of the Good Prince Albert, -
Hail! all hail to thee! (99)

Loyalty to the throne could co-exist with radical criticism of empire, and the establishment at home. Laycock shared the attitude of many working class Liberal-

radicals of the time which saw the monarch as being above politics and the struggle for reform.

Those writers with the least sympathies for Liberalism tended to be the most pro-imperialist, and this does not necessarily imply a clear-cut Toryism. William Billington, the radical Blackburn poet, celebrated the Battle of Tel-el Kebir in these terms as imperialistic as any Tory could produce:

Lives there a mon on British greawnd
Wod doesn't feel his spirit beawnd,
Wi't'nations lookin on o reawnd
To find eawr arms wi victory creawnd,
This day, at Tel-el-Kebir?

The poem concerns the victory of the British over the Arab forces in 1882, and is pointedly racist in its attitudes to Arabs - referring to 'smo-shanks' and 'white-coated wastrels'. It also suggest that, through war, Britain has been revived as a nation after being 'softened by liberalism':

Bud Arabi's a cur - a pup -
Wod singed his sneawt when he'd to sup,
Th'hot contents o eawr conquerin cup,
For Wolsey med th'owd dog sit up
An smook at Tel-el-Kebir!

Foak thowt us noud foos an fops,
Ut Peeos an' Plenty's stuff'd eawr crops,
Tell bright and turn'd us to milksops,
An time hed ta'en away eawr props -
Bud look at Tel-el-Kebir! (100)

Billington's anti-liberalism is a feature of his radical, almost socialist, views. He was far from being an isolated figure within the labour movement either in late nineteenth, or early twentieth century Britain. Radical, anti-capitalist views could co-exist with racist, pro-imperialist positions as shown in the above poem. Taken into its extreme, one result in a particular historical context is fascism. Billington remains an exceptional figure in the nineteenth century dialect tradition: an imperialist, a beer-shop

owner, an anti-capitalist politician rather than a 'radical' in the sense of Laycock or Brierley. It should also be said that Billington, living in Blackburn, was mixing with part of a strong local tradition of working class Toryism which undoubtedly cast some influence on his ideas. William Baron was also a product of this local culture in which Liberalism had less strong a hold on the working class. He lived in Blackburn from 1870, until his move to Rochdale in the early 1900s. William Baron's poems in Teddy Ashton's Lancashire War Journal are the most pro-war dialect pieces I have come across; and it is ironical that they were published by a socialist - Allen Clarke.

During the autumn of 1914 several pro-war poems appeared which are strongly racist and imperialist in tone, calling up the spirit of "the anglo-saxon race" and "the gradely bulldog breed" to fight "th'Kaiser's Huns". "To Th'Nation's Young Men - A Bit o'Plain Talk" is typical:

Come, what is it to be lads? Are yo gooin to tak your pace,
An help us to put paid to th'Kaiser's debt?
Uv course yo will, an show to th'world at th'Anglo Saxon race
Are summat mooar nor fireside patriots yet. (101)

The following week, Baron's "While Tommy's Away" (102) calls on the government to do something to reward the loyalty shown by the common soldier in volunteering to join the forces "agenst the Kaiser's hordes". Families at home should not suffer as a result of the bread-winner being away at the front, and a decent allowance should be paid. In the November 6th issue of Northern Weekly Baron attacked the "peace meddlers" who argued for a negotiated peace. Baron uses the image of straightforward no-nonsense Lancastrians wanting to fight the war to a finish. The poem is called "What Lancashire Thinks - A Reply to th'Peace Meddlers":

Every honest mon's feelin's agenst yo rebels,
For yo're traitors i'th'camp - we con co yo nowt else -
Or yo'd certainly find summat better to do
Nor strivin to save th'Kaiser's face aw day throo...

Th'contempt we have for yo' we connot conceal,
Sooa stop it at once - or clear eawt while yo're weel;
Yo're a nest o'vile traitors - a foul loathsome crew,
That's what Lancashire thinks, an what th'nation thinks too! (103)

William Baron's older brother Jack was also given to occasional flag-waving. As 'Jack o'Nan's' he wrote many hundred dialect poems on non-controversial 'homely' themes. He used standard English to underline his serious point that 'British hearts are true':

On Ocean's realm in calm or storm,
Our guardian ironclads,
Well manned by hearts sincere and warm -
Brave, plucky British lads, -
Encircle our fair little isle,
No foeman may pass through,
For peace upon our homes will smile
While British hearts are true. (104)

Other imperialistic writings are few. Only a small number of Lancashire dialect writers expressed overtly imperialistic sentiments, and they are confined to a precise geographical location - Blackburn. It may of course be entirely co-incidental that Billington and the two Barons were from Blackburn, but given the town's history of strong working class Toryism it is impossible to discount such geographical-cultural explanations.

Conclusion

This study of Lancashire dialect writing over the period from the 1850s to the 1920s suggests strongly that the predominant attitude towards imperialism was one of opposition. This stems from the predominance of liberal-democratic traditions amongst dialect writers, typified by Brierley, Laycock, and J.T. Taylor in the twentieth century. Socialist writers such as Allen Clarke, John Tyrer, Robert Brodie and Hannah Mitchell developed this liberal-democratic tradition by infusing it with a class content. The moral outrage at war, and the condemnation of imperial adventures as immoral and inhuman remain constant, with similar appeals to Christian morality.

During the two main 'crisis' periods during this period - the Boer War and the First World War - dialect writing suggests an uneven reaction. During the Boer War, socialist opposition was more consistent and arguably reflected a greater degree of coolness towards the war amongst working people generally. It was difficult for war propagandists to make out that the Boers posed a major threat to working class interests in Britain. Sympathy for the common soldier who enlisted out of frustration, unemployment or low wages at home was combined with criticism of the perpetrators of the war. During the Great War on the other hand, socialists such as Robert Blatchford could argue that Prussian militarism was a greater threat to British workers than their own ruling class. Though Allen Clarke had specifically argued that one set of masters is no different from another, when it came to the crunch of standing up against the flood of pro-war propaganda, it proved impossible not to succumb to some of the arguments. There is a further sense that working class boys were giving their lives at the front, and to oppose the war would somehow be letting them down.

In other words there is a sense of working class acceptance of the conflict without any great enthusiasm for the 'ideals' of the wars. 'Patriotism' may have appealed less to workers than to sections of the middle class. Richard Price noted:

The attraction to certain social groups, of such concepts as patriotism, was seen by the fact that young clerks were more eager to volunteer than young labourers. This does not mean that the young labourer was opposed to the war, it rather means that he did not respond in the conventional patriotic manner... Peace meetings were disturbed by those who really identified with the imperialism of the war in South Africa. (105)

It could be argued that the First World War was 'different': the naked militarism of the Prussian junkers was contrasted with the British tradition of 'decency, fair-play and democracy' - though supporters of the Boer War such as Blatchford were at pains to point out the racism of the Boers towards the blacks. The arguments over supporting the First World War on 'progressive' grounds - against Prussian expansionism, for the

right of small nations to self-determination and so on - had already been rehearsed sixty years previously in the Crimean War, where the enemy was 'Russian Tyranny'. As we have seen, the radical J. T. Staton identified strongly with this argument, whilst distancing himself from glorification of the war. The remnants of the Chartist movement appeared to have been split down the middle over their attitude to the war, in a similar way to the split in the labour movement in the First World War. The similarities are important - the identification of an aggressive imperialism (Russian and Prussian) and an identification of Britain as representing a democratic tradition which was worth defending. Hugh Cunningham has argued that the progressive use of 'patriotism' was weakened by the Crimean War and by the developing imperialist culture which followed, particularly from Disraeli onwards. Whereas in the eighteenth century, and through to Chartism, patriotism was often a term of rebellion, by the 1890s certainly, it had been monopolised by the imperialist right. This study of dialect writers suggests that this position needs qualification. The radical-Liberal writers such as Brierley, Laycock and Taylor were strongly 'patriotic' in that they identified with the long democratic traditions of Britain, which had been pioneered by their working class predecessors. Allen Clarke is more cautious about the term, and tends to use it in an ironical sense in his war writings (eg the imperialist pork-butcher is shown as a 'typical patriot'). Clarke argues that the war profiteers are not patriotic at all - the real patriotism lies with the common soldier, and his family, who are making the real sacrifice for 'their' country. Whether they are fighting a just war is secondary in his appreciation of them: in the case of the Boer war, he makes it clear they aren't. In the First World War he grudgingly comes to support the war, though that support is highly conditional, and ambivalent.

The tradition of 'radical patriotism', which Cunningham identifies, did not entirely die out by the imperialist age. Socialists like Clarke, Brodie and Mitchell do not adopt a 'pure' class attitude, but combine Christian morality, with a general love of country, and a class analysis to back it up. For Clarke, 'Lancashire' was synonymous

with 'the nation'. Lancashire was the leading force, politically, economically, and culturally, in Britain (see Appendix 31 "In Praise o'Lancashire"). Clarke and his circle are a long way from the Leninist denunciation of imperialist war, but equally far from the Blatchford-Hyndman type of socialist accommodation to imperialism. Clarke openly identifies with the positive traditions of British society - its democracy won through struggle, its legal system and improvements in factory conditions, and its cultural achievements. He condemns capitalists, exploiters of children, the war profiteers, and other negative features, which are often individualised, rather than seen as part of a political and economic structure.

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3. *ibid* p.61 Engels - Kautsky correspondence, September 12th 1882.
4. *ibid.* p.66.
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6. *ibid* p.239.
7. *ibid* p.211.
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12. Standish Meacham A Life Apart Massachusetts 1977 p.197.
13. Bowtun Luminary (BL) September 15 1855.
14. BL October 27 1855.
15. See Franz Mehring Karl Marx London 1948 pp 160-5.
16. BL November 24 1855.
17. BL November 24 1855.
18. BL December 22 1855.
19. BL January 26 1856.
20. BL April 5 1856.
21. Cunningham op.cit p.20.
22. Anon. O Konversashun Betwene Two Rachde Flannel Weyvurs Obeawt Th'War, no date p.4 (in Rochdale Public Library).
23. ibid p.4.
24. ibid p.7.
25. BL April 5 1856.
26. BL April 30 1852.
27. BL May 22 1852.
28. BL May 8 1852.
29. BL June 28 1856.
30. Ben Brierley "Ab o'th'Yate On Th'War" in Ben Brierley's Journal (hereafter BBJ) February 16 1878.
31. BBJ February 16 1878.
32. BBJ January 19 1878.
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34. BBJ February 9 1878.
35. Meacham op.cit p.197.
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37. Samuel Laycock Warblin's Fro' An' Owd Songster Oldham 1893 p. 244.
38. ibid p.169.
39. ibid p.167.

40. ibid p.166.
41. ibid p.165.
42. ibid p.86.
43. ibid p.256.
44. see Chapter 3 "The Classic Tradition of Dialect Literature".
45. Edwin Waugh Poems and Songs Second Series Oldham 1889 p.70.
46. David Lawton Webs From Fancy's Loom Manchester 1918 p.xix.
47. J. T. Taylor Stories and Poems Oldham 1928 p.52.
48. Lawton op.cit p.243.
49. ibid p.244.
50. ibid p.245.
51. ibid p.246.
52. ibid p.247.
53. Taylor op.cit p.156.
54. ibid p.158.
55. ibid p.158.
56. ibid p.407.
57. ibid p.368.
58. Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly (TANW) January 18 1902.
59. TANW July 7 1904.
60. TANW July 7 1904.
61. TANW November 4 1899.
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99. Laycock op.cit p.327.
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Chapter 10: Women

The aims of this chapter are to consider the treatment of women by male dialect writers across the main period of dialect literature (1850 to 1935), and to examine the work of women dialect writers themselves. To what extent did writers like Waugh, Brierley and Laycock accept the Victorian middle class' view of women as unassertive guardians of the household? How did they view women's employment in 'unladylike' occupations, such as weaving and carding? Did male dialect writers views on women change with the rise of the women's suffrage movement and socialism in the 1890s? For women dialect writers, we must ask why their appearance - with some notable exceptions such as Margaret Lahee - was so late in the day? Generally, women dialect writers only began to get published in the 1890s. Did the subject matter of their writing differ significantly from that of their male dialect writing counterparts? Did women dialect writers take up feminist perspectives on issues like the vote, housework, employment? By exploring these issues dialect literature may throw some light on debates over the position of women in nineteenth and early twentieth century Lancashire.

Come Whoam To Thi' Childer An' Me: Waugh and his Contemporaries' Views on Women

The poem which established Waugh's fame, "Come Whoam To Thi' Childer An' Me", published in 1856, is a fairly clear comment on Waugh's idealisation of women. The wife at home sings:

Aw've just mended th'fire wi' a cob;
Owd Swaddle has brought thi new shoon;
There's some nice bacon-collops o'th'hob,
An' a quart o'ale posset i'th'oon;
Aw've brought thi top'cwot, doesto know,
For th'rain's comin' deawn very dree;
An th'harstone's as white as new snow;-
Come whoam to thi childer an' me. (1)

The poem, highly popular with middle class philanthropists, and also working class readers, establishes an image of 'the perfect wife'. She has a fire going, and a solid meal and jug of ale to go with it: a perfect domestic idyll awaiting the husband's return from the pub. Yet behind the poem lay the reality of Waugh's own desertion of his wife, who was languishing in the workhouse with their children when Waugh wrote the poem. (2) This does not necessarily make Waugh a hypocrite. It does suggest, though, that a writer's motives for establishing such images of domestic bliss may have more to do with providing a literary escape route from the harsh reality of real life, as well as writing for a particular readership which desired domestic homilies like "Come Whoam".

Ben Brierley was moved to respond with a gentle piece of friendly satire: "Go, Tak Thi Ragg'd Childer An' Flit", sub-titled, "or, 'Come Whoam To Thi Childer An' Me' (As It Is)". Instead of a tasty meal awaiting, the drunken husband has little to look forward to on his return. The top-coat that the wife produces in Waugh's poem has been pawned:

What is there for supper? there's nowt!
Beawt theau take a red-herrin fro' Sol's.
Heaw con't think au con get thi owt good,
When theau leaves me not bu' bare walls.
If theu'd give me thy wage as theau out,
Au could do summat farrantly then;
Bo' au gettin a thowt i'mi yed,
We mun e'er ha owt gradely agen.
Have abrowt thi tip-cwto? go thi look!
Aud ha'browt thi th'stret-jacket as soon:
Theau knows au've ha t'pu it up th'speawt,
For money to pay for thi shoon.

The poem suggests that the man is about to hit his wife, to which she responds with the final threat:

Wilt hit me? ay, do if theaw dar!
An au'll just ha' thi walk eawt o'th'dur;
Theau thinks, 'cose theaw plaguet tother wife,
Theaw'll ha me at th'same rate as theaw'd her.

Bu au'll show thi a sperrit, mi lad,
'At'll no take a blow for a buss;
An' if t'tries thi owd capers wi me,
As bad as theau does au'll do wuss. (3)

Although Brierley wrote the poem as a semi-humorous piece, a take-off of Waugh's poem in both content and style, it nonetheless has some very sharp comments on domestic violence and the reality of living with a drunk. The woman is far from Waugh's ideal of the quiet and homely heroine struggling to keep a nice tidy home; she is quite sure that the reason there is no food is because the husband has drunk all his wages and she is not prepared to make any heroic sacrifices for him. In response to the husband's threats of violence she tells him that she will throw him out of the house, and not before she has had a chance to hit back at her aggressor.

Most of the other female characters in Waugh's writing are stereotypes of one sort or another. In "Margit's Comin'" we are presented with a ruthless wife seeking out the erring husband from the pub. A friend of the husband warns him that his 'Margit' is looking for him:

But, houd, yo'r Margit's up i'th'teawn;
Aw yerd her ax for thee at th' Crown;
An' just meet neaw, aw scamper't deawn;-
It's true as aught i'th'Bible!
Thae knows yo'r Margit weel, ov owd;
Her tung - it makes me fair go cowl,
Sin th'day hoo broke my nose i'th'fowl
Wi th'edge o'th'porritch thible. (4)

Margit is a tough character who will not tolerate her husband having the slightest bit of pleasure in the pub, and pursues him round the town to the obvious amusement of his friends. Waugh was perhaps the first dialect writer to use this stereotype, which was continued by Allen Clarke's character 'Bet Spriggs' in the Tum Fowt Sketches (though Clarke turned the stereotype against itself in subtle ways, as we shall see). If Margit is the stereotype of the battle-axe wife, his characterisations of young women are equally

limited. "Bonny Nan" is the sweetheart of a country lad, and an ideal of sweetness and gentility:

My Nanny's fair, an' trim an' rare;
A modest lass, an' sweet to see;
Her e'en are blue, her heart it's true,-
An' Nanny's hardly twenty-three; (5)

Waugh has great difficulty in writing about women other than as stereotypes. Many of his male characters, on the other hand, are highly distinctive and idiosyncratic. For example, in "Eawr Folk" all the characters are male. Brierley's own treatment of women varies considerably from the stark realism of the poem quoted earlier. Some of his love poems are indistinguishable from the shallow romanticism of Waugh. "Whoam-Brewed" is Brierley's domestic ideal, with the wife happy in her role of servitor:

There's nowt it'this world like my own chimney nook
When my cheear up to th'fire I've poo'd;
When th'wife has just rocked th'little babby to sleep
An' fotched me a mug o' whoam-brewed.

Hoo smiles does th'owd dame, as if nobbut just wed,
When her caps an' her napkins hoo's blued,
Then warms up her face wi a blink o'th'owd leet
Ut shines in a mug o'whoam-brewed. (6)

Some of Brierley's female characters are stronger than Waugh's. Like the old woman in "I're Livin' When Boney Wur Ta'en", called Betty. As with some of Waugh's elderly male characters, she is a strong, and slightly eccentric figure - but well-liked and respected in her community:

On a dark winter night an old lantern she'd swing,
A lantern without horn or glass.
If the wind blew the light out as oft was the case,
She'd say, "Drat yo, lads! let me pass."
If she rubbed 'gainst a stump in the darkness she'd say,
"Neaw Jammie, theau'rt auvish, it's plain,
But I'st ne'er and me wits wi' a monkey like thee;
I're livin when Boney were ta'en." (7)

Betty's 'rum' behaviour is excused on account of her age - she was living when

Napoleon was taken a prisoner - but the reader is led to think that she has always been a bit of a character, young or old.

Samuel Laycock's female characters are also more rounded than Waugh's; in "Bowton's Yard" he catalogues different characters in a typical Lancashire street. "Widow Burns" has echoes of Betty, though she is some years younger:

At number two lives Widow Burns - hoo weshes clooas for folk
Their Billy, that's her son, gets jobs at wheelin' coke;
They sen hoo coarts wi Sam'o'Ned's, at lives at number three;
It may be so, aw connon tell, it matters nowt to me. (8)

Laycock hints at the sexual relationships within a small community, suggesting they were more complex than Victorian moral standards would dictate, and also that these relationships, though 'talked about', were not regarded as immoral. The narrator himself lives "wi owd Susannah Grime", though he isn't always welcome in the household, and "hoo turns me eawt me eawt sometimes". Next door lives 'Owd Susie Collins', another elderly single woman, who makes a living selling beer:

At number six, next dur to us, an' close o'th'side o'th'speawt,
Owd Susie Collins sells smo' drink, but hoo's welly allus beawt;
But heaw it is the case awm sure aw connon tell,
Hoo happen maks it very sweet, an' sups it o hersel! (9)

However, Victorian standards re-assert themselves with "Uncle Dick's Advice to Wed Women". Uncle Dick tells his listeners that the way to keep their husbands out of the pub is by providing them with a clean home:

Let 'em feel - when their wark's done - 'at th'loveliest spot 'at there is
under heaven, is their own humble cot. (10)

The assumption in this, and much of Waugh's poetry, is that women do not work outside the house (or, with Waugh, outside the farm). Clearly this contradicts the very high levels of female employment in Lancashire, and the absence of its treatment suggests that dialect writers found it either unworthy of comment, or positively shameful. However, in Laycock's celebration of the end of the Cotton Famine, "Cheer

Up, Toilin' Brothers," the reality of female employment comes over:

Polly Breawn's bin i'sarvice fo two or three year,
At a ale heawse o'th'name o'th'Bull's Yead:
An hur an a waiter there is abeawt th'place,
They tell'n me, are beawn to be wed.
Eawer Lucy's i'sarvice up Huddersfield way,
Wi some chap - aw've fergettin his name;
But heawever, hoo says hoo shall leave in a month,
When they putt'n some wark in her frame. (11)

The poem suggests that a large number of young women were forced to leave Lancashire for the duration of the Cotton Famine, mostly to go 'in service', or other non-industrial occupations. However, Lucy clearly prefers working in the mill to living away from home as a domestic servant. This is the nearest glimpse we get of the working life of women in the writings of the triumvirate of Lancashire dialect literature.

J.T. Staton, writing at the same time as Waugh, Brierley and Laycock, includes a number of strong female characters in his stories such as 'Nancy' in "Domestic Economy", one of the stories published in Rays Fro Th'Loominary. Nancy is introduced as an ordinary working class girl:

Hoo'd lived at Stalybridge aw hur loife, havin bin born theer; un as hur parents were'nt at aw rich, hood bin put to work ith factory when nobbut twelve yers ov age and had kept on warkin. (12)

What is worth noting here is that the common experience of thousands of Lancashire women is mentioned at all, given the absence of it in Waugh et al; although she has worked in the mill since twelve years old there is no moral censure in this, indeed: "hoo wur a very nice person", as Staton tells us. The tale is a satire on middle class ideas of 'domestic economy', and the advantages of buying in bulk; poor Nancy buys a dozen pepper boxes after listening to her husband's account of a lecture at the Mechanics' Institute, on the basis that it is cheaper to buy a dozen than one. Her

husband finally abandons 'domestic economy' in frustration:

By gow, lass, he says, give oer practisin domestic economy, if that's road tha intends to carry it eawt. Wot the ferrups mun we do wi tharteen pepper boxes? One ull sarve us for loife. (13)

Although Staton accepts that it is normal for women to work, he also assumes that they bear the main burden of domestic responsibilities. Attempts to change this, such as Nancy's husbands homilies on 'domestic economy', end in disaster.

The overwhelming impression one gets of male dialect writers in the 'classic period', from the 1850s to the 1880s, is a feeling that they are unsure (consciously or not) of how to react to women in contemporary Lancashire. Waugh presents little more than stereotypes of women - as perfect wives, ideal sweethearts, or nagging brutes. Brierley distances himself from the more extreme myth-making of Waugh but still sees women as essentially servants of men - with the proviso that men have certain obligations to their wives (sobriety, courtesy, acting as bread-winner). Laycock in his non-didactic poems such as "Bowton's Yard" gives an accurate picture of women's lives in a community context, but cannot help re-asserting middle class moral standards in works such as "Uncle Dick's Advice to Wed Women". As with Staton, the reality of women's employment in the factories is acknowledged - though this usually refers to young, un-wed women. The assumption is that they will leave their work in the mill once they are married, and indeed in some areas of Lancashire (but not all) this was normal practice. (14) The dependence upon a husband constantly re-surfaces; the strongest characters in the poem of Laycock are widows - the legitimately independent mature women, who bravely cope with life on their own. Deserted wives seldom appear except as tragic figures of pity, and women who never married are usually depicted as sad old spinsters.

The 1880s and After: Male Dialect Writers' Treatment of Women

Did male dialect writers in the later period, from the late 1880s, have a different view of women from their predecessors? Accepting that dialect literature laid down strong continuities of tradition one must expect some similarities, as well as differences dictated by the influence of socialism and feminism from the 1880s onwards. The writers who were most influential in this period were Allen Clarke, Joseph Burgess, John Trafford Clegg and Sam Fitton, and it is mainly these writers who will be examined.

Trafford Clegg is closest to the classic period writers both chronologically and in content of his poetry, much of which being set in the Rochdale moorlands is reminiscent of Waugh. However, the period in which Clegg was writing (mid-1880s to early 1890s) had seen the establishment of new social *mores* in which women's employment (at least among the working class) was no longer regarded as in any way exceptional (at least in Lancashire). His love poem, "A Carter's Song" is an idealisation of women which has similarities to Waugh's 'Bonny Nan', with one notable exception: she works in a factory:

A lass 'at winds i'Radcliffe's mill
Has stown away mi heart;
Neaw thought some day bi day aw fill
An' drive mi jowtin' cart:

The industrial dress of his 'Betty' seems to him not something to be ashamed of, but adding to her charms:

Hoo wears a brat an' printed geawn,
An' fro her pratty yead
Hangs curvin to her middle deawn
A shawl check'd white an' red;
Her clogs, breet-varnished deawn to th'heel,
Like bells on th'cosy ring;
Ah, what hoo's like aw know some weel,

But cannot say nor sing! (15)

The carter pictures a semi-rural idyll where they shall make their lives when they are married; the poem does not comment on whether she will become a full time housewife then, though that may have been assumed. What is important in the poem is the elevation of a factory girl to that of a proud and respectable figure; although obviously not wealthy she makes sure her clogs shine brightly and both brat and gown are fitting dress for her idealised figure. There is a sexual allusion in "what hoo's like aw know some weel, but cannot say nor sing!" though probably meant on a fairly innocent level of love.

The character of the respectable and attractive factory girl became a popular theme in the 1890s, perhaps inspired by the steady development of independence as women weavers' earnings increased and the women's suffrage movement began to make head-way. William Baron's poem "Yon Weyver as Warks t'Beam Next To Me" is another celebration of the Lancashire factory girl that would have been regarded as unseemly by the writers of the 1850s and 1860s. In this case an alluring weaver is giving plenty of encouragement to the male narrator, but he is not going to bite:

I't' shed, wheer aw'm toilin' an' slavin'
Fro' mornin' to neet, like a foo;
An' piecin' mi bad sides an' 'mashes'
Till aw wonder which way aw ged through
There's a lass, hey! so winsome an' pratty,
An' angel yo'd tek her to be;
An' at me throws lots o'sly glances,
For hoo only just warks t'beeam next to me. (16)

The particular weaver is, unfortunately for the narrator, unbearably stuck up and flirtatious; she refuses to speak to the other weavers and has had a string of other men. The portrayal of the weaving shed is well done: the woman herself is not a stereotype of an 'immoral' weaver: she is an exception, and generally disliked for her snobbery. The male weaver-narrator says that for all her attractions "aw'd sooner hev one plain an' hooamly than fifty like her ony day".

R. H. Brodie also sang the praise of the Lancashire weavers in "A Lay o'Lancashire", where he returns to the theme of class situation not preventing the development of noble character:

There's mony a humble weiver
Workin' fro' morn to net,
Con dance wi ony maiden,
Yo'll come across i'th'street.
Wi her breakfast can an'basket,
Yo'll see her skip along,
An' when her looms get singin',
Hoo'll sing a lively song.

There's mony a factory lassie,
Wi clogs upon her feet,
If hoo'd nobbut brass behind her,
Could prima-donnas beat. (17)

While some dialect writers moved from an idealisation of the 'country girl' to that of the 'factory girl' in the 1890s, others were alive to some of the dangers of factory work which women had to face. Joseph Burgess' poem "Ten Heawrs A Day" was a moving attempt to draw attention to the problems of women workers with children:

As aw wur hurryin' on i'th'dark
Won mornin' to begin mi wark,
Just turnin't th'corner ov a street,
A fath'ry lass aw chanct to meet.
Carryin' a babby on hur arm,
Lappt in hur shawl to keep it warm,
Which to a nuss hoo had to ta'e
So hoo may wave ten heawrs a day. (18)

The poem ends with the child dead, lying in the same grave as the woman's consumptive husband. The tone of the poem suggests that women with children should not work at all - a position echoed by other writers and trades unionists of the time. A particularly contentious issue was sexual harassment of women workers by tacklers and

mill managers. This was treated in some depth by Allen Clarke in his novels Driving and A Daughter of the Factory. In the latter novel a weaver is seduced by the mill-owner's son and then left to fend for herself when the baby is born. The heroine of the novel, Rose Hilton, a weaver, reflects on women under capitalism:

Rose had long seen the unfair treatment, legal and otherwise, meted out to women..Man professes to worship woman; to treat her as being more spiritual and delicate than himself; but when she comes into the business world as a factor of labour, he looks on her with commercial selfishness... (19)

Elsewhere in the novel, the wife of a miner is seduced by her tackler and the enraged husband murders him in revenge. Bertha Lindley is the central female character in Driving, and, like Rose Hilton, is a weaver. Both are portrayed by Clarke as ideal heroines, correct in politics, morality and behaviour to others. Interestingly, neither speak in dialect, unlike other working class characters in the same novels. Clarke seems to be suggesting that the dialect he did so much to popularise is somehow vulgar when spoken by an intelligent working class woman socialist. In his short story "The Bully of Burlow's Shed", he returns to the theme of the bullying tackler and ill-treatment of women, and the ultimately victorious leader of the women weavers in Alice Camerone. In this exchange she moves from standard English to 'the rough and ready dialect' of her adversary:

"Go home and get your whiskers soled and heeled," she said one day to the bully, when he was attempting to boss her, as he did her companions. "If I'd a face like that I'd put it in my boots where it could not be seen. Why you're uglier than sin, you monster, and a thousand times wretcheder," and she laughed merrily.

"Durnt be usin any o'thy lip to me," cried Bill Rubbinson.

Alice Camerone smiled, and proceeded to fight him in his own rough and ready dialect "An who art theau?" she said coolly. "What are ta? Gie thysel a name, if theau con, an let's be knowin what they caw thee! Why mon, if theau'd only goo an look at thysel in t'glass theu'd dee o'freet." (20)

Like some of Allen Clarke's male working class heroes, Alice Camerone is 'bi-lingual', using dialect in particular situations, and standard English in others. In the case quoted Clarke is almost suggesting that she is demeaning herself by using the dialect which Bill Rubbinson speaks, as a weapon which she would not normally use.

Sam Fitton's poem "Shuttle-Kissin" is a humorous piece about another objectionable tackler, who ultimately gets a less-than-polite brush off from Matilda Curly-Toppin':

Matilda Curly Toppin' wer' a weighver an a lass
Who did her share o'laughin', an' earned her share o'brass;
Hoo kissed her share o'shuttles too but if they'd nobbut let her,
Hoo'd rayther pass the time away i'kissin' summat better.

Although Matilda is single, and her teeth are decaying through sucking the weft through the shuttle, she makes it clear to the tackler that his attentions aren't wanted when he makes a proposal of marriage:

I'm sick o'bein' single, an' I'm sick o'suckin' weft.
Mi teeth are gettin rotten an' I haven't mony left.
I thank thi for thi offer, which I very much decline,
For I'd rayther kiss a shuttle than a face like thine! (21)

William Baron also adopts the standpoint of the woman in his "That Young Chap 'At Weyves Across Th'Alley", in which a young woman weaver takes a fancy to a youth who has just started weaving near to her. The strength of the women's informal organisation in the weaving sheds is shown in the lines where she describes the lighthearted abuse the women generally bestowed on inexperienced young men:

Neaw, t'first day he started, aw co'd him a fop,
An' helped t'others on wi'ther chaffin';
Aw med lot's o'meemo's to t'weyver's i't'shop,
An' o'er him there were some rare laffin'.

After the initial put-downs, she becomes attracted by this new starter, and Baron uses the technology of the weaving shed in his descriptions of her romantic feelings:

Aw noticed him mooar nor aw noticed me wark,
For like as aw couldn't tee to it;
Aw leet a big "float" gooa, an'wove past mi mark
An' t'cutlooker bated me throo it. (22)

Baron's poem is a pleasing comment on the genuine sexual relationships which grew in the factories, alongside the occasional harassment of tacklers and managers. Here are two equals helping each other in their work and enjoying each other's company; perhaps it has an element of romanticism about it, but it would be wrong to see all aspects of mill life as squalid and inhuman.

The banter and 'chaffin' to which Baron refers, which women weavers usually reserved for male tacklers or inexperienced male weavers, gets hilarious treatment in Allen Clarke's "Bill Spriggs As A Tackler". The relationship between tacklers and the women weavers is treated in a far more relaxed way than in his novels Driving and A Daughter of the Factory, which verge on melodrama. In this sketch the comic hero Bill Spriggs becomes a tackler, and presents himself at the weaving shed bright and early, eager in anticipation of all the young women weavers he imagines will be slaves to his masculine charms. Instead he gets led into a series of hilarious errors by the weavers, led by Polly Marrison. After numerous adventures, the story continues:

At this point, that larkin weaver, Polly Marrison, gain coom up to Bill an skrieked eaut, "Heaw mony shuttles should I put in? "Heaw mony do they allow yo as a rule?" yelled Bill.

"One".

"Only one?" said Bill, "That's rayther skinny, isn't it? Well, seein' as it's thee an' theau'rt a nice wench, I'll let thee put three or four in as a special favour - for theau't a bonny lass...

Polly went away smilin, an soon t'tale were aw o'er t'shed: while Bill were sayin' to hissel, "I'm a gradely champion tackler, I am! There's no stinginess abeawt me! (23)

The humour of the story rests on a knowledge of weaving, and an awareness of the taut relationship between tackler and weaver; here it is basically humorous - in other situations it can take a more dangerous turn, as in "The Bully of Burlow's Shed". A frequent accusation levelled at tacklers was that they were lazy, and gave preferential treatment to the younger, more attractive weavers and neglected other looms. In the following scene from "Bill Spriggs As A Tackler", the profession's reputation for

sleeping on the job is picked on:

Bill stood near a tackler's bench an' Polly Marrison coom up again.

"Neaw what does t'want? said Bill.

"Nowt," answert Polly. "But I fancied yo' were lookin' a bit fagged eawt, an' so I thowt I'd tell yo that yo con lie deawn on that bench, and have a nap if yo want."

"Is that what it's for?" axed Bill.

"Ay, didn't yo know? Every tackler sleeps on his bench."

"It's a very thoughtful provision," said Bill, an he lee deawn an were soon dreivin his pigs to th'market, to the greit diversion o'th'weivers." (24)

Allen Clarke's writing, both humorous and serious, reflect the new-found independence and assertiveness of women weavers in the 1890s, and writers such as William Baron write realistically of relationships between men and women workers in the weaving sheds. Joseph Burgess' poem "Neaw Aw'm A Married Mon" carries the relationship between a 'factory couple' into the home, and was directly based on his own marriage - which ended tragically a few months later with the death of his wife. It shows an unusual commitment to shared housework, since both of them are still working in the mill:

As hoo's a factory lass,
An aw'm a factory lad,
We've noather on us brass -
Aw nobbo weesh we had.
So aw'st ha' to do heawse wark
For yo couldno ca'it fair
If aw 'weishin' up could shirk
An didno do mi share. (25)

More typical is James Standing's "Wimmen's Wark Es Niver Done", sub-titled, "As If By a Womman Hersel". It is clearly sympathetic to the hard life of the working class housewife, at home with a large family:

O'th'Monday morn aw get up tired -
A child, tug, tug, at th'breast;
Aw think sometimes aw'd lig wol eight,
But really ther's no rest.

Bi th'workers get off to their wark
Another lot begin
To romp abeawt an feight, an heyt,
An' make a weary din. (26)

We are a long way from the idylls of Waugh and even Brierley's "Weaver of Wellbrook" and "Whoam Brewed". The husband is criticised for not helping in the house as he should:

An as for him he taks no part
I'keepin corners square:
Heawever heedless th'childer be,
He nivver seems to care;
An' 'stead o'layin' on a hond,
An' helpin what he con,
He leov's all t'bits o'jobs to me,
Whol mi wark's niver done. (27)

The poem ends on a conciliatory note - although the life is hard, and she has none of the riches and finery of the upper classes, still "Aw'm blest wi childer fresh an fair, An that eawtweighs 'em all".

Domestic relations are treated in considerable detail by Clarke (as Teddy Ashton) in the Tum Fowt Sketches, which were published between 1892 and the late 1920s. (28) A central feature is the relationship between husband and wife (Bill and Bet Spriggs) and frequent allusion is made to the growth of the women's suffrage movement and the 'threat', posed in humorous terms, to male hegemony. Real events are used as a backdrop to the sketches, such as the 1892 court case of Mrs. Jackson from Clitheroe who won legal backing for evicting her husband. "Bet Spriggs Imitates Mrs. Jackson An Bill Springs Gets Turn't Eaut" is Allen Clarke's comment on the episode:

O'Wednesday neet there were a regler do i'Tum Fowt. Bet Spriggs, what had just yeard abeaut Mrs. Jackson o'Clitheroe, an heaw as women con do what they want neaw, chuckt Bill eawt, an towd him hoo wouldn't keep him anny mooar. (29)

The 'Tum Fowt Debatin Menociation' - the comic bastion of Lancashire male supremacy - finds its President, Bill Spriggs, homeless. Three committee members agree to form a deputation to see Bet, to point out the error of her ways, and re-establish men's superiority, and they arrive at Bet's door; Ben Noke makes the first salvo:

"Well Betsy," begun Ben Noke pompously, "We're a deppytashun o'three intelligent sober men, as drunk as new born babbies, bless their pratty faces; an' w'ere sent to thee for t'prove to thee by lodgick, fair an square an reound an oblong too-

"What are ta meitherin' abeaut?" interrupted Bet.

"Wait a bit, theau'll see. Neaw, when th'Almighty made mon, well he made him aw reet; he didn't make eaut o'some other animal did he?"...

"Well" resumed Ben, wavin his honds abeaut like an orator, "But when th'Almighty made woman he made her eaut o'Adam's rib. That were for t'show as hoo were a part o't'chap and belongs to him, and should love, honour an obey him in that station"

"Howd on, what station?" cried Sammy. "Is it Moses Gate or Lostock Junction?"

"Shut up theau leatheryead - As hoo must love, cherish, an obey him i'that station of life which her godfaythers an god mothers gan us in eawr baptism..."

"Theau't drunk, theau foo!" said Bet, "Go whum to thy wife. An if I were her I'd bounce thee reound a bit." (30)

Clarke uses satire to ridicule ideas of male superiority - the pompous pseudo-intellectualism of Ben Noke is quickly deflated by the sharp, down-to-earth comments of Bet Spriggs. It could be argued that Bet Spriggs is a stereotype of the harridan female, such as in Waugh's "Margit's Comin'"; however she is a far more complex character than that. Whilst not being reluctant to assault her husband when he deserves it, she will also support him when he is in the right - such as in "Bill Spriggs and Patsy Filligan o'er Winter Hill", when Bill heroically challenges the landowner's closure of the right of way. (31) Clarke was clearly using the stereotype of the 'rolling-pin' wielding wife but he develops it as a literary tool to comment on 'serious' political issues, such as women's rights. Clarke was a firm supporter of the suffrage movement - both the mass non-violent movement of the Lancashire weavers, and the methods of

direct action used by the suffragettes. In an editorial in Northern Weekly he suggests that:

If there were women in Parliament there would be a great deal less talk and a lot more work done. For the majority of women are workers not talkers... the top and bottom of it is that man is a conceited ass, and thinks that he - and he only - has got the lofty brain to rule and administrate. But he'll have to have it taken out of him. And the sooner the better. (32)

Clarke argues in support of 'direct action' on the basis that any man or woman has a right to disobey laws they have had no part in framing, and that the women have tried the much-vaunted 'quiet persuasion' until they are blue in the face and got nowhere. It was now up to the men to show where they stood, and support the suffragists including those in prison.

Clarke's stated political views on women help us to understand his intentions with the 'Bet Spriggs' character. It is easy to laugh at the usually good-natured warfare which goes on between Bet, her husband and his male cronies. Clarke is making political points all along the line: the conceited ass we find him editorialising on is one of the numerous varieties of 'Ben Nokes' in the world, who preach about 'women's inferiority' but have little in the way of intelligence themselves. Clarke turns directly to the issue of female suffrage in a number of sketches, including his "Gradely History of England" - a narrative in dialect on the history of England, recited before the inhabitants of the Dug an Kennel pub. The issue of female suffrage comes up, and Bill Spriggs informs the group that a suffragist - "a fine lady, a reglar swell" - was speaking on 'votes for women' in Tum Fowt but found Bet Spriggs uninterested in her arguments:

"Th'greitest weapon a woman con have in her hond," said eaur Bet, "is a rowlin pin, an if every woman ull only mek use o th'rowlin pin hoo'I never need to bother abeaut a vote. Yo couldn't knowck a stupid mon deawn wi a vote, but yo con soon bring th'greitest crackyeard to his senses wi a two- three welts fro a rowlin pin... Vote be hanged.. gie me a good heavy rowlin pin in I'll soon have all th'women's reets I want." At this speech th'fine lady gan eaur Bet up as a bad job, an went away. (33)

In this early sketch, written in 1901, five years before the editorial quoted above, Clarke is expressing doubts about the 'middle class women' who were organising the suffrage campaign - a point picked up by some socialist opponents of female suffrage, with its restrictive objective of parity with the existing male franchise. Clarke also uses the sketch to poke fun at parliament itself:

The narrator, Teddy Ashton, continues his speech:

There were some clappin in this speech, an then I went on. "As to havin women i'Parliament -"

"It would never do," said Bill Spriggs. "It's no place for a respectable woman; I've been an MP mysel, an I know."

"Heaw's that Bill?" said I. "Why is parliament no place for a respectable woman?"

"Because it's no place for a respectable mon," said Bill. (34)

Clarke became increasingly sympathetic to women's rights issues, and strongly supported moves to extend women's municipal franchise. This included running features on women political activists like Maud Shutt and Sarah Reddish, and supporting male candidates in local elections who stood for women's voting rights. In "At Th'Gab Show" Clarke satirises Bolton Council's debate on the issue of giving women the municipal franchise, and gives sharp pen-portraits of local councillors. The sketch was based on a real debate, instigated by Clarke's close friend Solomon Partington:

Partington went on givin reasons an arguments i'favour o'women bein elected to Teawn Ceouncils. He said that awready there'd bin women representatives on London Ceauty Ceouncil, but they'd bin chucked off - "An quite reet," yelled one o'th'ceouncillors. (35)

The debate goes on, and eventually the vote is taken - the six Labour councillors, plus a handful of Tories, Liberals and independents, support the motion but twenty five vote against, and it is lost.(36)

"Well, what does ta think o'that Bill?" I said to Bill Spriggs as we clomped deawn th'steps into th'street.

"Why, we con breath yessy neaw," said Bill.

"Th'country's saved again, an th'Union Jack still floats o'er th'land o'th'free.

By 1907 Clarke's Bet Spriggs had come round to seeing the need for women's representation, and she stood as council candidate for Tum Fowt. This was, in fact, the first year that women could stand as local council candidates In Bolton the socialist and feminist Sarah Reddish polled a good vote in Halliwell; the sketch is clearly modelled on the impending November elections when Reddish stood. The narrator is Teddy Ashton:

This is Bet Spriggs' election address. Read it, an wonder whatever th' world's comin to. To th'Electors o'Tum Fowt, England an th'Neighbourhood - Especially women.

Fellow women, an th'brutes yo're teed to - at last we'n gotten eaur chance to keep men in order an put th'world tidy. Th'law neaw allows women to stand for town ceawncils, an I'm puttin up, an yo mun put me in.

Men's had th'game in their honds lung enoof, an look what a mess they'n made of it. They haven't even had th'gumption to secure dacent wages for the theirsels to keep their wives an bring their childer up gradely. Men's been i'power for I durnt know heaw mony generations, an yet today there's theausands on em eaut o'wark... (37)

Bet answers her critics who suggest she is "nobbut a woman what bosses her husband", saying there is more to her than that:

But I'm summat mooar nor a husband tamer - though I admit I can do my whack at that. I'm one o'them that would like to see th'frauds an humbugs what misgoverns this country packed off abeawt their business - an that's to Owd Nick, if I'm any judge o'Monkeys. (38)

This survey of later dialect writers suggests a considerable change in attitude towards women. Generally, there is an acceptance of women as industrial workers, even an idealisation of them. The poems quoted by Burgess and Standing also suggest a recognition of the onerous nature of housework, and a commitment to do something more about the house than men have traditionally been expected to do. Within the vast output of Allen Clarke we find the most advanced treatment of women by a male writer. The character of Bet Spriggs alters steadily during the years of the campaign

for women's suffrage until she becomes an articulate spokeswoman of female independence, rather than just a highly assertive housewife who 'isn't interested in politics'. The fictitious characters of Bertha Lindley, Rose Hilton in his novels also herald a new 'hero' of working class literature - the class conscious and sex conscious working class woman.

The Debate Over Women's Lodges

This section of the chapter does not fit well with either male dialect writers' treatment of women, or the work of women dialect writers themselves. It relates to the controversy in Rochdale, in the 1840s, over the establishment of women's friendly societies. Much of the argument conducted in the local press was in dialect, and the row highlights attitudes towards autonomous women's activity in a working class community.

The growth of working class friendly societies in the early nineteenth century was not entirely a male phenomenon (39) : in Lancashire a range of 'women's lodges' developed in the 1840s, calling themselves 'Female Shepherdesses', 'Female Foresters', 'Women Odd-Fellows' and other titles which related to their male counterparts. This development was not entirely welcomed by the male societies, and two interesting accounts have survived of the reactions towards them. The first, Women's Lodges - A Bit o'Taulk Obewt Um Between Mary Un Nancy, appeared in pamphlet form in 1843, and circulated in the Rochdale area. Although the two characters are women, it was most probably written by a man. The dialogue throws light on the activities of the lodges, the outside (male) perceptions of what went on in them, and gives a suggestion of what was deemed the 'proper' things for women to concern themselves with. As a dialect piece, it is quite early in the development of the form, hence the eccentric spelling of many words.

The 'dialogue' begins with a quote:

Ut th'Lodge they're drinkin un doancin un yellin
Wol ther hewses ur durty, un ther childer ur bellin

This sets the tone for the conversation between the respectable Mary who has seen the error of her ways and no longer goes 'to the Lodge', and Nancy, a regular attender. The opening suggests a high level of organisation, with secretarial back-up, a system of benefits and clearly laid-down rules; Nancy greets Mary as follows:

Well, Mary lass, hew ar ta gettin on, aw annot sin te befoar us mony a bakin day, aw wur usd to see the ut Lodge sumtimes, nut a think thew as'nt bin lately, fur aw yerd Seckretare sayin us hew thewrt gettin ewt o benefits; eh, owd lass, thew missus monny a jolifikashun! (40)

Mary tells her old friend that she no longer goes because men are admitted after the lodge meeting is over, and some have been 'taking liberties' with other men's wives. Many of the women also have got drunk, and neglected their children and homes. Mary cites the case of 'Cathrun':

Nobbut last Tuesday neet aw went into Cathrun's for th'stockin needle ut hood borrowd un little Cathrun sed her mam wur goon to th'Lodge un ud nevr used it, for hood sin ur poo ur stokin dewn so us th'oles cudn't be sin.

Mary's complaints also tell us that the lodges had a district organisation- she tells of Rachel going to the Rossendale branch as a delegate from the Lodge and returning 'so lat whol Dick wur e bed'. (42)

The dialogue continues in a second pamphlet - Sum Moor Taulk Obewt Women's Lodges - Mary emphasises the 'unrespectable' nature of the Lodges and how no young woman would ever be courted by a man if she was known to frequent the Lodge:

Ony yung lass ut evur expexs o dasent yung mon lookin fur o wife omong wimen's Lodges ul be mistan, noather mon nur woman uts ony respect fur ther sel, ul evur goo nere ony sich loik placus. (43)

The argument continues, with Nancy defending the role of the Lodges in providing sickness benefit. Mary replies that there are some 'respectable' women's societies which provide the positive benefits of the Lodges, without the drunken debauchery:

Sum ov Bameford wimen ur in o club ut's held be Bameford skoo, un it's bin ogate a lung toime, un the sen it's o vere gud un, membr's us a tay party once o yer, un then they'n sum innozent amusment, neaw cood wi nut have o Sick Society ut Independunt ur Methody or Baptist skoo rewm? They may bi sure iv wimen get togethur in o ale hewse ther sure to disgrace theresels. (44)

Clearly, women are not to be trusted together where drink is available. However, the advantages of female organisation in a 'respectable' setting is approved of, for example a nonconformist meeting place, where sick benefits are distributed and innocent amusements such as tea parties are organised. In the end, Nancy is convinced of Mary's arguments, and resolves not to attend the Lodge any more.

A further attack on the Lodges appeared in the Rochdale Spectator the following year. "A Few Minnits' Tauk Obeawt Wimin's Lodges, Atween Tim o'Nathon's un Yeam o' Oud Sam's" was probably inspired by the Nancy and Mary dialogue. This time two men discuss 'the problem'. Tim's wife, Sal, has been attending with disastrous results for the household - untidiness and lack of provisions because Sal is too busy with her lodge business. Yeam suggests that the lodges provided burial assistance, and that "iv theaw wur deead vur Sal un th'wenschus would loik to see the dasuntly berrid!" (45). Tim replies that the present state of things in the house is "wur nur bein berrid alive!" Yeam describes some of the Lodge procedures, which further terrify the reader:

Th'yed o'th'Lodge begins o nomine wi "Officers and Sisters Be upstanding" un "Officers and sisters" so it is, un ut hoo makes woman ut ther mayin promis o er oath whol hoos hung up uthool nevver tel nout obeawt th'Lodge wol hoos o livin woman, un then the letn ur deawn to be finisht. (46)

The men discuss the finances of the Lodges, and how money is squandered on ale - the Lodge meetings always being held in public houses. Tim also informs Yeam that many women are members of several lodges, and one pregnant 'Shepherdess' actually gave birth at Lees Lodge after she had tramped from Huddersfield! Particular objection is made to the practice of admitting men to the Lodge after the meeting is over; they have

to pay for the privilege, and one man who tried not to was plucked 'loik o pigeon, un had him nakt us neer us meet be'. (47)

At the end of the dialogue, Tim suggests that the Tories are involved in setting up the women's lodges "to breed supporters ov th'Church an State". He cites one lodge called 'The Female Protestant Molesworth and Roby Society' as proof of their sinister political intentions, and Yeam is suitably shocked. Tim promises to provide Yeam with more information on this at a later date.

Both the Nancy and Mary sketches, and the Tim and Yeam piece, level similar accusations at the women's lodges - indeed, it is possible they were written by the same anonymous author. These can be summarised as 1) women are neglecting their domestic responsibilities, particularly child-care, cleaning and cooking, 2) women are demeaning themselves through drink, 3) they are either engaging in, or open to, immoral sexual activities. The 'Tim and Yeam' dialogue is more overtly political: the secrecy and oathmaking of the Lodge is of concern, and particularly the tory connections. In all probability the local Tories capitalised in the popularity of women's lodges by forming their own, rather than the lodges being a Tory invention as such. The 'Mary and Nancy' sketch, with its favourable mention of women's societies meeting in nonconformist rooms suggests that there may have existed a range of different types of women's organisations with 'friendly society' functions. Both sketches acknowledge that even the 'dissolute' lodges serve some useful functions - sickness benefit and burial clubs. The burial club movement did become particularly widespread in Lancashire amongst working men in the 1860s, but usually these, and other friendly societies, rigidly excluded women.

The lodges provided women with access to some form of social welfare type benefits which they would otherwise have had access to only through a husband. Equally, they permitted women-only socialising which no doubt had its occasional

raucousness, though probably no worse than most male lodges. Nonetheless, the male perception of the lodges as drinking dens for women clearly went against a male working class morality. Whilst the admission of men appears to have been done on a carefully controlled basis with an entry fee and sanctions against non-payers, this was seen as a further weakening of a husband's control over 'his' property.

The fact that these sketches were written in dialect suggests that the issue was a popular one in Rochdale in the 1840s, the use of 'local characters' helping to set a seal of moral correctness on the story, without using the language of middle class preaching, which may have been less well received.

The Women Dialect Writers

The outstanding fact about dialect literature in the nineteenth century was how it was almost totally dominated by men. The reasons for this are not difficult to find. Dialect literature was a predominantly working class literature; working class women had less access to education in literacy skills than even their male partners; they had less time to write, compared with middle class women, because of the combined pressures of work and domestic responsibilities. It could be regarded as not being a woman's role to 'write' if she was from the working class.

There was a social acceptance of middle class female writers, but there are few examples of such women writing in dialect. Mrs Gaskell used dialect as dialogue in her 'industrial' novels, but she did not write 'dialect literature' as such, in the way that some middle class male counterparts in the Manchester Literary Club did. Perhaps this was because dialect literature was seen as coarse and earthy: essentially a masculine form. A Lancashire middle class man such as George Milner, W.E.A. Axon or Richard Rome Bealey could write, and write successfully, in dialect. A middle class woman would have been taking immeasurable risks both with her literary and personal

reputation if she had written in dialect. It would have been seen as degrading, unwomanly and in poor taste; whilst it may have been acceptable to read, say, Waugh and Laycock, to attempt to write similar poetry in dialect was a literary non-starter.

Margaret Lahee: A Radical Woman's Voice in the Nineteenth Century

The one woman who did write dialect successfully was in every sense an outsider. Margaret Rebecca Lahee was born in Carlow, Ireland, in 1831. Her parents died when she was young, and she was brought up and educated to a high standard by relatives in Wicklow. Clearly a product of the Anglo-Irish middle class, nonetheless her situation as an orphan gave her an isolated feeling. At the age of eighteen (or twenty) she moved to Rochdale to learn the trade of dressmaking with a Mrs Kavanagh, a friend of her relatives. She befriended Miss Susannah Rothwell Wild, daughter of a hat manufacturer in Rochdale, and lived with her until her death in 1896. Her life suggests someone living in a closely knit community but without being totally a part of it; she was 'respectable', in a business which had considerable status, but not within the charmed circle of Rochdale's bourgeoisie. Her relationship with Susannah Wild might raise questions about her sexuality and in nineteenth century Rochdale would have been seen as another of the slightly 'odd' sides of Lancashire's only (at the time) woman dialect writer. She was a highly politically conscious woman, as is clearly evidenced by her fascinating account of Rochdale's foremost radical politician, Tom Livsey, (49) where she closely identifies with his political ideals. Although of Irish descent, and strongly attached to her native land (she wished to be buried in Healey Dell because it reminded her of the Vale of Avoca), the issue of home rule is not discussed in her writings. However, her radical-liberal beliefs suggest she would have been associated with the home rule campaign in the 1880s. Rochdale accepted her as an important literary figure, and she is one of the four writers commemorated on the Rochdale Dialect Writers' Monument in Broadfield Park.

Margaret Lahee was able to write in dialect because she was relatively free from the

social restrictions placed on lower middle class women of the time and the social/economic disadvantages of her working class sisters. She was an 'outsider' being from Ireland, she was unmarried with no family ties in the area to disapprove of her dialect writing. She was low enough in the social scale to befriend working class people and to get to know working class life intimately.

Her first published work was in 1859, "Owd Neddy Fitton's Visit To th'Earl o'Derby" - a comic sketch, initially published by the Bury Times. It is an amusing, if unexceptional story about a Lancashire farmer who goes to see his landlord, the Earl of Derby, when he is told by a land agent that the rent is increasing. It was a great popular success and went into many reprints, establishing the reputation of Margaret Lahee as a dialect writer. However, it is worth noting that early editions of her writing are often signed only 'M.R.L.' keeping both her identity, and sex, a secret. Her motives in writing in dialect are outlined in her introduction to her novel, Sybil West:

I am aware that there are fastidious individuals who would disparage and decry vernacular literature. But beyond other counties Lancashire has preserved its native dialect, rough and rugged in harmony with the vigour of its race... it is well worthy of study, not only from a philological point of view, but for its rich humour and pathos, racy of the soil. (51)

Only dialect can provide a 'realistic' portrayal of the lives of the 'people', within which she includes both the working class and the people 'who, through commercial enterprise, industry, or good luck, have attained affluence and superior social standing' who nonetheless return to use of the dialect when in situations of pressure. Her view of 'genuine Lancashire people' takes in the Liberal ideal of the 'productive classes'; excluded would be the landed gentry and their hangers-on (although the Earl of Derby gets sympathetic treatment in 'Neddy Fitton'). She is not attempting a purely academic description of Lancashire people, as a total outsider; she has more than one foot in the community, and this tension between her and her subject matter was highly creative:

I have laboured in the field of Lancashire literature for over half my lifetime,

and have tried to bring forth the pure gold hidden beneath the surface of the people's nature. (52)

Her early dialect writings such as 'Neddy Fitton' do not mark her out as being any different a dialect writer from her competent male counter-parts like Waugh and Brierley. Surprisingly she seems never to have met Waugh, although he wrote to her in 1895 acknowledging a New Year's greetings, indicating he had read and admired Neddy Fitton when it was first published in 1859. (53) Her most interesting early work was the biography of Livsey published in 1865, where she comments on her position as a woman writing on politics:

It is generally an understood matter that ladies know little of politics, and care less; but of course there are exceptions to every rule, and I have taken the liberty of claiming that exception... (54)

This biography is a factual account of Livsey's life, but written with literary style, and extensive quotes from Livsey in dialect. She describes an argument between young Tom and his arch-Tory schoolmaster Hugh Oldham, about the 'privileged classes':

"Dunnot the privileged classes as yo co'um, rather plunder folk out of thir brass nur work for it thersels, with thir Income Tax and Outgo Tax, thir Property tax, and the dule knows how many taxes besides. I'll tell yo what maisther, the present law stands in vast need of amendment, and if I ever live to be a mon I'll"
- "You'll be hanged or transported sir, for your damnable radicalism, you sill sir... (55)

She deals with Livsey's Chartist and trade union activity sympathetically, seeing Chartism as a heroic fore-runner of the Liberal campaign for universal suffrage. She describes Livsey's role in preventing a massacre of working people in Rochdale during the 1842 strike, when Hussars were drafted in by the local establishment 'in high hope of seeing some of the Radical mob shot down'. Strikers from Oldham and Ashton descended on Rochdale to draw the plugs in the still-working mills, and Livsey is described as saving the day, as the rioters advanced towards the hidden soldiers:

"Aw say, where do yo reckon your bown to now? Out on yo for a pack of

undacent rapscallions, how dar yo think o'stonnin up for yoursels, or how can you for shame to ax your masters to give you a proper wage for your work. Bith mons, aw shame for you, aw do; you should be like those set o'folk at Fergus O'Connor tells o'er, that's fain to get potato's n sale o'th'year round." Hisses and groans."

"O, yo may shout an make your din, but let me tell you, if your bown into Rochdale to plug-draw, you'll be o shot, for information has been lodged against us..." (56)

Livsey fails to stop the crowd, who are then attacked by the soldiers and many people are injured; despite Livsey's attempts to stop violence, a warrant is issued for his arrest and he flees to Liverpool at the pleading of his fiancée, Sarah Lord. (57) Lahee uses the dialect to impress on the reader how close Livsey was to his people, 'a true son of Rochdale', as well as giving realism to the text. In conclusion she points the political way forward, hoping that:

...the high principle of liberalism may be extended, and that Rochdale will be foremost in the battle for reform, if that reform will extend itself to the working classes, and above all things, to the half-famished paupers, in granting them better and more decisive laws, which will protect them from the tyrannical and merciless system now in force against them. (58)

Margaret Lahee wrote several 'comic' sketches, such as "The Hunting Party Or Owd Jemmy Wrigley's Story", "Gardener Ned's Philosphy" and others (59). Later in her life she wrote a number of novels, some of which were serialised in the local press. Sybil West appeared during 1885 and 1886 in the Rochdale press, and was published in book form in 1893. Sybil West is the work which establishes Margaret Lahee as a major female writer, and deserves wider recognition for its literary depiction of the life of Lancashire women workers. Unlike other 'industrial novels' the central character is a working class woman, who uses the dialect as naturally as any man. Even the socialist Allen Clarke was wary of having his women heroines speaking in dialect, whereas Lahee does this quite naturally. The story fits with the middle class ideal of self improvement and individual advancement through hard-work; however, it is far more than yet another Smilesian tract. Its portrayal of working class figures is extremely well done, and her knowledge of the cotton industry is clearly considerable. Sybil West is the eldest daughter of a working class family plunged into poverty by the death

of the father. They were relatively prosperous from the wages the husband earned, running a small farm and doing occasional carting work, though not the stereotyped ruined middle class family forced to send the daughter to the mill. (60) At the age of twelve Sybil is forced into the role of family breadwinner, as a tenter at a weaving shed, where she earns four shillings a week. Her mother comments:

"Smo' wages that, Sybil, to keep thee i'meyt an' clooas," said the mother, "but happen thae'll get moor in a while, so thae mun do thi'best to larn, mi wench, as I've nobbut thee to help me till these childer getten a bit owder." (61)

Sybil is too proud to tell anyone that she is literally starving, and it is only when her weaver, Martha Brierley, forces her to eat some of her own food:

"Sybil, my wench, artunt thae gooin' to thi dinner, for I deawt thae's had no breyfast?" "Naw, I con do beawt aught till I draw mi wage."
"Nay, nay, lass, seetho, here's some potato pie. I've brought mi dinner today. Come, get it into thi mon. I'm sure thae'rt hungry..."
Sybil looked at the tempting food with longing eyes, but seeing two of the other girls watching her she turned aside.
"What! Winnot thae have it"
"Naw, I thank yo' o'th'same, but I'd leifer wait till I goo whoam."
"Thae little comical powse! Tak' it this minnit or I'st be settin thee one in new. Tak it I tell thee..." (62)

When the two other girl-tenters leave, Sybil devours the pie in desperation - the effect is to make her throw up, and collapse in a faint on the shed floor. The scene is very well described with the sympathetic character of Sybil's weaver, Martha Brierley, bringing comedy into a tense and serious situation without lessening the impact of Sybil's position. The mill manager, Gorton, sees the state she is in, and makes sure she gets promoted to learner-weaver, ie working two looms until she is proficient to work the usual four. Martha, Sybil's younger sister, is also given a job as a tenter for an experienced weaver. Thus, through the kindly actions of the mill manager, and the support of her workmates like Martha Brierley, the West family are saved from starvation. Good times do not last though. The mill goes on short time, and then the workers are laid off. The family are again plunged into poverty, but are rescued by the officer of work for Sybil and Martha at a distant weaving shed. The sisters move home and start work at their new weaving shed - and trouble begins with their new tackler,

Tom Holt. Accurately showing the power of patronage and favouritism the tacklers could wield, Lahee describes the fury of Tom Holt when told to put Sybil on the looms he had promised to a friend, Mary Turner. He makes his mind up to make Sybil's life a misery but first tries to win her confidence with false kindness; in this scene he goes over to Sybil who is having trouble with the unfamiliar new looms she has been given:

"Let me see lass; connot thae work it reet?"

"Naw, I connot; it runs weel enough for a bit, an'then it starts o'runnin' heavy."

"Oh, I'll soon doctor that for thee. Neaw then try it - hey ups! that's the style. Will it do neaw, think'st ta?"

"Ay. That's first rate."

"I thowt I'd do mi best to fettle 'em for thee; but they'n olez heavy gooin looms shuz what th'manager may think..." (63)

Tom Holt tries to sabotage Sybil's work, and she has to report to the mill manager who is inclined to sack her; however, Holt has been spotted by Jack Whittaker who denounces him and Holt is thrown out of the mill. The other weavers are overjoyed at the news and sing "Rule Britannia"! A weakness of the novel is the lack of reference to the role of the trade unions; admittedly, unionisation of women weavers did come late, but many would have been members by the time Sybil West was being written. Equally, whilst there is a sense of collectivity in the weaving shed, through mutual kindness and friendship, this is not reflected in any collective response to injustice. The only salvation for Sybil against the tyrannical tackler is through a fair-minded manager.

One of the strongest features of the novel is the distinctive individual characters, particularly that of Martha West, Sybil's younger sister. When Martha starts in the weaving shed, she is put 'tenting' with Martha Brierley - whom Sybil had previously assisted. She comes home and tells the good news to her mother and gives some of the shed 'gossip'; that Sybil had been re-named, or 'kesson'd o'er ogen':

"Why? Who has christened her?" inquired Mrs. West.
 "Eawr factory folk."
 "An' what done they co'her? Nowt wrong, I hope."
 "Naw, they darn't do so, whol I'm aside her. They nobbut co' her 'Th'Spring Throstle' cose hoo's olez singing' oather hymns or psalms."
 "I'm thankful to yer it," said the mother happily, "for whol hoo's raisin her voice i'song, hoo mun be content wi her lot."
 "Ay, an' I'm content too, mother, I'm olez singing' 'Oh, be joyful', for o' ut eawr Sybil puts on me shameful. See yo' hoo want let me a budge a yard fro' her side if hoo con help hersel. Hoo's a gradely owd slave driver." (64)

The impish characteristics of young Martha are nicely drawn, establishing her as a forceful, and quite different, character from the more strait-laced Sybil. The youngest of the three daughters takes more after Martha than Sybil, who, through her courtship with the aspiring mill engineer Jack Whitaker, has begun attending evening classes in literacy skills. This leads to tensions within the family, vented in usually good natured sarcasm:

Sybil had not been long attending the night school before her mother and her sisters began to notice that she was getting vastly refined in her mode of speaking, so much so that the girls commented on it one to another, and often mimicked her when her back was turned. (65)

Margaret Lahee again uses humorous techniques to bring out a difficult domestic situation in which the mother tries to steer a path between the aspiring Sybil and the down-to-earth Ann. One evening Sybil calls Ann in to the house, after some noisy games outside with her friends, and asks if she has learnt her 'task' for the following morning Sunday school:

"Yigh, sure I have, replied Ann."
 "Who says 'yigh'?" said Sybil reprovingly. "You should say yes."
 "Nay, indeed I, noather," said Ann, disdainfully. "It's quite enough for me to say 'yes' to th'schoo'mistress, beawt botherin' wi sich mee-maw talk when I'm awhoam."
 "Mother," said Sybil demurely, "I do wish you would check these children for speaking such broad dialect."
 "Ann, does thae aver! Heaw leekest thae does no do as eawr Sybil tells thee? What's use o'sendin' thee to schoo' if thae winnot larn to speyk gradely?"
 Sybil turned aside to hide the smile her mother's dry humour had provoked, the little woman having delivered to Ann a lecture in the broadest provincialism. (66)

Lahee clearly sees use of language as being a particularly important class indicator: Sybil's upward mobility is reflected not only in her attending evening classes and courting Jack Whittaker, but in speech as well. Later in the story, Jack and Sybil are parted through a mutual misunderstanding and Sybil receives the attentions of Harwood, one of the mill-owners. A friend of Sybil's in the shed, Emma Fielding, is talking about Harwood, to Sybil, and Martha is listening:

"Martha." said Sybil reprovingly, "it is not right of you to listen to what one person is saying to another."

"Eh dear! Wht a tail eawr cat's geet'n on. If hoo's aught to tell thee, that I munnot yer, let her keep it till I'm off t'clod."

"Martha, please do try and speak properly, if you can."

"Well, but I connot; an I'st ne'er awae to try. Does thae yer that Sybil West? Heaw leekest thae connot stick to eawr own gradely talk, same as mi mother. Thae never yers her speykin mee-maw..." (67)

Harwood disgraces himself with Emma Fielding, who, it appears, is already pregnant by Tom Holt, the tackler. However, Harwood ultimately mends his ways and marries Martha West - who loses none of her racy humour and dialect. Jack and Sybil are finally united, and Jack is at the head of a prosperous business. Even young Ann makes a move up by marrying one of the mill-owner's sons: the story has the obligatory 'happy ending' in which all the righteous characters are rewarded. Much of the novel may seem archaic and melodramatic - sudden leaps of fortune, the unlikely marriage of all the West girls to the middle class and so on. Yet within it is much stark realism and an unusually skilful characterisation of working class women. Lahee does not hold back from writing about exploitation at work, although most of the management and owners are treated sympathetically in the novel and Gorton becomes a spokesman for righteousness and truth. One of the most moving parts of the novel concerns the fate of Emma Fielding, a young beauty who is seduced at the age of thirteen by Tom Holt and is forced to have an abortion, which Holt pays for. The money was taken to Emma by an acquaintance of Holt's, Joe, who described her state to James Collinge, Ann's future husband:

Well, I browt th' brass to Emma, and I did get to know beawt axin (her condition PS) for when I went into th' heawse I seed Emma sittin' i' th' low chair, lookin' th' picture o' dyeth, an' howdin' a teeny bab to her breast. When hoo seed me hoo brasted eawt cryin', an sed, 'Oh Joe, yo' mustn't tell anyone wheer I am, nor anything else abeawt me; for if Tom Holt's wife gets to hear o' me havin' this child, she'll be sure to make bother about it.!' (68)

Emma commits suicide - despite heroic attempts by Martha West to save her from drowning in the mill lodge. It is left to Gorton, the sympathetic manager, to express the moral lesson - addressed to his own class though, not to 'wayward' young women:

Dear, dear. How short sighted we masters are to be sure. If we advertise for a cashier or a traveller, we require credentials as to his honesty... While on the contrary we employ an overlooker, carder, jobber, etc, from the fact that he understands his work, never taking into consideration the girls and women over whom he is placed. Hence, if these men be immorally inclined they may carry their insidious influence amongst the females who work under them - even as in Emma Fielding's case - and cause ruin and desolation to many a hapless girl who becomes ensnared within their toils. (69)

Lahee is arguing that the main evil of the factory system lies, not at the level of the owners and managers (though some, like Frank Harwood, abuse their positions), but primarily at the level of the overlookers who are in constant contact with the workers. This undoubtedly had a large measure of accuracy; writing about Bolton in the 1880s, Allen Clarke commented on the overseer's immense power, after noting the improvements that had been made since the days when, he suggests, in some mills seduction was literally a condition of employment:

But matters are bad enough still, as how can they help but be in a state of society where managers and overseers have almost life and death power over their female employees... Last year... there was an account of a woman who was discharged because she refused to be seduced by the mill manager. (70)

Lahee avoids taking up a class position by reducing the evil primarily to the level of 'immoral' overlookers, whilst most of the managers and owners are

sympathetically portrayed. However, the masters are condemned for their lack of interest in the matter.

Lahee's own political standpoint, radical Liberalism, shared with Waugh, Brierley and Laycock, limited her ability to take up a position which showed an innate conflict of interest between masters and workers. Instead, interests are reconciled on an individual level, with some of the working class women marrying the decent and respectable masters. Naturally, once having moved up the social scale they leave the weaving shed. There is a limited supply of eligible masters' sons whom an aspiring weaver could marry, and the weakest part of the novel is its repeated use of this escape route for working class women. However, in its dignified treatment of working class women, its description of the sexual assaults then common in the mills, and the role of women in the work process in the weaving sheds it is a pioneering work which deserves greater recognition. Its use of dialect as an indicator of social class and upward mobility, showing Sybil dropping her use of dialect speech, is very skilfully done. Lahee takes its use from a purely descriptive literary device showing 'how people talk' to using it to suggest social mobility within a family, and the conflicts this gives to which this gives rise.

Margaret Lahee died in 1896, five years after Waugh's death. It cannot be said that she inspired a range of new, working class women writers. She was the exception, an outsider, but with strong roots in her community, but without some of the social controls which her lower-middle class sisters would have had through marriage and family ties.

Women Writers of the Second Generation of Dialect Writers

The 'second generation' of dialect writers begins to establish itself in the early 1890s, and as I have argued in Chapter 4 ("The New Generation of Dialect Writers")

was influenced by the young socialist movement, and by changing attitudes towards women, in part a result of the rise of women's political and trade union agitation. As working class women began to take an active political role in both of these movements, some of them began to express their ideas in writing - though it was not until the 1920s that a large amount of dialect literature was being produced by women.

The outlets available to working class women writers included Allen Clarke's Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly, the Cotton Factory Times, the overtly socialist press and local newspapers. The acceptance of women writing in dialect appears to have developed slowly; most early poetry and prose by working class women writers such as Sarah Robinson and Elizabeth Eckersall ("Busy Bee") who wrote in the Northern Weekly was in standard English. In the 1890s there still seems to be an unspoken assumption that dialect is somehow more coarse and masculine in form than standard English. It might be acceptable for male writers to depict female characters speaking in dialect, such as Allen Clarke's weavers in Driving and A Daughter of the Factory, but even then he qualifies this by having the female heroine using standard English.

Elizabeth Eckersall: The Busy Bee

Elizabeth Eckersall began writing dialect poetry, both for the local Bury press, and for the Northern Weekly and Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Annual, in the 1890s. She had started work at the age of eight as a half-timer in a local mill, and attended night school in her teens to catch up on the education she had missed as a child. (71) She married William Eckersall who also wrote dialect poetry. (72) Her work is a good example of the constraints Lancashire dialect writing found itself in - wanting to appeal to the popular readership, and hence be acceptable to local newspaper editors, but also to express radical ideas. Swann, in Lancashire Authors, gives the poem "Abeaut Cards" as an example of her work which appeared in one of the Bury papers. It is a simple and unexceptional poem 'about cards', or the poet's attempt to learn how to

They towd me t'rules, aw tried not to forget,
Hearts were trumps, so we all began to play;
Aw put a king on upon my partner's ace,
An' then he said aw'd thrown that king away.

We played again, aw did my very best,
Aw didn't win a trick wi' o'my pains,
We'd lots o'fun, but still aw am afraid,
If aw play whist aw'se have to get fresh brains. (73)

This was the sort of homely and faintly amusing Lancashire dialect which local newspapers liked to give some local flavour and light relief in their pages - it would upset no-one, and make no demands on the reader. However, some of her work, contributed to Allen Clarke's publications was more controversial. Her poem "A Bad Lot" appeared in his Lancashire Annual in 1922 and is a particularly strong statement on the life of a woman worker. The 'bad lot' alluded to are the mill owners, mine bosses and the establishment generally. The entire poem is worth quoting:

"A Bad Lot"

Us workin' folks are aulus doin' wrung
O'er fifty years aw've yeard that same owd tale
Aw'd like to yer a bit fro' t'other side,
That tale's like war-stuff, sickenin' an' stale.

Aw went to work when barely eight yers owd
Before aw're twelve they put me on fulltime;
An' mind we had to work till six at neet,
To stop at two o' Saturday were prime.

My father were a collier, liked a spree,
At one time, too, he geet a peound a day;
A hundthertweight o' coals were sixpence then,
An' neaw for dirt we'n o'er two bob to pay.

He liked to study th'stars, an' plants, an' fleawers;
He took his scythe in summer, blithe an' free;
When th'huntsmen coom he chucked his pick away,
And that were wrung again at th' pit yo' see.

Aw just were th same, aw didn't like aw wark,
An' longed to be i'th' woods among its fleawers;
That were not reet for folks that had no brass,
But good days croom an' soon we geet ten heurs.

My mother were akin to Job, aw'm sure,
But aw geet owderstill, an' didn't mend;

Aw wouldn't tek a gift fro' th'manager,
Aw spit at him when axed to be his friend.

Aw had four looms, but some were alus stopped,
For warps or bobbins, sometimes weeks, not days;
That taks a lot off poor worker's wage,
An' such wark noather mon nor mesthur pays.

To tak a book or sewin' weren't allowed,
But still we often did it, broke their rules;
They couldn't watch us aw an' every heaur,
At takkin' chances workers are not fools.

Neaw workin' folks are havin' shorter heurs,
Aw wonder heaw rich folks will make ends meet;
They'll ha' to emigrate or work theirsel',
When that day comes, we'se aw be dooin' reet. (74)

The author of the poem longs to break out of the inhuman grind of mill and mine and live a richer, fulfilling life it is outstanding. No attempt is made to glorify the drudgery of a weaving shed: the writer shares her dad's distaste for toil and longed 'to be i'th woods among its fleawers'. The job was only made bearable by breaking the company's rules, 'tekkin' a chance' by bringing in a book or sewing.

Sexual harassment of young mill women by overlookers and managers was a common theme in Lancashire writing. Such harassment often caused serious trouble, such as the big strike in Nelson at the end of the last century. On a literary level, the matter is usually resolved by the girl's 'true love' giving the overlooker his come-uppance. Here though, the lass stands on her own two feet and spits in his face!

The poem has none of the maudlin sentimentalism of much dialect writing in the 1920s, particularly when looking at the past. Here, the past has little to recommend it - a child starting work at the age of eight, forced to work twelve hours a day till six at night. As far as I am aware, Elisabeth Eckersall had no other 'radical' dialect poetry published, and never brought out any work in book form.

Maud Shutt: Poet and Politician

Maud Shutt shared Elizabeth Eckersall's socialism and feminism, and wrote some short, lightweight pieces for the Northern Weekly. She was a member of the Salford Board of Guardians, and a member of the ILP. The Northern Weekly, in a front-page tribute to her in 1903, described her as:

...a fluent speaker, a skilful debater, possesses a quick repartee and a keen sense of humour. Such a combination is rarely met with among women workers. One consequence of Mrs. Shutt's liberal interpretation of her duty is that she is constantly getting into 'hot water'. The ordinary Guardian can't stand her. So much the worse for the ordinary Guardians say we. (75)

She contributed a few dialect poems during 1903, including "The Courtship of Tommy Knocker-Up", a letter from Tommy to his beloved, 'a washer-wife' of Pendleton. The letter, and its response, are simple, but pleasingly done poems about the courtship of a working class couple:

My washer-wife of Pendleton,
This letter neaw awm sendin',
To tell thee that aw love thi true,
An hope awn not offendin.

These two years that aw've knocked thee up,
To go to wark at five,
Love's been knockin' at my 'eart,
As true as awm alive... (76)

While the poem is nothing exceptional, nonetheless it is an unselfconscious description of working class life, using the 'knocker-up' theme to describe his own feelings towards his 'washer-wife'. The hard life both of knocker-up, and the washerwoman who has to rise for work at five in the morning, is made bearable by the love for each other.

Maud Shutt doesn't appear to have written much poetry after this period; perhaps her political commitments made too heavy a demand on her. What is perhaps

interesting is that a working class woman political activist did feel the importance of writing poems on the lighter side of working class life, expressed through the medium of 'Tommy Knocker-Up's dialect.

Ethel Carnie: Songs of a Factory Girl

Ethel Carnie shared Elizabeth Eckersall's early life as a half-timer in a weaving shed; at the age of eleven she had work as a reacher in Delph Road Mill, Great Harwood, before becoming a winder at a neighbouring shed. According to J.R. Swann, her first published poem was "The Bookworm" in 1905. (77) However, she herself describes how much of her poetry was written earlier, and how the "Bookworm" was written at work:

...it was really composed one morning whilst working at my frame. I think it is no exaggeration to say that all my poems came into my head at the mill. It might be... that my occupation has something to do with the rhythmic forms into which my thoughts have shaped themselves. (78)

"The Bookworm" and most of her other poems, are not written in dialect. However, it is worth quoting the first four verses of her most famous poem to give a general indication of her work, and philosophy - that of a working class intellectual:

I own no grand baronial hall,
No pastures rich in waving corn;
Leave unto me my love for books,
And wealth and rank I laugh to scorn. (79)

All the poems published in her first collection, Rhymes From the Factory (1907) and Songs of a Factory Girl (1911) are in standard English and none relate to 'factory' life. The love of books suggested in "The Bookworm" appears to have acted almost as a narcotic, taking her away from the reality of life in the mills, into an ethereal world of romance. The titles of some of her poems indicate her clear intention to get as far away from the mill as possible, and write 'pure' poetry: "To Thomas

Carlyle", "To the Bust of Mozart", "Bohemia". "Meditations in Holyrood Palace" and "The Last Days of Pompeii". (80) The attraction for the publisher lay perhaps in the novelty of a 'factory girl' writing poems about Mozart. They certainly do not lie in the quality of the poetry, which is mediocre. In the same year that Rhymes From the Factory was published, she contributed two dialect sketches to Northern Weekly and Clarke wrote an editorial complimenting her on Rhymes from the Factory. (81) The two sketches, "Old Jim's Last Looms" and "A White Geranium" are short stories using dialect in the dialogue. "Old Jim's Last Looms" (82) is the tale of an old weaver who is losing his sight; he is finally told by the manager that he is sacked. He comes home and describes the scene to his wife, Nan:

"Tha sees it's this way," went on the old fellow, "My eyesight doesn't mend ony, and last week aw'd a reight mess wi' a black side, an this mornin' th'manager come on sez, 'Tha doesn't need to come anymooar. Tha's gotten too owd to weyve.' I knew that afore, but warking folk has to keep on their pins as long as they con."

Their situation seems desperate, until the following week a letter arrives from a relative in Fall River (a big textile centre in the USA where many Lancashire workers emigrated). Their George is coming home with plenty of money for the family -more than enough to see Jim and Nan out for the rest of their years in retirement. "A White Geranium" (83) also features a weaving family - William Fothergill is an elderly weaver, and Nan is his daughter. Mrs Fothergill dies when giving birth to Nan, and the father and daughter live a frugal, but happy life. When William gets too old to weave, Nan goes out charring; however she is seduced by the son of the Registrar, whose office she cleans. The theme of the 'white geranium' is about the basic pureness of working class people - Nan, the fallen woman, is the real heroine. The white geranium is also symbolic of the child she gives birth to: like the plant it momentarily weakens, but survives with proper love and care. Nan wants nothing to do with the middle class father - when asked by a neighbour she replies scornfully:

"An when arta beawn to fayther id?" she asked, as she took it on her knee.
"Yo; con see thad apple on t'cornice?" inquired Nan.
"Well, when id goes back onto t'tree as id coom off aw'll mek him pay."
"Weel, iv ever aw yerd owt like tha." (84)

Both stories are basically optimistic. "The White Geranium" is the better tale. It does not opt for an easy solution to the particular problem it highlights.

Nan survives of character and goodness, with some help from her friends and father. The use of dialect in the dialogue gives an added dimension of realism to the characters and emphasises their down-to-earth nature.

Ethel Carnie's success in getting a national publisher for her poetry, and later her novels, perhaps made her play down the use of dialect. For a time she edited The Woman Worker, a newspaper associated with Blatchford's Clarion which also had a national circulation. Her main novels - Miss Nobody, General Belinda and This Slavery - are located in the North, but cannot be called 'regional' novels, still less 'dialect' novels. In This Slavery, the heroine is Rachel - described by Mary Ashraf as "the first realistic treatment of the woman revolutionary leader". (85) She is a mill worker who becomes a political activist, and suffers imprisonment. Like the heroine of Clarke's A Daughter of the Factory, there is a hidden secret to her life. She is the illegitimate daughter of the mill owner - her mother was seduced on the promise of a job in the mill, when she was in desperate financial difficulties. Rachel discovers this, and rejects her father's offer of an allowance so she can leave the mill and get a good education. Rachel shares Rose Hilton's (of Daughter of the Factory) at times elitist dismissal of the working class, but she sticks with them. The following extract also gives an indication of the much watered-down dialect she uses in her novels:

There are times when I get sick of the working class. Sick of 'em. They'll work till they drop, they'll rot without even smashing a window, they'll clem and shake their tabel-cloths without crumbs to deceive their next-door neighbour... They're no good, and I can only stop with 'em because I can't get away from 'em. (86)

Ethel Carnie's success as a national working class writer led to the weakening of the specifically regional contours of her writing; perhaps this was a desire to make her work read by workers from all over the country - or it may have been pressure from her publishers to make her books accessible, and with as little use of dialect as possible. (87) Clearly she could write dialect well, if she wanted to; instead in her novels there is nothing more than a faint northern tinge to the dialogue. My view is that her novels suffer accordingly; they become less specific, and they are not tied in to recognisable places and events. The attempt to both appeal to working class readers and also to be universal in approach is a difficult act to pull off, and unfortunately too many of her situations are in an abstract limbo of both period and place. However, she returned to dialect writing in the 1930s, contributing short sketches to the Cotton Factory Times.

Mary Thomason: Warp and Weft

In her later years Ethel Carnie was a revolutionary socialist. A contemporary of hers, Mary Thomason, had no such strong political convictions, but nonetheless she was a notable working class woman writer, and clearly a part of a labour movement culture. Like Allen Clarke, she came from a 'respectable' working class family, which ultimately passed up into the lower middle class. (88) She became a pupil teacher at the age of thirteen, and spent most of her life as a schoolteacher in Leigh. She was an active member of the co-operative movement, the Leigh Literary Institute, and the Wesleyan Church. She lived from 1863 to 1937, and most of her writing was published in the local press in the 1920s and early 1930s, including in the Leigh Friendly Co-operative Record. (89) It was only after her death that her writings were published in book form as Warp and Weft, in 1938.

Most of these writings are strongly local in character - about Leigh life, its people and its customs. Her poetry is a mixture of standard English, and dialect pieces;

indeed her celebration of "The Lancashire Dialect" is actually written in standard English:

My father danced me on his knee,
And made me laugh and shout with glee,
He spoke his words as thou art spoken,
and I, in lisping accents broken,
Did learn the language ever dear
The dialect of Lancashire
So fondly learned from parent dear.
Sweet is thy dialect, Lancashire. (90)

The poem tells of her education and being 'well-taught' in English. However, sometimes she finds that only dialect can 'utter thoughts I wished to speak'. Most of her dialect poems are about domestic life, not described sentimentally, but frequently in a forceful, realistic manner. "Washin' Day" is about a mother's hard-pressed washing day, with one of the children off school, sick:

Jane, I shall have t'keep thee fro'th'skoo',
It's liked be, I'm in sich a fix,
I con't get to stairt o'thooose clooas,
An th'biler's bin gooin' since six.

What wi' havin' th'breakfast send th'mill,
And th'childer t'get ready for th'skoo,
I've ne'er fund time t'have a bite,
For th'babby sticks to me like glue. (91)

The poem attacks the intrusion of middle-class male authority, in the shape of the School-Board Man, wanting to see why Jane is off ill:

Skoo' Board mon! Oh, well! He may come,
I'm gettin that I donnot care,
When men, who don't know heaw I'm fixed,
Want th'orderin' o'what's my affair. (92)

The poem which follows "Washin Day" is also the words of a harassed mother, speaking to her daughter Jane. It is about the realities of a young girl growing up - with her mother telling her to expect little from life, and not get involved with fantasies of marrying some rich and handsome suitor:

Come, neaw Jane! Do put deawn that book:

For to sit theer wastin' thi time
In readin' such rubbish as that
It cannot be less than a crime

An dear! There is thi poor Aunt Kate -
Once as fine a lass as thay'd find;
Hoo used to read novelletes like that,
Hoo did, and they poisoned her mind.

...

So thee be a sensible lass;
Learn heaw to mend stockin's an bake;
Fit thisel' to be a poor mon's wife,
And happen a rich mon they'll make. (93)

Her work sometimes expresses the sense of women's independence in Lancashire, and how they were just as good at getting together and having a good time as the men.

"A Noggin O' Rum" describes one such spree:

It was th' Club Dinner day for th' men.
We women while they were away,
Said "We'll have a gradely good do,
We'll buy some rum for eawr tay."

And did we have a gradely good do,
And gradely good tay by gum!
We aw put a penny each deawn
And we got a noggin o' rum

After tay we went in for fun;
Three or four a good song did sing.
Jin Trant towd some comical tales
And we aw danced reawnd in a ring. (94)

Mary Thomason was brought up in a community which was dominated by coal and cotton, and many of her poems are about mining life and the great strength of character of Leigh miners. Unlike middle class writers, this sympathy did not end at the first sign of industrial trouble. Her "Strike Song" is a sympathetic portrait of a miner coming home to his family, to announce the strike is on:

Come Mary put mi pit clogs by,
From th' jacket shake the dust,
We've gone on strike for ten percent,
We'll get it lass, I trust,
There's nothing cheers a house so much,
As a bright fire o' coal,

Yet colliers wages scarce will keep
The Body with the soul.

But we're on strike for ten percent,
We're not down-hearted yet,
We are on strike for ten percent,
And ten percent we'll get.

Don't bother much o'er food for me,
But give eawr Joe enough,
If he an thee get decent meals,
I will put up with rough.
And cheer the up my bonnie lass,
And little Hoe don't fret,
That dobbie-horse I promised thee,
When th'strike is o'er they'll get. (95)

Mary Thomason also wrote several dialect prose sketches, under the general title of William Lee's Ancestors - Or, Tales of Leighth Folk. Part 1 tells of the narrator (William Lee - but probably Mary Thomason's own recollections in semi-fictional form) and his recollections of childhood, sitting by his grandfather's hand silk loom. It describes the old weaver singing the broadside ballad "Th'Cotton Wayver", describing the hardships of weaving after Waterloo. (96) This gets him on to reminiscing about the 'Leighth Feight':

It happent when he was a lad.

He said, that through there bein a tax on corn, bread was so dear that poor folk were all but clemmed to death; and when they could put up wi things no longer, they begun to hae secret meetin's, and they made pikes, an practised feightin'. When they thowt they were ready, they agreed to meet i'th'Leight Market Place, and openly declare their grievances.
But th'Constable geet to know, and they sent to Warrington for th'soldiers.
Then a magistrate coome an read th'Riot Act.
When he had finisht, th'captain o'th'soldiers sheawted "Charge!". (97)

The narrator describes the crowd being attacked by the soldiers, and how his grandfather was beaten by two constables who mistook him for 'Owd Bonny' who used to write satirical songs 'abeawt th'rich folk stuffin' and eytin' while th'poor folk were clemmin'.

Other sketches are about home life, and adventures of the silk weavers in the

nineteenth century. They suggest that the tradition's of Leigh's silk weavers remained alive through oral transmission, and that memories of the weaver's radicalism remained strong into the twentieth century.

Mary Thomason's writing is perhaps more strongly rooted in her locality than most dialect writers of the twentieth century; she wrote almost totally for local publications, and most of her writing is directly about Leigh. Despite the town's growth in the late nineteenth century it has perhaps retained a greater sense of identity than many Lancashire towns, and a working class writer such as Mary Thomason was able to relate to a ready-made audience for her poems in both dialect and standard English. She does not patronise her readership but writes warmly and realistically about local working class life, avoiding excessive nostalgia and sentimentality. Her belief in working class causes comes through in poems like "Strike Song", though most of her work is about the 'normal', day-to-day life of working people, so often neglected by the more 'political' writer.

Hannah Mitchell; 'Daisy Nook'

Hannah Mitchell has similarities to Mary Thomason. Much of her writing in dialect is about domestic life, from a woman's point of view. Both were being published at the same period - the late 1920s and the early 1930s. However, whereas Mary Thomason writes primarily for her own, and her reader's, enjoyment, Hannah Mitchell's work in the Lancashire ILP's paper, Labour's Northern Voice, are the clearest expressions of socialist feminism written in dialect ever to be published. Hannah Mitchell was not from Lancashire originally - she was brought up on a small Derbyshire farm, and left home early to live in Bolton. Here, she got involved in the socialist movement, married - and began to pick up Lancashire dialect. In her autobiography she describes her love of the dialect:

As life grew easier for me after the end of the war (1918 -PS), I had joined the Lancashire Authors' Association... I had always loved the Lancashire dialect since first hearing it from my good friend and hostess in Bolton... Becoming more familiar with the Lancashire dialect, I began to write sketches in it. These were printed in a small paper run by the ILP called "The Northern Voice", and were mainly written round current events. (98)

These sketches were written under the pseudonym of 'Daisy Nook' - a reference to the working class 'resort' near Failsworth, immortalised by Ben Brierley. These sketches ran during the 1920s, and frequently touch on women's issues. For example "Women's Work" is a comment on those men who thought women should not work but stay at home and do the housework. It's a sharp piece of satire on the men who attended a meeting to discuss the matter:

Another chap geet up an said as he were on o'them as thowt women were takkin men's jobs, an' he thowt if men had better wages, they could keep their wives awhoam, but he said nowt abeawt their sisters and cousins, so aw reckon he thowt as some other chap should keep them.

Then a youngish chap geet up an said he thowt as it were th'man's place to go to work an mek a livin' an th'woman's place to mind th'house, an he talked a lot o'drivel abeawt "hot dinners" an "smilin wives". So aw coam to th'conclusion as he weren't married or he'd ha known as it didn't allus run a hot dinner, an' as there weren't much smilin on weshin' days. (99)

As the meeting goes on, the narrator pretends delight at the proposal to start a 'Society To Prevent Married Women Working'. The feigned delight turns sour when it is made clear the men only mean work "i'th'factory or th'office or teych i'th'skoo's or owt leek that":

They said nowt abeawt her doin weshin awhoam, or takkin a bit o'tailorin' or shirt makkin' in, nor nowt abeawt heaw hoo could stop awoam if hoo had a sick husband or one as wee eawt o'wark or one o'them as had bin born teighert an' ne'er had time to rest hissel thro havin' so mony pint pots to lift. (100)

In a later sketch. "Spring Cleaning", she attacks the male socialists who are too busy fighting the revolution to bother about mundane things like house-cleaning - that's the women's job. 'Daisy Nook' is asked by a male comrade if she is coming out to the socialist meeting - a major crisis is on. She replied:

"Crisis be hanged" aw said. "It's no worse nor it wur every year... Th'women con manage as they allus ha to do wi givin one another a lift wi th'carpets an such like. "Carpets," he stuttered, "what on earth are you talking about?"

"Why, abeawt th'spring cleanin' to be sure," aw said,

"That's th'only crisis as troubles me at present..."

"Nonsense," he snapped, "I'm not talking about a paltry business like cleaning a house... I'm talking about something that will materially affect the lives of thousands of our fellow human beings... The general election, always a serious event, is complicated this time by the addition of thousands of inexperienced women voters..." (101)

She argues that spring cleaning is comparable to a general election. "Clearin aw th'rubbishy ideas eawt o'Parliament". She goes on to argue that politics in the past - before women had a vote - was hardly an example of men's intelligence. She says that she is going out with her sisters to canvass 'aw them inexperienced women voters' whilst him and his comrades will be supping their beer in the pub. The sketch has two political lessons - firstly that women's work in the home isn't trivial, and that men should take an equal share in it and see that 'domestic politics' can be as important as 'world politics' in its way; and secondly that it is usually the women activists who do all the hard slog of canvassing in elections, whilst the men in the pub after their meeting.

"Why Women Should Vote Labour" (reprinted in full as Appendix 30) was written for the local elections in November 1928, and is partly an educational piece on why working class women should make more use of medical and welfare facilities provided by their council, and about the need for getting more women elected onto the local council. Mrs Green's husband is a working class Tory, and she is at home with five kids; the youngest, a girl, is ill but she is reluctant to take her to the welfare centre:

Awm noan goin to be towd mi business wi a lot o'young hussies i'starched caps. Awve had five childer an nowt ails t'other four. There's noan finer childer i'th'street. (102)

Mrs. Green is finally convinced by Mrs. Timms to take her girl to the welfare centre -

Mrs. Green is finally convinced by Mrs. Timms to take her girl to the welfare centre - in the Top Ward which has Labour councillors. Her ward is Tory. Also in the Top Ward are public wash-houses, which prevent the situation Mrs Green is in of having wet washing drying out in the house, creating an unhealthy atmosphere:

"It's a pity they're so far off," Mrs Green said, "We seem to have nowt at this end o' teawn. Th'welfare Centre's up i'th'Top Ward, an th'Library, an th'Baths, an weshouse an aw. We'n nobbut a bit of a recreation greawnd deawn here, an it's a penny car to th'Park; it hardly seems jannock. Heaw is it Mrs Timms?"

"Well, it depends a good bit on what soart o'folk we han on th'Council, Mrs. Green. There's a twothree Labour chaps, wot yore Bill caws crazy socialists on for th'Top ward, an a woman or two..." (103)

Mrs Timms convinces Mrs Green of the need to think about voting Labour - "So what the'men do, it seems to me as if women should vote Labour for th'sake o'their little childer as cornt help theirsels".

Hannah Mitchell's writings are an attempt to use dialect to address working class people 'in their own tongue' to convince them of the need for socialism; in this sense she uses dialect sketches in the same way that Allen Clarke was doing (she was familiar with the old Northern Weekly, alluding to it in "May Day" (104), and lived in Bolton when Clarke was publishing it there). However, she was writing for a labour movement paper, which would have been read by mostly committed socialists. Some of her sketches (like "Spring Cleaning") are directed at a labour readership which had not been entirely won for 'women's' issues, like housework. Her character 'Daisy Nook' expresses basic, seemingly 'common sense' arguments about feminism, made all the more straightforward by seeming to come from the mouth of an ordinary working woman, speaking in dialect. It is noteworthy that the male socialist in "Spring Cleaning" speaks standard English - suggesting he isn't 'down-to-earth' in the same way. Whilst using dialect to project women's politics within the labour movement, she also used the technique of the 'homespun' narrator to have a go at pompous and divisive elements within the labour movement. In "Th'Left Wing" she criticises the

inexperienced young male socialist who is ready to dismiss everyone else in the party as 'right wingers'. She combines a use of dialect with homely ridicule to bring the man down to earth: After being called a right winger, she answers:

"Durnt call me no names," aw said, "or yo'll need booath yore left an right wings to fly away wi'. Aw were a socialist afore yo were born, an when aw tawk abeawt socialism aw know what aw mean better nor yore likely to tell me..."

She then catalogues her idea of socialism - social ownership, production for use and not profit, through democratic struggle. The young man replies:

"Ah," he said, "That's very elementary. Do you know anything of Marx?"
"Aye" aw said, "an Spencers, an Cohens an aw, an Pipers Penny Bazaar..."
"You don't understand I see," he said, "although you seem to have a crude conception of socialism. Do you believe in the dictatorship of the proletariat?"
"Aw durnt know him." aw said, "but whoever he is aw wouldn't let him dictate to me. We'n enough dictators i'this country.. we'n these fellys imitatin that castor oil chap i'Italy, Cockalorum aw mean. Oh, Mussolini is it? Aw knew he were cawd after some sooart o'shellfish. An' we'n twelve chaps i'prison for thinkin an sayin as sowdgers shouldn't be ordered to shoot their fellow workers, so we'n rayther mooar dictatorship nor aw care abawt neww..." (105)

This should not be taken as a right wing attack on the left, so much as a plea for socialist unity and a put-down of youthful arrogance. The reference to the twelve men in prison is a reference to the communist leaders who were imprisoned in the run-up to the General Strike - hardly sympathetic figures to Labour's right wing. Her comments on dictatorship suggest a more libertarian approach to winning socialism - there are enough dictatorships of the right in the world, do we need one of the left? Her answer would clearly be 'no' - socialists should be elected through democratic means on to local councils and parliament, and other bodies. Her adversary is not convinced, but perhaps many of her readers would be encouraged to think more carefully before criticising experienced comrades, and using cliches over-freely.

As well as being published in Labour's Northern Voice, Hannah Mitchell recorded that her sketches were sometimes read out at meetings and socials (she did not recite

them herself very often), continuing the oral tradition of dialect well into the 1930s. (106)

Her dialect writing was, by her own testimony, popular with the readers of the paper, and it was the existence of a regional socialist paper such as Labour's Northern Voice which provided an outlet for her work. It would have been unacceptable in the local press, as much as in the national socialist newspapers like Labour Leader and the Daily Herald. Her work stands out as a notable contribution to working class and feminist writing in the 1920s, and a demonstration that dialect was capable of expressing radical new ideas, within a traditional literary form.

However, she did not inspire the formation of a new school of working class women writers in the way Allen Clarke did a predominantly male group of dialect writers. Although she joined the Lancashire Authors' Association after the First World War, she was a lone voice in using dialect to comment critically on women's issues. The numbers of women dialect writers remained sparse during the 1920s and 1930s despite the growing number of working class women writing in standard English in Lancashire literary circles. Many of these were members of the L.A.A. like Hannah Mitchell, and include Ethel Pearce (wife of Allen Clarke's close friend Alf Pearce, and for many years editor of the L.A.A.'s Red Rose Leaves), Alice Collinge, a member of the L.A.A.'s committee, WEA activist and associate of the Bolton Whitman group, and Mary Lonsdale of Accrington. Despite her evident enjoyment in being a member of the L.A.A., her radical dialect writing was criticised by other, conservative, members. This is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

Jane Fitton - wife of Sam Fitton - wrote a number of dialect sketches and poems for both the local press and the co-op and labour movement publications such as the Cotton Factory Times under the name of 'Th'Owd Fossil', though they do not depart from the traditional 'homely' themes of dialect literature. (107)

Women Writers After the Second World War

Although outside the scope of this thesis, it is worth briefly mentioning the fact that a growing number of women dialect writers emerged. These included Joan Pomfret, Alice Miller, Joan Townsend and Bessie Foulds. Their writing indicates that by the 1950s it had become completely acceptable for women to write in dialect; however, the subject matter and form of their work shows little to distinguish it from their male counter-parts in the 1920s (or earlier). The major advances made by Hannah Mitchell were lost, and the reasons for this are perhaps best sought in the political and cultural climate of the 1950s and 1960s. The link between dialect writing and working class movements, which had existed from the 1890s and had found expression in publications like the Cotton Factory Times, Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly and Labour's Northern Voice, as well as in dialect readings at Labour Party and trade union gatherings, faded away after the Second World War. Dialect writing took on an institutionalised form, through the Lancashire Author's Association which was a socially and politically mixed grouping but without any direct labour movement links. Working class women writing in dialect are unlikely to have found any critical comment about women's conditions encouraged in the largely male, socially conservative nexus of the L.A.A..

Conclusion

This chapter has been in two main parts - the attitudes of male dialect writers to women, and the contribution of women dialect writers. Amongst male dialect writers, we find an acceptance of prevailing middle class views about women in the writing of Edwin Waugh, who tends to idealise women and place them at home, looking after the children, keeping a tidy home. Brierley is more aware of the realities of women's lives

in the 1860s and 1870s, when many had to work and found little time to 'keep a good home'. The independence which women gained by working in the mills - however relative - finds cultural expression in the strong female characters in Laycock's "Bowtun's Yard", and some of Staton's sketches. Yet there is an assumption that at least married women should be at home, though men have responsibilities to help around the house. It should be remembered that Waugh, and Brierley had their earliest experiences in handloom weaving communities where the women would stay at home, but help with the weaving, as well as domestic work such as cooking and washing. Waugh never really reconciled himself to the changes brought about by the factory system, and the implications of large numbers of women leaving the home to work in the mills. Arguably, the hand-loom weaver's hatred of the factories and their destruction of the domestic system coincided with the Victorian middle class view that 'woman' should be a pure, idealised figure which would not be sullied by 'employment'. Clearly, for working class women, the reality was far different but Waugh's idealisations may have found sympathetic readings among workers nostalgic for the old domestic system of the hand-loom weavers, as well as middle class patrons eager to impress on working class families the importance of 'a good home'.

The second generation of dialect writers accept the reality of women's work in Lancashire, and some even romanticise the figure of 'the Lancashire weaver lass', such as Trafford Clegg and Baron. Allen Clarke's female characters are usually strong, heroic figures, such as Rose Hilton and Bertha Lindley - yet their usual fate is to marry the male hero and retire from their jobs in the mill. The nearest he gets to a realistic portrayal of women workers is in the Tum Fowt Sketches where the power of working class women on the factory floor is well put across. His accounts of sexual harassment in the mills, usually found in his novels, are also realistic and to the point. The issue of women's rights is brought up in Allen Clarke's work, indicating a development from a position of mistrust of 'middle class' women telling working women their business, to one of complete support for women's suffrage. In the writings of Joseph Burgess we

find a quite advanced commitment to shared housework, which is absent in Clarke's writings, and in most other male writers' work, with the possible exception of James Standing ("Wimmin's Wark Nivver Done").

The more advanced positions taken by male writers in the period from the late 1880s to the 1920s is due to an acceptance of the reality of female employment in the mills, and the growth of a strong working class women's culture in the mills (weaving, and also carding, being overwhelmingly female occupations). Also important was the growth of the women's movement itself, which forced men to take an attitude towards women's suffrage, and the rise of the socialist movement which hesitatingly took up the 'woman question'. Trade unions in the cotton industry increasingly began to organize women in the 1880s, and in some cases fought issues such as sexual harassment by tacklers and managers. All of this made writers like Clarke take the problems of women seriously in their writings.

Women dialect writers were slow to appear on the scene, and I suggest the reason for this is that dialect writing as such as was seen as a male, working class literary form. A woman using dialect could be viewed as over-masculine, or even common. In addition, there were the general cultural, social and physical sanctions against working class women doing any sort of writing at all in the nineteenth century. They had other things to bother about. Margaret Lahee was able to break through this in mid-Victorian Rochdale - as a member of the lower middle class. She had no family ties in the area, but a 'respectable' position in the community which was at the same time accessible enough to the lives of working class people. The peculiarity of her case is shown by the lack of other women dialect writers until the 1890s and 1900s, when a small number of working class women writers begin to use dialect - Elizabeth Eckersall, Ethel Carnie, Maud Shutt, and Mary Thomason. Hannah Mitchell advanced women's dialect writing considerably, using the now traditional Lancashire stereotype of the strong-minded, sharp-tongued and down-to-earth woman to put over a socialist

and feminist message to working class and socialist readers. The decline of a political regional working class culture in the 1930s meant that the opportunities to develop this direction of women's dialect writing was lost.

Notes

1. Edwin Waugh Poems and Songs 3rd Series Manchester n.d. c1892 p.3.
2. Martha Vicinus Edwin Waugh: the Ambiguities of Self-Help Littleborough 1984 p.5.
3. in Heywood's Samples of Lancashire Dialect Manchester n.d. c1885 pp.27-8.
4. Waugh op.cit p.102.
5. *ibid* p.77.
6. Ben Brierley Spring Blossoms and Autumn Leaves Manchester 1878 p.104.
7. *ibid* p.126.
8. Samuel Laycock Warblin's Fro' An Owd Songster Oldham 1893 p.5.
9. *ibid* p.5.
10. *ibid* p.34.
11. *ibid* p.127.
12. J.T. Staton Rays Fro' Th' Loominary Manchester Manchester c1866 p.67.
13. *ibid* p.69.
14. Practice did, however, vary from town to town. This could partly be accounted for by different demands of the labour market: spinning towns like Bolton tended to expect married woman to leave work; possibly in weaving areas, where there was a bigger demand for female labour, it became the norm to stay on, possibly with breaks for child-rearing. Like all labour markets, there was a degree of artificiality in this. Women were excluded from many spinning jobs because of the power of the male spinners' unions. See Jill Liddington and Jill Norris One Hand Tied Behind Us 1978.
15. John Trafford Clegg Sketches and Rhymes in the Rochdale Dialect (2 vols.) Rochdale 1895 vol.1 p.36.
16. William Baron Echoes From the Loom Rochdale 1903 p.56.
17. J.T. Swann Lancashire Authors St Annes 1924 p.53.
18. Joseph Burgess A Potential Poet? Ilford 1927.
19. Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly (TANW) September 4 1898.
20. reprinted in P. Salveson ed. Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Scrapbook Bolton 1986.
21. Sam Fitton Gradely Lancashire Stalybridge 1929 p.223.
22. Baron op.cit pp.167-8.

23. Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Readings No.2 Blackpool 1923 p.15.
24. *ibid* p.18.
25. Burgess *op.cit* p.155.
26. in G.H. Whittaker A Lancashire Garland Stalybridge 1936 p.263. Also James Standing Echoes From a Lancashire Vale Todmorden n.d. c1901 p.5.
27. *ibid* p.265.
28. see Chapter 5 "The New Generation of Dialect Writers".
29. Tum Fowt Sketches Number 9 Bolton n.d. c1892 p.8.
30. *ibid* p.112.
31. Teddy Ashton's Journal (TAJ) September 18 1896.
32. TANW November 10 1906.
33. TANW September 9 1901.
34. TANW September 9 1901. The "Gradely History" was later re-published as a pamphlet.
35. TANW January 21 1905.
36. TANW January 21 1905.
37. Fellowship (F)(formerly TANW until April 20 1907) October 8 1907.
38. F October 8 1907.
39. Anon. Women's Lodges - a Bit O'Taulk Obewt Um Between Mary Un Nancy, Rochdale 1843, p.2.
40. *ibid* p.3.
41. *ibid* p.5.
42. *ibid* p.8.
43. Anon. Sum Moor Taulk Abeawt Womens' Lodges Rochdale 1843 p.6.
44. *ibid* p.8.
45. Rochdale Spectator (RS) August 1 1844.
46. RS August 1 1844.
47. RS August 1 1844.
48. see biographical notes in Whittaker *op.cit* p.195.
49. Margaret Lahee The Life of Alderman T Livsey Manchester 1866.
50. Margaret Lahee Owd Neddy Fitton's Visit to th'Earl o'Derby Bury 1859.

51. Margaret Lahee Sybil West Oldham 1893 p.iv.
52. *ibid* p.iv.
53. see introduction to Lahee *op.cit* (1859).
54. Preface to Lahee *op.cit* (1867).
55. *ibid* p.9.
56. *ibid* p.38.
57. see Allen Clarke The Men Who Fought For Us Manchester 1918, who uses this incident in a fictionalised manner.
58. Lahee (1866) *op.cit* p.156.
59. Mostly published as pamphlets in the 1860s and 1870s. She wrote "Tim Bobbin's Centenary" to celebrate the 'father of Lancashire dialect's' centenary in 1886.
60. This was a recurring theme in "industrial novels" of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and used, amongst others, by Allen Clarke on several occasions.
61. Lahee *op.cit* (1893) p.5.
62. *ibid* p.8.
63. *ibid* p.35.
64. *ibid* p.35.
65. *ibid* pp.62-3.
66. *ibid* p.63.
67. *ibid* p.97.
68. *ibid* p.148.
69. *ibid* pp.135-6.
70. Allen Clarke The Effects of the Factory System 1899 p.83.
71. Swann *op.cit* p.91.
72. *ibid* p.93.
73. *ibid* p.93.
74. Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Annual Blackpool 1922.
75. TANW September 19 1903.
76. TANW June 27 1903.

77. Swann op.cit p.69.
78. Ethel Carnie Rhymes From the Factory 1907 - Preface.
79. ibid p.1.
80. ibid p.1.
81. F August 9 1907 "Factories and Poetry" - refers to a meeting between Clarke and Ethel Carnie when she was a mill-girl.
82. F July 26 1907.
83. F July 26 1907.
84. F July 26 1907.
85. Mary Ashraf An Introduction to British Working Class Literature Berlin 1979 Vol.1 p. 192.
86. Ethel Carnie This Slavery 1925 p.36.
87. This Slavery may have been written as early as 1911, and re-written for national publication in 1925.
88. Thomason's father was a School Attendance Officer - see foreword to Thomason Warp and Weft Leigh 1938.
89. ibid - Foreword.
90. ibid p.2.
91. ibid p.8.
92. ibid p.8.
93. ibid p.9.
94. ibid p.12.
95. ibid p.11.
96. See Chapter 2 "Origins of Dialect Literature".
97. Mary Thomason William Lee's Ancestors - Or Tales of Leighth Folk Leigh 1938 p.33.
98. Hannah Mitchell The Hard Way Up London 1968 p.191.
99. Labour's Northern Voice (LNV) March 19 1926.
100. ibid.
101. LNV May 3 1929.
102. LNV October 26 1928.
103. LNV October 26 1928.

104. LNV May 15 1928.
105. LNV January 22 1926.
106. Mitchell op.cit p.192.
106. Swann op.cit p.96.

Chapter 11. Conclusion: A Regional Working Class Culture?

This chapter has two main objectives. The first is to try to bring together a number of themes developed in the preceding chapters which relate to the period between 1890 and 1914. My argument is that something unique happened in this period, the emergence of a distinctively regional, working class culture, in which dialect played a major role as a literary token of both class and regional identity. This chapter draws in some of the wider elements of this culture and looks at how dialect helped to fashion this view of social reality.

The second part of the chapter aims to comment on some recent interpretations of the social and cultural history of Lancashire, and to ask what light, if any, dialect literature sheds on such debates.

A Regional Working Class Culture?

The period which I propose to examine in a broader sense in this chapter will consider the role of the socialist and radical dialect writers in the period from 1890 to 1914, relating their dialect writing to other aspects of what I have tentatively called 'a regional working class culture' which had distinctive industrial, political, social and literary aspects. It was not a culture which emerged from a void - its roots lay in the pre-industrial culture of the hand-loom weavers of Lancashire. It seems to me that the central feature of that culture was its stress on independence. The weavers for a period enjoyed a relatively high degree of occupational autonomy, combining small farming with weaving, or being able to work independent of the direct supervision of an employer. The hand-loom weavers in their political appeals lay much stress on their sense of independence - which was reflected in wide sympathy for Jacobin politics, and

a very high level of intellectual attainment in varied fields, including music, literature, botany, geology and mathematics. This is not to say that every single weaver was either a brilliant musician, scientist, or artist. What I am saying, though, is that the weaving community produced a large number of highly cultured individuals, who were often self-taught, or who had been educated by parents, rather than formal school institution.

I have argued in Chapters 1 and 2 that this culture was not totally extinguished by the industrial revolution, but survived in a transformed, urban context in the later decades of the nineteenth century. Its political expression was Chartism in the 1840s, and then radical Liberalism in the succeeding three decades. The success of dialect writers such as Waugh and Brierley was in creating a literature out of this handloom-weaving culture. It was frequently a romanticised literature, constructed so as to appeal to the literary sensibilities of the middle class. Nonetheless they helped retain the culture of the handloom-weavers as an emblem of working class pride. The sense of a lost 'golden age', felt by industrial workers in the 1840s and 1850s is frequently cited. Yet we should be careful about assuming that workers saw the factory system as 'inevitable'. From the late 1880s onwards there was a challenge to the factory system, expressed in the writings of the socialist Allen Clarke, Elizabeth Eckersall, Joseph Burgess, and others. Clarke, with his strong historical sense, saw the handloom weavers as the role models for the Lancashire working man and woman under socialism: a society which was de-industrialised, using modern agricultural methods, and reflecting diverse intellectual and cultural needs.

During the 1890s a number of threads within a Lancashire working class radical tradition seem to come together. It should be made clear that this was a minority culture within the working class, but had a far wider impact. In particular, many working men and women who were part of it became key opinion-formers and political or community leaders in subsequent years, as trade union officials, MPs and councillors, teachers, and journalists. This culture was based on a common industry, cotton, and

located in a restricted geographical area confined to the cotton towns north of Manchester, south of Lancaster, east of Wigan and west of the Pennines. This 'regional culture' included a strong sense of working class independence, reflected institutionally in the I.L.P. and local socialist clubs and parties, trades unions, the co-operative movement, and diverse localised organisations including the Labour Churches and Clarion clubs. It had its own press with the Cotton Factory Times, Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly, and local labour publications. It had distinctive cultural features which included a love for the countryside and a sense that the new society would be based on the land, rather than the unnatural factory system. Alternative life-styles such as a belief in herbalism and spiritualism, vegetarianism and unorthodox religion such as Spiritualism or 'New Theology' also feature. It was strongly independent of the establishment, and its dialect - both spoken and written - helped re-affirm a distinct sense of region and class.

It was a minority culture within the working class, certainly, although some of its elements did have a wider effect. Its 'active membership' was made up of the members of the I.L.P. Labour Churches, the radical end of the co-operative movement (particularly among members of the Women's Guilds), the readership of Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly, of which there were 20,000 in 1900, (1) and an assortment of herbalists, spiritualists, Tolstoyans, Whitmanites and vegetarians.

There was a very noticeable network of individuals and organisations within this period which deserves greater consideration than it has received so far. It flies against the idea that there was an orderly progression of working class politics away from Liberalism and towards a state-centred socialism, and suggests instead that working class politics in the 1890s had a large element of radicalism which was both socialist and anti-statist, inspired as much by the writings of Edward Carpenter, Kropotkin and Morris, as by Marx, Kautsky and Hyndman. On the fringes of this culture on one side was the 'respectable' I.L.P. leadership, on the other was the cluster of anarchist or

libertarian grouplets which appeared in the period. However, what is important is that the culture I am speaking of cannot be tied down to a study of an organisation; it was a climate of ideas and a sense of community, more than a party with a definite political programme. We can begin to trace it by looking at themes within it, individuals involved and the idea of a 'network' relating one aspect of the culture to another.

A Common Industrial Community

Working class independence, and the Lancashire dialect were the two main corner stones of the edifice of a broad Lancashire working class culture; or at any rate, the substantial 'respectable' portion of it. The foundation was the highly distinctive occupational structure of south-east Lancashire, based to a remarkable extent on the cotton industry and large-scale factory production. By 1895, the year Clarke was writing The Effects of the Factory System, the cotton industry directly provided over half a million jobs in Lancashire. If one adds the jobs provided by servicing and transporting cotton, plus cotton machinery manufacture, and coal mining, a picture emerges of a region totally dominated by cotton. Unsurprisingly, the culture of working people in Lancashire strongly reflected this shared industrial basis. The conclusions which have, however, been drawn from it differ considerably. Patrick Joyce (2) has suggested that the dominance of the factory in cotton towns such as Blackburn produced, in the early to mid-Victorian years, an overpowering paternalism with the factory owners controlling all aspects of 'their' workers' lives. Other historians such as Neville Kirk (3) have argued that this ignores the high levels of independent trade union organisation and spasmodic bursts of militancy and even riot. However, the 'cultural' claims of Patrick Joyce have gone unanswered. What appears to me to be the case is that the cotton workers of Lancashire developed a strong sense of cultural 'apartness' relatively early in the nineteenth century. Standish Meacham's argument of 'a life apart' (4) developing in the late 1880s already existed in Lancashire from as early as the 1850s, based around the dominance of cotton manufacture whose division

of labour found an almost exact reflection in a 'typical' working class family structure. The father would in this model, be either a 'minder' (mule spinner) or an overlooker or fancy weaver. The mother, if it was an area where it was traditional for her to work, would be a plain weaver, accompanied by any unmarried daughters. Older sons might be 'side-piecers' for their father or a friend of the family; younger lads would be employed as 'little piecers'. Neighbours, friends, relatives would share similar work patterns, with perhaps the occasional engineer or railwayman. Their jobs, like their friends working directly in the industry, were bound up with the success or failure of cotton. Within this family/industrial structure to talk of a rigid separation between 'labour aristocrat' and less-skilled occupations such as weaving and side-piecing does not seem particularly useful in analysing working class politics and culture in this period. The tendency is towards a workforce stratified by status and gender, but united by a common industry, by the family, by neighbourhood and by a whole set of inherited customs and traditions, forms of speech and habits which go in to make up a distinct 'culture'. Clearly, dialect was very much a part of this culture, a proud emblem of both class and locality. Contrary to John Foster's comments (5), this 'opaque' dialect was used at all levels of the working class (and above). It emphatically was not confined to the 'non-aristocratic' sections.

The dialect writers of the 'classic generation' built on this shared culture, combining a nostalgia for the past with a homely and inward-looking view of the present, based around a veneration for family life. While the cotton industry does not feature directly in their work to any large extent, nonetheless it is there as a sort of 'phantom of the opera', hovering above Waugh's sentimentalising of the countryside and wayside inns, suggesting that tomorrow morning the reader will be back in the industrial reality of modern-day Lancashire. This escapism employed by Waugh became increasingly played-out by the 1880s when memories of handloom-weaving and rural life-styles had weakened. The dialect writers, not necessarily radical ones, begin to feature the reality of work much more noticeably in their writings. None of them

express any love for the work, or pride in the job - such as some of the handloom weaving ballads did a couple of generations earlier. More common is the sense of longing for the 'loosing' whistle at half-past five, or the feelings of detestation expressed in Burgess's "There's Nowt Loike Spinnin Shoddy". (see Appendix 19) The factory master, supposedly so fondly regarded by the workers, seldom features at all, except as a figure of disapproval (Burgess compares them with the 'Egyptians' of Biblical times). The most common figure outside the actual production workers is the overlooker; sometimes friendly, sometimes not. He appears to be the highest figure up the management scale actually visible to most workers by the 1880s. The owners increasingly lived further away in the select part of town, if they had not, by the 1890s, moved away completely. A visit to the spinning room floor would be a rarity, except to escort a prominent visitor round the mill (such as described in Clarke's novel Driving).

If the company was a 'good' firm to work for, there would be the annual outings and occasional tea parties. The health of the master would be toasted and people would get on with enjoying themselves. But it seems absurd to conclude, as Joyce does,(6) that this illustrates the 'hold' of the employers on the workforce and indicates the dangers of trying to replace one accepted orthodoxy (of endemic class conflict) with a different orthodoxy, based on equally shaky foundations. If cotton workers had the occasional 'beano' provided by the firm, they also had a range of their own social organisations which provided a much more significant part of their culture. The co-operative movement in particular had a wide ranging social and educational role in Lancashire by the mid-1860s, as did the churches and independent working men's clubs. As argued in Chapter 7, to base an entire hypothesis on a detailed study of only one town, as Patrick Joyce did in Work, Society and Politics, is a big risk. Blackburn, the focus of his study, was also atypical of the cotton-belt towns, with a much stronger tradition of working class Toryism than most of the south-east cotton belt communities.

What role did dialect have in the independent institutions of the Lancashire working class? At social events organised by groups like the co-op, dialect came to have an almost ritual role, with 'recitations' by popular local characters who advertised themselves as 'dialect reciters, humorists, elocutionists' - a tradition still alive in the 1920s. Many dialect poems were, of course, originally written to be sung, and renditions of Waugh's Lancashire songs were common. The formal dialect recital served both to entertain (usually it would be a humorous sketch) but also to emphasise that both audience and reciter were part of a distinct community, and only they could fully comprehend the speech, and frequent allusions to the work process, in many of the recitations. Dialect bound a working class community, in a celebration of both class and region. As Clarke said in his poem "In Praise o'Lancashire", it was the dialect which 'sawders us together'.

A Lancashire Press

The dominance of the cotton industry was naturally echoed in local newspapers which, from the spread of the provincial press in the 1850s, was full of news about particular mills, including financial details, accidents, fires, and strikes. What begins to emerge in the 1880s is a much more direct tie-in with the cotton industry, classically marked by the publication of the Cotton Factory Times from 1885. This mass-circulation weekly paper epitomises the culture which grew up within the cotton communities, and reflected the gradual changes which took place politically and industrially in Lancashire through to the 1930s. As well as providing detailed local textile news - particularly strikes, major union meetings, and conferences, it also gave considerable coverage to technical developments, hints on how to improve working practices, and comments on general industrial matters, from a worker's standpoint. The masters had their own papers, such as the Textile Mercury, between whom little love was lost. The Cotton Factory Times did much to encourage the growth of working class cultural identity. Ben Brierley, in his last years, contributed regular dialect

sketches - "Whims an' Waggeries Fro' Walmsley Fowt". At the same time, Allen Clarke was getting some of his earliest poetry published, albeit in standard English. From the early 1890s considerable space was given over to dialect sketches and poems, both from regular contributors like Clarke and later Sam Fitton, but also from mill workers with no previous literary experience, who sent in stories, poems and articles. A particularly interesting feature was the regular column entitled "Mirth From the Mill". A prize was offered each week for the most amusing entry, and there seems to have been no shortage of contributions, often poking fun at tacklers or minders, and frequently in dialect.

A popular element was the serial story. In the 1880s these tended to be melodramas with no particular local connections. An exception to this was the serialisation of D. Pae's Very Hard Times, a novel about the Lancashire cotton famine, which began on January 16th 1885 and was serialised over several months and eventually published in book form. In the 1890s many of Clarke's most popular novels were serialised, including The Knobstick, The Little Weaver, and Lancashire Lasses and Lads - all with strong cotton industry themes.(7)

Sam Fitton's dialect sketches, written under various pseudonyms, became a prominent feature in the 1900s, and the paper did regular features on Lancashire working class writers, both contemporary and historical. The centenary of Edwin Waugh's birthday in 1917 was marked by a large front-page story and celebratory dialect poem by William Cryer.

The Cotton Factory Times moved steadily away from its original radical Liberalism towards support for the Labour Party. It shared the 'moderate' labourism of most of its readers, and attacked the 'Bolsheviks' and other usurpers of Labour's mantle. Sam Fitton attacked leftist 'direct action' tactics in his poem "Directest Action - Voting" on July 6th 1920, suggesting:

If you would save yourselves, think well and note -
The only Direct Action is the vote.(8)

Other papers in addition to the Cotton Factory Times reinforced Lancashire's unique working class culture. Predominantly dialect-written journals were no new thing, and we have already referred elsewhere to the success of J. T. Staton's lively paper the Bowtun Luminary which ran, with changes in title, from 1853 to 1864. Joseph Burgess produced the Oldham Operative during 1884, which contained a smattering of dialect, and Ben Brierley's Journal had a large number of dialect contributions, both poetry and prose, during its long run from 1869 to 1891. The nearest rival to the Cotton Factory Times was Allen Clarke's Teddy Ashton's Journal, started in 1896, which changed its name to Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly in 1899. Clarke started the paper following a disagreement over some of his contributions to the Cotton Factory Times. The paper quickly developed a style of its own, combining radical politics with Lancashire dialect, philosophy and comment. Clarke's Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Annual, which appeared from 1892 to 1936, provided a further focus of Lancashire culture with a substantial readership. The dialect poet William Baron published his smaller Bill o'Jack's Monthly between 1909 and 1911, though it never enjoyed the success of the Cotton Factory Times, or Clarke's publications.

This distinctively Lancashire press, with its stress on regional culture, was not an isolated phenomenon. The vast majority of local papers in south east Lancashire by the turn of the century had regular dialect sketches, both in prose and poetry (more often the latter). Usually, this was a means by which talented cotton workers such as Elizabeth Eckersall, writing for the Bury Times, Sam Fitton (Oldham Chronicle etc), William Baron (Blackburn Standard), Ethel Carnie (Blackburn Times) and Ammon Wrigley (Oldham Chronicle) could gain an outlet for at least some of their work. Many of these writers also had writing published in the Cotton Factory Times and Clarke's papers, and often went on to see their work appear in book form.

Some of the working class institutions had their own periodicals, particularly the co-operative movement. Most towns had their own Co-operative Record, and it was common to see dialect published in them. Some trades unions produced journals, such as the Nelson Weavers' Power Loom which had regular dialect material.

An Independent Life-Style

The cultural apartness which I have stressed earlier found reflection in a number of broader aspects of daily life than have been mentioned hitherto. The independence which had been a marked feature of the handloom weavers in earlier generations was far from being abandoned, and indeed resurfaced quite markedly in the 1880s. In the area of health care we see a quite pointed distrust of middle class medicine, and an increasing reliance on local working class herbalists. Derek Moffit (9) has argued that herbalism - or medical botany, enjoyed a major revival from the 1880s up to the end of the First World War, when large numbers of working class people used the services of known and respected local worker-botanists. It goes without saying that Lancashire had an exceedingly high incidence of infant mortality, death rates and general ill-health through working in a dangerous and unhealthy industry, and having to live in polluted communities. The herbalist provided a cheap and accessible cure, using natural means. Further, he or she would be a part of the local community, not a distant and possibly unfriendly middle class man. There is a large number of adverts for herbalists which appear in Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly around the turn of the century. They outnumber any other form of advertisement, and fit in with the paper's stress on 'the natural life'. The regular Northern Weekly rambles were often accompanied by Fletcher, the miner and highly respected medical botanist, who would point out particular types of herbs and their uses. Lancashire working class herbalists such as Richard Lawrence Hool of Bolton, and Webb of Southport, won international respect for their work.

Several dialect poets and writers refer to 'the local herbalist'; Sam Hill in particular celebrates an old local worthy who was known as 'Owd Polyant' who kept an extensive garden at his Stalybridge home:

But not alone to please the eye
Did th'owd mon till his greawnd;
He'd yarbs o'different macks, yo know,
O'handy, just areawnd;
Ther'n marigolds for maysels, aye,
An' heawse-leek for sore een'
He'd yarrow, good for pains i'th'back;
lad's love, an wormwood keen;(10)

This independence in health took on a positively oppositional form at the turn of the century when the 'medical profession' and successive governments tried to limit the scope of working class 'amateurs'. Farnworth herbalist Charles Hassall founded the People's League For Medical Freedom, based on the principles of 'the right to choose' one's own form of medical treatment. An increasingly bitter struggle developed, probably culminating in the celebrated 'Black Box' Trial in the 1930s, when Leigh herbalist Charles Abbott was tried for various malpractices.(11)

Many of these herbalists were politically radical; Fletcher was one of Westhoughton's first I.L.P. councillors and Hassall's name crops up in The Northern Weekly on several occasions. Charles Abbott was an admirer of Harry Pollitt in the 1920s and other herbalists were Communist Party members in the 1920s and 1930s. What they had in common was a strong distrust of the state, which went well beyond their own specific interests as herbalists, and extended directly into working class politics.

I would suggest two reasons for why industrial Lancashire became such a centre of herbalism. Firstly, the inherited hand-loom weaving traditions which laid much stress on natural cures; and secondly the material factor of widespread ill-health and little spare cash to pay expensive doctor's bills. The handy proximity of open

countryside, and the rambling tradition, was a further important element.

Lancashire dialect and herbalism had a particular close connection; we have already referred to Sam Hill's work, and other writers who commented on the positive value of herbs included Allen Clarke himself who features a radical herbalist, Middleton, as the hero of his novel Lancashire Lads At The Front, set during the war, and Willian Cryer, who himself became a professional gardener. Fred Plant, writing as 'Harry o'th'Hills' describes in one of his dialect sketches a visit to a Gorton herbalist and describes the various cures available. Most herbalists defended their practice as completely scientific, and demonstrably reliable. However, there was a 'mystical' element which went under various headings including 'astro-botany' and such like. There was a discernible mystical, or spiritual strain running through working class culture throughout the nineteenth century which had elements of working class independence and radicalism within it. The spread of Swedenborgianism through Lancashire in the 1830s and 1840s is still evidenced by the remaining 'New Jerusalem' chapels dotted round Lancashire; whilst much of this early messianic religion was diverted into Primitive Methodism it resurfaced with particular force in the Spiritualist movement of the 1890s which struck deep roots in Lancashire.

The spiritualist movement was seen by many of its working class adherents as a conscious attempt to escape from the hypocritical middle-class Christianity peddled by the employers and persons, and took on very direct political positions. (12) It was clearly identified as the 'new religion, and, in the words of the above herbalist/spiritualist, "Those who would enjoy to the full the new earth must be in the vanguard of progress with every reform". For many working class radicals in Lancashire, this connection between spiritualism, herbalism, socialist politics (usually through the I.L.P. or Labour Church), country rambling and use of Lancashire dialect was almost spontaneous. The most regular fund-raisers for Clarke's Northern Weekly during its last years (1905-8) were local spiritualist churches, who frequently advertised

him as a speaker, giving dialect recitals such as the 'Tum Fowt' sketches. Clarke wrote considerably for the spiritualist press, such as his novel for the Two Worlds. The accounts of spiritualist experience in such papers even once included a description of a returned spirit giving a recital in Lancashire dialect! Clarke's second wife was a natural medium, and had regular experiences which he described at length in The Eternal Question. (13) It should be emphasised that Clarke's spiritualism was not exceptional, and that very many local I.L.P. activists were also deeply involved in their spiritualist churches around the turn of the century. The Bolton Trotter carried an editorial at the height of the 1893 Miner's Lock-Out headed "A Message From the Spirit World: How Long Will the Colliers Be Out?" (14)

On a less mystical plane, working class desires for an 'independent' religion to match their political independence found echoes in strong support for the Labour Church movement in Lancashire. (15) James Sims, of Bolton, became President of the National Labour Church movement and was a close friend of Allen Clarke, as well as being an avid botanist.

The search for 'the new life' also found reflection in changing eating habits. Vegetarianism, often misunderstood as a completely middle class fad, had a particularly strong following amongst Lancashire working class radicals at this time. Advertisements for popular events like the Northern Weekly annual tea party include references to vegetarian menus, and Clarke editorialised in his paper against vivisection and the ill treatment of animals generally. He advocated vegetarianism in his spiritualist work, The Eternal Question, where he says:

Treat all living creatures askin; hurt naught that breathes.
Kill no beast, bird, or other living thing, for food, or sport, or science. Live on
vegetables and fruit.(16)

Vegetarianism was an important part of the regional socialist sub-culture, and vegetarian cafes sprung up in several Lancashire towns. The cafe on Bolton's Newport

Street, opened for a brief period in the 1890s, advertised in Clarke's papers. He drew attention to it in "Bill Spriggs As a Vegetarian", one of the Tum Fowt Sketches on topical issues.

An important part of the 'independent' life-style increasingly popular with Lancashire working people in the 1890s was the weekend escape into the countryside. Working class rambling and cycling groups established themselves in every Lancashire town by the mid-1890s, the most famous being the network of 'Clarion Clubs'. Whilst Lancashire seems mainly to have opted for cycling clubs, there were a number of rambling groups dotted around the shire. Working class organisations like local co-operative societies had their own rambling groups, and the I.L.P. in a number of towns had similar bodies. In Rochdale there was a Clarion Field Naturalists body which organised regular outings and picnics during the 1890s, publicised in the local Rochdale Labour News.

The S.D.F. members (some of whose membership often overlapped with the I.L.P. and were involved in Clarion activities) were not averse to the attractions of the countryside either. In 1896 they organised the great commemoration of Chartism on the summit of Blackstone Edge, with H. M. Hyndman as main speaker. In the same year the S.D.F. campaigned in the Darwen area for access to the local moors and, most spectacularly, led the Winter Hill Mass Trespass in the same year, involving over 10,000 people in a fight to regain access to the old moorland roads.⁽¹⁵⁾ The event was celebrated by songs and dialect verses, including Clarke's "Bill Spriggs o'er Winter Hill; Likewise Bet" which included his song "Will Yo' Come o' Sunday Mornin'?".
(17)

The attraction of the countryside for working class radicals was more than that of having a pleasant Sunday afternoon with friends. The countryside, and the open air, were seen as the last remaining natural assets of the people, untouched by the ravages

of industrial capitalism. Hence the back-to-the-land campaigns, and the enormous popularity of images of socialism incorporating the peasant or land worker. Robert Blatchford expressed this with characteristic force in his essay "The New Party In The North". Pointing out the fundamental difference between socialism in the north and the movement in London, he invokes Whitman, Ruskin and Carlyle as the spiritual mentors of the movement. In particular, he lauds:

...the trumpet tongued proclamation by the titanic Whitman of the great message of true Democracy and the brave and sweet comradeship of the natural life - of the stainless, virile, through human life, lived out boldly and frankly in the open air under the eyes of God.

NOW I SEE THE SECRET OF MAKING THE BEST PERSONS. IT IS TO GROW IN THE OPEN AIR AND TO EAT AND SLEEP WITH THE EARTH.(18)

The final three lines are actual quotes from Whitman, whom Blatchford greatly admired, following his introduction to the great American mystic's work by J. W. Wallace of Bolton Labour Church, and leader of the Bolton Whitman group.(19) The concerns of Whitman with nature and the open air life find an obvious echo in much Lancashire dialect writing; indeed Clarke dubbed Waugh 'The Lancashire Whitman' for his sweeping romantic portraits of the wild moorland country. Interestingly, Whitman himself was concerned to develop a native American dialect which could provide a vehicle for his poetry aimed at the workmen and workwomen of the United States. In the Whitman collection at the US Library of Congress are some Scots and Lancashire dialect poems which his Bolton friends had sent him. Whitman's own democratic poetry, which encompassed a broad, mystical sense of the one-ness of nature and humanity, found a ready, sympathetic readership amongst the radical working class of Lancashire. English socialists like Edward Carpenter and the Bolton Whitman group, also did much to popularise his writing which appeared in countless socialist periodicals of the 1800s and 1900s.

Political Independence

A recurrent theme in this study of working class culture was the conscious distancing of working people from the establishment - expressed in dialect, in various ways of going about their lives both domestically and in recreation. Whilst this was partly an outcome of the nature of the work process in Lancashire's cotton industry with relatively high concentrations of labour and a largely absentee bourgeoisie, the inherited traditions of independence stemming from the handloom weavers cannot be overlooked. In the socialist press of the 1880s and 1890s there is an abundance of references to 'old Chartists', many of whom had been hand-loom weavers. Whilst Chartism's tremendous energies were watered down into forms of radical liberalism in Lancashire, the libertarian thrust of Chartism still found an echo in certain liberal beliefs - above all, in its distrust of the state, standing armies, and 'officialdom'. As Meacham and Hobsbawm have argued, working class people in the 1890s largely wanted to be left alone by the state rather than use it as a vehicle for social transformation. Hence, the libertarian, anti-statist socialism of Edward Carpenter, William Morris, and, locally, of Allen Clarke and a wide range of I.L.P. socialists, enjoyed much wider popularity than the statist prescriptions of the S.D.F.. Admittedly, this is over simplifying a very complex political development, but it is an argument which has hitherto been ignored. What I would argue is that libertarian models of socialism, mixed with an element of messianic 'Christ that is to be' revivalism, struck a particularly strong chord amongst the more politically minded workers of late Victorian Lancashire. The loose structure of the I.L.P., and the broad periphery of the movement including the Clarion clubs, Labour Churches and local socialist groups, provided an exciting alternative culture to that of the local establishment, and with that culture went a stress on locality - with a celebration of dialect - and on new ways of living which included spiritualism, herbalism, vegetarianism and 'the open air'. Occasionally, it even went as far as a libertarian sexuality, particularly inspired by

Carpenter's writings, and by the more general influence of Whitman.

It was remarkable how Allen Clarke's circle of friends and writers exemplified the 'new socialism' of Lancashire. Fred Plant, or 'Harry o'th'Hills, was active as a socialist councillor in Stockport, and his novels of the 1900 Tram Strike, and working class life of Denton, were read as avidly as his humorous dialect sketches in the Northern Weekly. Arthur Laycock, son of the poet Samuel, became the key figure in early Blackpool socialism and active in politics in a Lancashire setting, and his Christmas Annual provided a mixture of dialect and political comment along similar lines to Clarke's Lancashire Annual. John Tamlyn, who spent most of his years in Lancashire struggling to make a living in Burnley, was a socialist who successively propagandised around Lancashire for the S.D.F., I.L.P., and for Clarke's 'Daisy Colony' scheme. His novels and short stories are glorifications of the lonely and often heroic life of the socialist missionary. Peter Lee, central character in Rochdale I.L.P. politics in the 1890s, combined spiritualism with left-wing politics and Lancashire dialect stories and sketches. Elected Rochdale's first socialist on the School Board, he used that experience in his novel Mystery o'Sunny Fowt. Clarke's attempts to use the Northern Weekly as the organising force for a range of non-sectarian experiments in radical living had mixed results. The Northern Weekly annual picnics were always big successes, unless the weather was bad. The rambling groups were also well supported in a number of localities where there was no competition from existing I.L.P. or Clarion groups. The cycling club, facing the established strength of the Clarion cycling Club, appears to have been less of a success. The 'Daisy Colony' branches established in 1904 and 1905 to raise support and funds for the back-to-the-land scheme appear to have worked well for the duration of the scheme, dying out in response to the failure of the scheme itself as much as anything. The local supporters' groups formed for the paper itself in its last years, from 1906 to 1908, also seemed to have functioned for a time as vehicles for non-sectarian socialist propaganda, though increasingly influenced by a mix of Tolstoyanism and industrial unionist ideas.

This highly distinctive regional socialist culture went into decline in the five or six years before the First World War. The most direct vehicle for it, Clarke's Northern Weekly, ceased publication in 1908. Many of the early I.L.P. or independent socialist publications of the 1890s and early 1900s also ceased. The I.L.P. leadership itself became more concerned with the requirements of parliamentary victories, and electing members on to town councils, than changing the whole basis of society. The 'conscience' of the socialist movement, Robert Blatchford, himself became increasingly discredited for his militarism. The Labour Church dwindled to a handful of branches by 1910, and many of the early and most popular propagandists had either died (like Caroline Martyn, Morris, Enid Stacy, and James Sims) or had become national party officials (Hardie, Glasier, Anderson). Edward Carpenter increasingly stayed at home on his farm and wrote his memoirs. Disillusionment with parliamentary socialism became widespread amongst working class activists after 1906, though the effect was to channel sympathy towards a harsh non-political syndicalism in which industrial muscle became the decisive force, effectively marginalising the role of workers in badly organised firms, particularly women, and having nothing to say about the 'larger socialism' that Carpenter and Clarke preached. By the outbreak of war, the socialist movement was fragmented in mutually hostile camps of the I.L.P., the British Socialist Party, and syndicalists. Outside it, and sceptical of the interest evinced by the male-dominated labour movement, was the increasingly militant women's suffrage movement. The combination of class issues and Lancashire dialect survived in weakened form in Clarke's writings in the Liverpool Weekly Post; but he no longer had the access to complete editorial freedom and a paper of his own to do as he liked. The Cotton Factory Times did of course continue, demonstrating Lancashire workers' loyalty to the war effort, though allowing the occasional questioning voice. The power of dialect was now turned to displays of loyalty, and cheering the lads at the front.

The Part Played by Dialect

Lancashire dialect writing played a large part in moulding together this regional, working class, socialist sub-culture. Dialect expressed the two key reference points for the 'members' of this large, informal, network: a sense of region, and a sense of class, often based on a common industrial experience. Dialect speech was the 'true' voice of the 'common people' of Lancashire. The most notable members of the sub-culture, Clarke, Arthur Laycock, Brodie, Plant, and Fitton were all products of the Lancashire, working class 'cotton culture'. Most had worked in the mills, or their parents had. They were *of* as well as *for* the working class in Lancashire. It was a natural development for them to use dialect as a medium to express the new values of socialism, as they interpreted them. Traditional dialect literature, as developed by Waugh and his circle, was pre-eminently Liberal in politics: it was the literature of the respectable working class man and woman, who had an interest in culture and the arts. The transition made by many working class people from Liberalism to Socialism was far from being direct and straightforward, but Clarke's dialect writing may well have contributed towards it. In his work, and his wider activities, dialect was a key element in his construction of social reality. The 'ground' on which he worked was the lived experience of working class people of the 'cotton belt' towns of Lancashire. Those he aimed at, the 'respectable' sections of the people, were at least broadly familiar with the work of Waugh, Brierley, and Laycock. He very consciously stepped into their shoes, using dialect to popularise the new ideas of socialism.

Clarke saw himself as having a mission, to produce a radical literature which would be read and enjoyed by Lancashire working people. His project widened with the success of his Northern Weekly and developed a momentum of its own, through the various social activities described above. Clarke, and his circle of friends, were generally content with writing for a Lancashire readership, and did not seek to get into national publishing (Clarke did have work published nationally, but it was never his

main interest).

There were two levels to this sub-culture. The narrow definition, that outlined above, included the dialect writers, Labour church-goers, Clarion cyclists and rambles, spiritualists, vegetarians, herbalists, and a range of socialist activists. Naturally, there was a lot of overlap between each of these, and Clarke was all of them! There is a 'second level' to this sub-culture, which is much wider, and possibly more significant. This is the group of people who made up the readership of Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly, the Cotton Factory Times, and The Clarion, were in a process of moving from voting Liberal towards support for the socialist alternatives (I.L.P., local socialist parties, and later the Labour Party itself). They would like the dialect sketches in Northern Weekly, but be capable of speaking both 'broad Lancashire' and standard English when the social occasion demanded it. They would shop at, and possibly be active members, of the local co-operative society. They would be members of a trade union in many cases, and would perhaps be aged between their early twenties and late thirties. They would be a mixture of men and women, some would be mill workers, some would be shop workers or clerks. They would like to 'get out' to the surrounding countryside at weekend, and join their wider circle of friends on 'chep trips' to Blackpool. They would make up a part of what Clarke called the 'second caste', or the substantial, 'respectable' stratum of the working class, in cotton town society, but as the most lively, and dynamic part of it. This group, numbering very roughly about 50,000, (20) would form the base for the transformation of Lancashire working class politics after the First World War, at least those who survived. And that is the nub. How much more could have been achieved if many of the most articulate, creative, and intelligent had not been slaughtered in the war?

A Regional or A Class Vision?

There are clearly some fundamental questions which need to be considered in

relation to regional, and class, identities. This thesis has tried to show that peoples' real, lived, identities were not reducible to a simplistic "class" identity, be it working class or middle class, in the nineteenth century. A mid-nineteenth century cotton spinner ('minder') may well have recognised himself as a part of a working class which included the engineer, or skilled artisan. Likewise he may have gone so far as to see an identity with some other grades of textile workers, such as the skilled weaver, and the 'tackler'. He may have been less prepared to shake hands with the coal miner, women weavers, the Irish immigrant, and the 'underclass' of nineteenth century urban England. He would have had an identity formed by a concept of locality and "Lancashire" which was expressed through dialect speech, pride in one's town and county, and through the growing number of dialect writers. Patrick Joyce is undoubtedly correct when he suggests that:

Tendencies towards a unity of labour experience and resulting unity of class sentiment can be geographically and industrially localised, or emergent or declining at different times and under different conditions. To admit this, and to recognise the formative role of periods of economic and political crisis, is not to disallow the the notion of class consciousness.....At the same time, there were elements of continuing force and moment in workers' conceptions of themselves which imply the persistence of a consciousness of being workers. Such a notion...was that of a trade, allied to the concept of the 'artisan' or 'craftsman', which conveyed important distinctions of honour and worth often far beyond the ranks of craft workers alone.(21)

Other writers have developed more sophisticated views of class than the traditional orthodoxy about nineteenth century social history which gives complete supremacy to class. Stedman Jones has argued (22) that during and after the Chartist period, class relations were not reducible to the accepted dichotomies based on twentieth century Marxist analysis. This analysis suggested that the "central contradiction" was between the industrial proletariat and the industrial bourgeoisie, as employers. Mid-nineteenth century radicalism tended to view the industrial bourgeoisie as a potentially progressive force, compared with the landed aristocracy, money-lenders, and unproductive "middle-men". This was echoed in dialect literature. Samuel Laycock, the dialect poet who epitomised Lancashire working class Liberalism in the

1870s and 1880s, wrote a popular poem (published in broadsheet form) called "The Peers and the People":

Must these preawd Peers tak' possession o'th'helm,
An' quietly say whoa's to govern this realm?
Are th'Bees to eat th'lean, an' th' Drones to eat th'fat,
For ever an' ever? We'll see abeawt that.

Widen that ring, lads, neaw up wi' your sleeves,
An' we'll soon mak' short war o'these lordlin's an' thieves;
Lancashire lads can march up th their graves,
But can never be ceawards, or traitors, or slaves!(23)

Earlier, Edwin Waugh could write inspirational verse such as "Unfurl the Flag" which catches perfectly the mood of advanced radicalism of the 1860s:

What domineering band is this
That claims defiant sway?
And who are those that dare resist a free-born people's way?
How long shall patient Britain strive
Against this selfish crew; And toiling millions waste their lives
To serve the feudal few? (24)

It was very clear that "the people" went far beyond the industrial working class, and included all social forces outside the ranks of the aristocracy - the "feudal few". This politics, a form of populist radicalism which flourished from the early years of the nineteenth century but began to fracture towards the end, took in the Reform Movement, Chartism, and Liberalism. In the ideology of popular radicalism, the "central contradiction" was not found within factory relations, but in the realm of politics: the grievances of working class people were the product not of economic exploitation, but of a lack of democracy. Within Lancashire, dialect writing such as Laycock's helps us to see how a very specific regional consciousness - the "brave Lancashire lads" - reinforced popular radicalism. Patrick Joyce has quoted Allen Clarke's "In Praise o' Lancashire" which includes lines such as:

Eaur Lanky lads an'their gaffers
Has built aw th'bloomin' earth;
An' there isn't a job that's wo'th owt
But Lancashire gan it birth.(25)

Joyce, as argued in Chapter 7, makes the mistake of isolating one small piece of

Clarke's writing to draw some very far-reaching conclusions about dialect serving to 'mute' class which cannot be substantiated in Clarke's work as a whole. However, there was a sense in which 'region' partly overlaid 'class' in dialect writing, even in the later period of socialist dialect writing. Part of the reason lies within the particular form of 'socialism' espoused by Clarke and his friends. This was the broad 'ethical' socialism of the I.L.P. and Labour Churches, which - in often highly ambivalent ways - played down class conflict, whereas sections within the S.D.F. tried to magnify it. Clarke spelt it out in the conclusion to Effects of the Factory System:

I do not wish to rouse class hatred and opposition. I wish to unite rather than dissever. Though the masters in the past, as a body, have been cruel to the men, a more humane and considerate spirit is astir today; and though there are yet unfair and tyrannical masters, there are also unfair and unreasonable men. (26)

It could be argued that this 'ethical' socialism which he was espousing, had a clear pedigree dating back to 'moral force' Chartism, through radical-Liberalism. Whatever the reasons, there was a strong ideological basis within Clarke's socialism for appealing beyond the 'working class' as such. As such, there was little reason why his dialect writing should not try to appeal to wider groups in society. What is perhaps surprising, if anything, is the vehemence and class hatred which *does* come through in some of his writing, such as his Voices poetry, and in many of his novels.

The vision Clarke had of Lancashire, shared by his circle of dialect writers, was one in which the 'working class' was the leading force in society, at the head of progressive movements of all kinds, at the 'leading edge' of industrial development and overseas expansion, but for all that, essentially 'gradely', down-to-earth, people, exemplified in the poem "In Praise o'Lancashire". Lancashire is the engine-house of Britain, which in turn leads the world in industrial development. It is the Lancashire worker, primarily, who is the driving force. There is an interesting relationship between Lancashire regionalism and a much wider, indeed world-wide, cosmopolitanism. The parochialism of dialect can co-exist with Lancastrian workers

setting up mills in Russia, working in the Asian colonies, and elsewhere in the world. It is the same localism/cosmopolitanism J.B. Priestley refers to in his Bradford novels: the broad Yorkshire-speaking wool sorter with an unrivalled knowledge of the world because of the nature of the wool trade.

Clarke did not have a 'chip on his shoulder' about class; his writings do not have any of the bitter resentment towards the middle class found in some working class writers. He was firmly of the working class, and stayed in that milieu, even though in his later years he had the option to leave, through getting into national journalism if he wished. He chose not to, whereas many working class writers never have that choice. He was fiercely loyal to 'his' class, as in this response to 'T. Owen' of the cotton employers' paper, the Textile Mercury, who accused him of exaggerating social problems in the mills, in his Effects of the Factory System:

I say - and I can prove it if need be - that the workers have more right to health and happiness than capitalists, bankers, financiers, solicitors, army and navy officers, merchants, traders, writers, journalists, and even statesman. For the working classes keep all of these; and - I say this carefully - the most deprived of the workers is really a better man than the best of the idlers who live on his labour.(27)

Class is the starting point for Clarke's work, the life of the Lancashire factory workers and their families. It was these people he wrote about, and these people for whom he wrote for. He was a regional, working class writer; writing of working class themes within a regional framework. He did not put 'region' above 'class'; he saw "Lancashire" as the working class. "Lancashire" was thus an ideological construct, a world of contradictions: smoking factory chimneys and child labour, beautiful moorlands, and of course his beloved Blackpool.

Industrial class conflict was a reality of Lancashire life throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, as Kirk (28) among others has demonstrated. Major strikes took place in the Lancashire cotton industry throughout the period regarded as the "golden age" of class collaboration. Kirk identifies the years 1853-4 (the time of the

Great Lock-Out in Preston), 1861, and 1867, and 1869 as times of particularly acute industrial conflict. The industrial proletariat, and industrial bourgeoisie, had clearly recognisable interests, which were at times antagonistic. However, this is set in the context of a radical politics which viewed the lack of democracy, rather than industrial capitalism as such, as the root cause of injustice.

Joyce is right about the limited horizons of radicalism in the 1850s and 1860s. It is difficult to find, within Lancashire radicalism, any desire to replace the industrial bourgeoisie's control of the productive process with that of the working class. The most common response was to argue for "fair treatment" of workers within an accepted framework of existing social relations, or to opt for "back to the land" experiments. This was an undercurrent within Chartism, and re-surfaced at intervals throughout the nineteenth century. As late as 1905 Allen Clarke set up the Daisy Colony near Blackpool,(29) calling up the spirits of the Lancashire hand-loom weavers to justify his attempt at re-creating a more "natural" lifestyle.

Even when relations between advanced working class radicals and bourgeois liberals were at a low ebb, for example after the passing of the 1832 Reform Act, and in the later years of Chartism, this was often seen as a betrayal of the industrial bourgeoisie's natural allies among the working class, rather than an inherently antagonistic relationship based on relations of production. Once the political challenge of Chartism had subsided, the possibility of a compromise between capital and labour became clear. Within Lancashire, with its regionally-specific industry (cotton), and towns which developed a strong sense of civic pride shared by both working class and middle class citizens, such a compromise came almost naturally. Industrial relations within the cotton industry became increasingly formalised, with trade unionism steadily accepted as by the employers as a sensible means of handling the relationship with at least the higher status sections of the workforce.

The late 1880s mark a watershed in working class politics in Lancashire, with a section of the working class showing interest in the ideas of socialism. However this should not be taken simply as part of a hostile reaction towards the employers. The 'ethical' thrust of the new socialism had perhaps more appeal than the economic arguments of the S.D.F. The Social Democratic Federation struck roots in some Lancashire towns, particularly in north-east Lancashire. By the early 1890s the I.L.P. was active in many districts, often with over-lapping membership with the S.D.F.. The Clarion newspaper and its associated cycling and rambling clubs, choirs and discussion groups, the Labour churches, Women's Co-operative Guild, and specifically regional newspapers like The Cotton Factory Times and Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly formed a growing socialist culture. However, even then this socialism had little of the hard cutting-edge of twentieth century left-wing socialism and communism based on the centrality of class war. All the key figures of late nineteenth century socialism, including Hardie, Macdonald, Morris, Carpenter, and Blatchford tended to have a 'communitarian' rather than 'class' vision of socialism. They shared Allen Clarke's attachment to the myth of the "independent artisan" and a dislike of "industrialism" per se, but not a hatred of the industrial bourgeoisie. David Howell (30) has shown that in terms of hard, practical politics there was little to distinguish I.L.P. economic policy with that of radical Liberalism in the 1890s.

The growing trade union militancy in this period was often concentrated in industrial sectors which were peripheral to the key industries of cotton, engineering, and mining. In Lancashire towns like Bolton and Rochdale the 'new unionism' was most prominent among carters and lurrymen, clerical workers, and railwaymen. There were short-lived attempts to form unions for the cotton piecers, which were crushed more by their 'minder' colleagues than by the cotton masters. Trade unionism was well established, and highly respectable. To give just one example, when Mawdsley, secretary of Bolton Trades Council and an official of the cotton spinners' union died, his funeral was attended by tens of thousands, with an oration delivered by the Earl of

Hereford, who was a close friend of the deceased! Mawdsley was the apogee of working class Conservatism, having stood as a Conservative parliamentary candidate in Lancashire. (31)

However, by the turn of the century, industrial class conflict became more politicised. Both the Cotton Factory Times and Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly became much more outspoken against the cotton employers. During 1900 a particularly bitter strike took place at Sunnyside Mills in Bolton, over changed working practices resulting from the introduction of new American looms (see Chapter 4 and Appendix 23). The local socialist movement, and Clarke's paper, played a big role in rallying support for the strike. By this time, the social relations of the factory had changed from that based on the "family firm" with a relatively visible owner, to one which was becoming more recognisable as a "modern" industrial enterprise in which ownership was much less visible. The manager replaces the owner, who may have retired to the more pleasing climates of Bournemouth or Silverdale and whose sons have little interest in the tedium of running a factory.

The outbreak of the First World War brought to a sudden end the development of an indigenous working class politics which was grounded in the reality of industrial Lancashire. What emerged afterwards was a highly centralised Labour Party, with little (though some) room for regional or local autonomy, and equally centralised Communist Party whose primary allegiance lay with the newly-formed Soviet Union.

The Ambiguities of 'Respectability'

In the preceding chapters I have attempted to draw out the main themes within dialect literature, and the differing uses to which it has been put. It should be clear that dialect literature was far from being a direct 'mirror' of working class attitudes, but was capable of expressing elements within working class culture of the nineteenth and

early twentieth century. To an extent, writers like Waugh, Brierley, and Laycock, and later on Allen Clarke and Sam Fitton, helped to mould this culture. They provided a framework in which people could develop their own perceptions of social reality.

Did the early writers 'import' some middle class values into the Lancashire working class? Much revolves around interpretations of 'respectability', and the dialect writing of Waugh, Laycock and Brierley suggests a form of working class respectability which was reconcilable with, but distinct from, middle class values. Its stress on temperance, the home and family, and a romantic association with the countryside (in the case of Waugh) parallels very closely the contemporary bourgeoisie's interests, in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Yet this 'respectable' working class culture had a strong collective ethos too, revolving around institutions which were unequivocally working class in inspiration: the co-operative societies, trades unions, burial clubs, and friendly societies. As Walton has argued (29) it was these voluntary organisations which were crucial to the growth of a culture of working class respectability, and dialect literature played a big part in the process.

If most of the work of Waugh, Brierley, and Laycock presents little threat to middle class politics, the picture is more complex both before the 'heyday' of dialect literature, and after (before 1850 and after 1880). The writing of 'Tim Bobbin' and his imitators ('Tim Bobbin the Second', 'Paul Bobbin', and anonymous broadside writers) wrote dialect literature which was rooted in the everyday life of late eighteenth century Lancashire working class, and incorporated what was later regarded as embarrassingly naturalistic descriptions of manners and morals. Mid-Victorian commentators saw Waugh and his followers as having 'purified' the dialect, ridding it of 'coarseness and vulgarity' and creating a literature that could compete with Burns. The generation of dialect writers which followed after Waugh clearly owed a great deal to his pioneering literary efforts, and were frequently effusive in praise of the 'Lancashire Burns', as well as celebrating Laycock, Brierley, and the earlier dialect writers such as 'Tim

Bobbin'. The attitude of dialect writers such as Allen Clarke, R.H. Brodie, Arthur Laycock and Fred Plant towards the 'classic writers' combined a critical awareness of their short-comings in avoiding politically contentious issues, along with a respect which veered towards veneration for the role as working class writers who struggled hard for literary recognition, and pioneered the creation of a distinctive Lancashire dialect literature, with more-or-less standardised forms of spelling, and - less obvious but crucially important - a form of literary convention in terms of both subject matter and form. The young socialist dialect writers found it difficult to climb out of the furrow which Waugh had ploughed, which at times verged on the sentimental and was frequently moralistic in relation to sexual attitudes.

The Achievement of Lancashire Dialect Literature

The Lancashire dialect tradition was probably the strongest, and most adaptable, forms of working class literature seen in this country. Its success lay in its appeal to a sense of class and community. It was an emblem of pride worn as visibly as any uniform or medal. Despite Victorian (and more recent) educational attempts to stamp it out, it has remained remarkably resilient as a form of speech. As literature it has enjoyed intermittent periods of popularity, usually at times of major crisis and change in established ways of life. The first period of popularity came in the 1850s and 1860s, in the work of Waugh, Brierley and Laycock, who appealed to a sense of past traditions, increasingly threatened by the onset of industrial capitalism. Dialect was a link to the past, spoken by parents and grandparents, which should be preserved in literature. Cotton workers and their families read cheap penny editions of the 'classic' dialect writers, while middle class antiquarians purchased the expensive gilt-edged editions, in their shared admiration and love for Waugh's homely and sentimental poetry. If the middle class antiquarian, and paternalistic friends, saw positive moral lessons in the early dialect poetry, most working people simply saw it as pleasing, nostalgic, and about the sort of lives they lived, or had led. Working people were not stigmatised as

villains, drunks or rowdies as most middle class literature pictured them, but as interesting, multi-faceted, characters.

As new political and social ideas became increasingly current within the working class, younger dialect writers like Clarke began to express the new ideas in dialect form. He encouraged and assisted many others and successfully tapped in to a short-lived but immensely creative period of a real, alternative Lancashire socialist culture. I would suggest its success was a result of an ideological crisis - people wanted new ideas, but by expressing them in dialect form it gave them an element of continuity and familiarity. All along, the key to the success of dialect literature was that it existed within an enormously strong industrial community with its own culture - 'the cotton-belt culture'. To repeat Clarke's memorable phrase, it "sawders (solders -PS) us together". (32) Dialect did indeed bind the various strands of Lancashire working class culture together: the culture of the 'respectable', liberal, working class.

The dialect writers of Clarke's period, including himself, Brodie, Plant, Hill, and the Eckersalls saw themselves as part of a continuous dialect tradition stretching back to John Collier, and taking in Waugh, Laycock and Brierley. Whilst the political content of their material, and much of the contemporary subject matter, was new, the form was largely unaltered. This is the only justification for Martha Vicinus' comment that dialect literature 'neither advanced or regressed' after the 1880s; in fact, as the only published academic commentary on the history of dialect she appears unaware of developments after the 1880s - which were, in terms of actual content, considerable. (33) Brian Hollingworth, in his 'Introduction' to his Songs of the People, is similarly weak in his appreciation of later developments in the 1890s and early 1900s, actually suggesting that the quality of dialect literature decreased in tandem with the quantity produced (34). Hollingworth's comments are chronologically wrong - the period he refers to saw a very tangible strengthening of both dialect literature, and its links between author and reader, because of the availability of Teddy Ashton's

Northern Weekly, the Cotton Factory Times, and cheaply published pamphlets and sketches. He later comments on how the audience for dialect increasingly came to demand nostalgia, rather than comments about the contemporary 'human condition', with arch references to 'potato pie', 'clogs' or 'case clocks'. This was true for the bulk of dialect published during the inter-war years, and more so for that produced in the 1950s and 1960s. The temporary links between Lancashire dialect and working class radicalism in the 1890s and early 1900s were largely broken by the end of the First World War. Dialect literature, exemplified in the work of the Lancashire Authors' Association, went back to the nostalgic sentimentalising of Waugh at his least powerful. The Cotton Factory Times steadily took less and less interest in dialect, until by the mid-1930s it was uncommon to see any dialect contributions at all. Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Lancashire Annual continued to appear, though its influence as a carrier of radicalism and dialect became more muted and uncontroversial. The actual amount of dialect published in the inter-war years appears overall to be considerably lower than in the years preceding the First World War. When it did appear, it was largely in locally produced small editions, rather than the cheap mass publications of the 1860s and 1890s.

Dialect Today

It is not my intention to dwell on the post-Second World War period, although some comment on developments are, I think, useful. The drastic changes in Lancashire from the late 1950s to the present day appear to have had a similar effect on popular consciousness as in the 1850s, following the Industrial Revolution. Just as the handloom weaver and the physical trappings of domestic industry had vanished, so now has the mule spinner and power loom weaver, the factory chimneys, cobbled streets and gas lamps. A veritable industry has developed to exploit the 'old Lancashire', and dialect has been brought out from relative isolation, dusted down, and put to the service of the heritage industry. As with Waugh's romanticism of the 1850s, the present day

nostalgic dialect finds a ready audience among many Lancashire people who have fond memories of childhood and adolescence mixed in with images of gas lamps and cobbled streets. Memories of the harsh reality of life the mills recede, leaving comfortable images of a less-troubled world. The vast majority of dialect written today is about the past - an image of cheerful lads and lasses, skipping along to the mill with their potato pie, clogs sparking on the cobbles. Little dialect is being written about modern Lancashire. Lancashire dialect runs the risk of trying to perpetuate an image of an ethnically-pure Lancashire, without the cultural diversity that has always been present in different ways. Just as Allen Clarke included positive Irish characters in his Tum Fowt Sketches of the 1890s, I have little doubt that if he were alive today he would include characters from Asian and Afro-Caribbean backgrounds. Unfortunately, it seems that people writing in dialect today are frightened of the new social realities, and retreat into the past.

The Lancashire Authors' Association continues the tradition of dialect writing; recently it absorbed the Lancashire Dialect Society, a mere youngster formed in the 1950s. We must hope that, in the future, it will stimulate further interest in dialect, but as a living form of speech and writing, rather than an old-fashioned curiosity. Lancashire dialect literature was a remarkable phenomenon, which grew, and then declined, with the fortunes of the cotton industry and the communities to which the industry gave rise. One should not be too much of a sceptic to hope that something which continues the tradition of Waugh and Clarke can survive in post-industrial Lancashire.

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3. Neville Kirk The Growth of Working Class Reformism in Mid-Victorian England 1985.
4. Standish Meacham A Life Apart: The English Working Class 1890-1914 Massachusetts 1977.
5. John Foster Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution 1974 see p.238.
6. Joyce op.cit.
7. see Paul Salveson "The Lancashire School of Working Class Novelists" in G Klaus (ed) The Socialist Novel Volume 2 Brighton 1986.
8. Cotton Factory Times July 6 1920.
9. Derek Moffitt "The Medical Herbalists of Lancashire" in P Salveson (ed) Lancashire Scrapbook Bolton 1986.
10. Sam Hill Foirewood; Splinters an' Shavin's fro; a Carpenter's Bench Stalybridge 1902 p.118.
11. See Charles Abbott Hocus Pocus? Leigh 1938.
12. See Logie Barrow Independent Spirits: Spiritualism and English Plebeians London 1986.
13. Allen Clarke The Eternal Question? London 1919.
14. Bolton Trotter August 4 1893.
15. See Stephen Yeo "The Religion of Socialism" in History Workshop 4 1977.
16. Clarke op.cit p.224.
17. see Paul Salveson Will Yo' Come o'Sunday Mornin'?: The History of the 1896 Winter Hill Trespass of 1896 Bolton 1982.
18. A. Reid (ed) The New Party in the North 1895.
19. see Paul Salveson Loving Comrades: Lancashire's Links to Walt Whitman Bolton 1985.
20. This figure is based on readership of Northern Weekly at 20,000, and an overlapping readership of Cotton Factory Times at about 50,000.
21. Patrick Joyce Visions of the People p.5.
22. G. Stedman Jones "Re-thinking Chartism" in Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History 1832-1982 Cambridge 1983.

23. See Appendix 12.
24. Edwin Waugh Poems and Songs 2nd Series Oldham 1889 p. 53.
25. Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Annual 1896, and 1923.
26. Allen Clarke Effects of the Factory System London 1899 p.177.
27. Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly April 2 1904.
28. Kirk op.cit.
29. Paul Salveson "Back to the Land: The Daisy Colony Scheme" in Bulletin of the North West Labour History Group 1983.
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Notes on Appendices

The appendices are intended to give a deeper impression of some of the works of dialect writers mentioned within the dissertation. They largely relate to writers in chronological order.

1. Tim Bobbin Celebrations, 1986: Tim Bobbin Trails

The memory of 'Tim Bobbin' (John Collier) remains strong in his town of Rochdale. In 1986 a 'Tim Bobbin Trails' was produced, as well as a new biography by Jean and Peter Bond, who produced the Trails.

2.a Tim Bobbin Celebrations, 1909: Sam Fitton cartoon and poem

1909, the 200th anniversary of Collier's birth, was perhaps the high-water point of the Lancashire dialect 'movement' and the event was celebrated in many parts of the county. This cartoon and poem links a tradition of writing and art-work (Collier and Fitton were both poets and artists) stretching over 150 years. (Cotton Factory Times April 2 1909).

2.b Lancashire Authors at Tim Bobbin Celebration, Rochdale

This photo, from Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Annual 1927, shows an impressive grouping of dialect writers, including Clarke, Brodie, Arthur Laycock, Sam Fitton, J. T. Baron, Joseph Baron, Sam Hill, James Leigh, Joe Cronshaw, and R. H. Brodie. It was from this gathering that a decision was made to establish the Lancashire Authors' Association.

3. 'Tim Bobbin' (John Collier) extract from "Tummas an' Meary" with translation by Elijah Ridings.

This short excerpt is interesting for its translation, as well as giving the reader a sense of Collier's dialect. The need for translations (Ridings was not the first - Samuel Bamford did one some years earlier), suggests Collier's dialect was unfamiliar to many Lancastrians. (from G. H. Whittaker A Lancashire Garland).

4. "Jone o'Grinfilt"

This is the original version; it became very popular as a broadside ballad, and numerous imitations were made. It is thought to have been composed around 1800 by Joseph Lees and Joseph Coupe, after a night's drinking in Manchester. (from J Harland and T. T. Wilkinson, Ballads and Songs of Lancashire London 1875).

5. Rachde Kronikul un Workin Man's Lantrun

The paper had a brief existence during 1852, and was written entirely in dialect. It commented on local and national events, carrying local advertisements. (No. 1 October 1852).

6. Bowtun Luminary

Staton's Luminary was similar to the above Rochdale publication. It was written mostly in dialect, with a strong political emphasis - from a radical perspective. Above all, it was a local satirical magazine. This issue, of May 22 1852, contains a "History of Tum Fowt", creating the comic tradition perpetuated by Clarke in his Tum Fowt Sketches. (No.7 May 22 1852).

7. Lankishire Loominary

The Loominary continued the tradition of dialect political satire which Staton had attempted with his Bowtun Luminary, paying particular attention to international issues such as Russian expansionism, and the American Civil War. This issue covers the debate on possible intervention by Britain. (No.2 Vol.1 October 10 1863).

8. "Th'Bowton Loominary And Its Author" by 'Billy Button'

R. H. Brodie ('Billy Button') was one of Allen Clarke's regular contributors to Northern Weekly and his Lancashire Annual. This short article links Staton into the tradition of dialect literature, continued by the Lancashire Authors' Association. (Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Annual 1923).

9. Edwin Waugh "Come Whoam to th Childer an'Me"

This is probably the most famous Lancashire dialect poem ever written, and made Waugh's name as a dialect poet. (Waugh's Lancashire Songs Manchester 1866).

10. Edwin Waugh "Eawr Foak"

This was a popular poem by Waugh, and has less of the sentimentality of "Come Whoam". (Waugh's Lancashire Songs).

11. Samuel Laycock "Welcome, Bonny Brid"

Laycock's poem, about a father addressing his new born child when the Cotton Famine was at its worst, is Laycock's most famous poem. (Collected Writings Manchester 1900). His wife was in the last stages of pregnancy as he composed the poem, expecting a boy. Laycock finished it within minutes of the child being born - it was a girl! The baby, Hannah, grew up to marry another dialect writer, Sim Schofield.

12. Samuel Laycock "Th'Peers an'th'People"

This poem, published as a broadsheet, exemplifies the radical populism of the second half of the nineteenth century. (in own collection).

13. Samuel Laycock "Th'Vicar's Son an'th'Grand Owd Mon"

This is a spirited defence of the reputation of Gladstone: a very specific intervention in local political debate, published as a broadsheet by the Liberal Blackpool Times in December 1890. (own collection).

14. Samuel Laycock "A Strange Dreom"

A piece of political satire by Laycock, with an 'owd peawer-loom weaver' dreaming he is in Hell. The poem attacks Disraeli and the Tories, and was published as a broadsheet by Heywood's of Manchester. (own collection).

15. Richard Rome Bealey "Owd David At Major's"

This poem was published as a broadsheet by Ireland's of Manchester, in 1866. It is another example of a direct intervention in a political struggle - in this case the rights-of-way campaign at Pilkington, near Bury. The protagonists were politically split between the landowning and staunch Tory Derby family, and local Liberal opponents. (own collection).

16. Samuel Laycock "To William Baron"

This is an affectionate tribute from a radical poet (Laycock) to a conservative (William Baron). Does it suggest that dialect formed a political bridge between differing political views, as well as expressing them? Both Laycock and Baron used dialect to express their respective politics, but clearly there was a bond of friendship and loyalty between them. (in LAA collection, Preston).

17. Bill o'Jack's Journal

The cover carries the message "A Monthly Magazine of Lancashire Literature for All Classes", reflecting Baron's desire to make dialect 'respectable'. (L.A.A. collection)

18. "Ben Brierley Interviewed by Teddy Ashton"

This interview, published in Clarke's Trotter in 1892, establishes the strength of the continuity between two generations of dialect writer, and shows Clarke staking an unambiguous claim for Brierley's mantle: "Theau't'up at th'top o'th'tree, Ben/I'm but beginnin' to climb". (Bolton Trotter October 21 1892).

19 and 20. Joseph Burgess "Ther's Nowt Loike Spinnin' Shoddy" and "Ten Heawrs A Day"

Burgess wrote some of the most powerful dialect poetry on the factory system. These are the two most famous ones. (A Potential Poet? Ilford 1927).

21. "Bill Spriggs as a Minder"

This was one of Clarke's most popular 'Tum Fowt' sketches, about 'Bill Sprigs' attempting the work of a mule spinner ('minder'). The sketch is a typical example of Clarke's use of different occupations familiar to his readers to develop a funny story. But perhaps there is something more: 'minding' is a skilled job, and a dangerous one. The point is that working people do dangerous, and skilled jobs - reinforcing a sense of pride in skill and occupation, as well as in community, expressed through use of dialect. The cartoon by Sam Fitton is a delightful added touch. (Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Readings No. 2, 1922).

22. An' Election Address to th' Rachda Folk"

A piece of political propaganda in dialect, in which Clarke's favourite 'Tum Fowt' characters - Bill Spriggs, Georgie Greensauce, Billy Bobbin, and Patsy Filligan, come out firmly in support of their author! Quite what the Rochdale I.L.P. and S.D.F. thought of it, on whose joint behalf he was standing, isn't recorded. (Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly October 6 1900).

23. Th'Patent Automatic Cemetery Looms

This later 'Tum Fowt' sketch shows the progression in Clarke's dialect writing, from writing sketches which were above all, entertainment, to sketches which were first and foremost political. The sketch was about a strike in the Sunnyside Mills, Bolton, over introduction of new technology. (Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly May 20 1905).

24. 'Billy Pickinpeg' "Dobbill Weivers an' Yankee Looms"

These two letters to the Northern Weekly purport to be from 'Billy Pickinpeg', one of the strikers at Sunnyside Mills. It is possible they were written by Clarke himself. (Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly January 6 1900 and January 13 1900).

25. "Bill Sprigs on th' Engineer's Lock-out" and Readers' Letters

The 'Tum Fowt' sketch is an early attempt by Clarke to use the sketches in support of a 'labour' issue. The readers' letters on the same page largely relate to the novel which had been serialised in the paper, "A Curate of Christ's". One letter comes from the secretary of the "Longsight Permanent Way Department" branch of the railwaymen's union (probably the General Railway Workers' Union) which censures Clarke for the unsatisfactory ending of the novel. A unique letter in the history of literature and the labour movement? (Teddy Ashton's Journal October 25 1897).

26. 'Billy Button' "Th' Invasion Bogey"

This is a powerful piece of political comment in dialect, in which R H Brodie, as 'Billy Button' - a 'typical' Lancashire character puts across a socialist message to his friend 'Tommy Harrop'. It is in marked contrast to his published poems, none of which are political in content. (Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly April 21 1906).

27. Arthur Laycock "War's a Grand Game"

Laycock, son of Samuel, was prepared to stand up and be counted as socialist and pacifist. This poem was published shortly after the end of the war. (Blackpool Christmas Annual December 1918).

28. Sam Fitton - Humorist, Author, Dialect Reaser and Reciter, etc

This advertisement reflects the continuing importance of dialect recitals into the 1920s: continuing the tradition of Bamford and Waugh from the 1850s. The emphasis is on entertainment, aimed at concerts, co-operative society functions, church gatherings, and other social events. (L.A.A. collection, Preston).

29. Sam Fitton "My Owd Case Clock"

This was Fitton's most famous poem, published as a broadsheet in his village, Shaw, about 1922. The broadsheet tradition continued, but examples such as this become less common in the inter-war years. They disappear completely after the Second World War.

30 and 31. 'Daisy Nook' "Pin Money" and "Why Women Should Vote Labour".

Hannah Mitchell, writing as 'Daisy Nook' (harking back to Ben Brierley's Daisy Nook Sketches), uses dialect to put across a strong socialist and feminist message in these two sketches. Written in the late 1920s, one wonders whether they came across as archaic, or whether they still did a strike a chord in Lancashire readers' minds? (Labour's Northern Voice, December 13 1929, and October 26 1928).

32. Summat Abeaut Co-operation

An interesting dialect advertisement from 1923, for the co-op, which attempts to appeal to 'th'black-coated brigade'. (Teddy Ashton's Lancashire Annual 1923).

33. 'Teddy Ashton' "In Praise o' Lancashire"

This seems an appropriate poem to end with. It brings together the socialist tradition of Clarke, but also has a wider regional appeal, with a strong element of chauvinism thrown in. It harks back to the Chartists and handloom weavers, and has a direct 'dig' at 'chirpin' Cockneys'. Class appeal, or regional appeal? Class is there, but it comes a poor second to the broader appeal of 'Lancashire'.

Tim Bobbin — Trails



"I wun at th'Riggin oth'Woard . . . for th'Wetur oth'tone Yeeosing faws into th'Yeeost, on th'tother into th'West Seo,"*

John Collier (1708-1786), better known as "Tim Bobbin" and variously dubbed "The Lancashire Hogarth" and the "father of Lancashire dialect writing", was schoolmaster at Milnrow near Rochdale for almost all his adult life. Yet from what was then a country village, this hard-drinking, fun-loving character established a nationwide reputation.

His comic tale "A View of the Lancashire Dialect" was hailed as a masterpiece. He wrote poems and pamphlets; painted signs and portraits and was satirist, wit and historian. Moreover, Tim's engravings and oil-paintings sold as far afield as the West Indies.

The trails take in places associated with Tim, chiefly in Milnrow and Rochdale but also across Blackstone Edge in the Ripponden area.

* "I live on the ridge of the world . . . for the water from one eaves falls into the east and the other into the west sea."

THE FACTORY TIMES, APRIL 2, 1909.



TIM BOBBIN.

All hail to thee, Owd Timothy,
Tha sets mi pencil throbbin!
I wonder what tha'rt paintin' neaw,
Timotheus of the Bobbin!

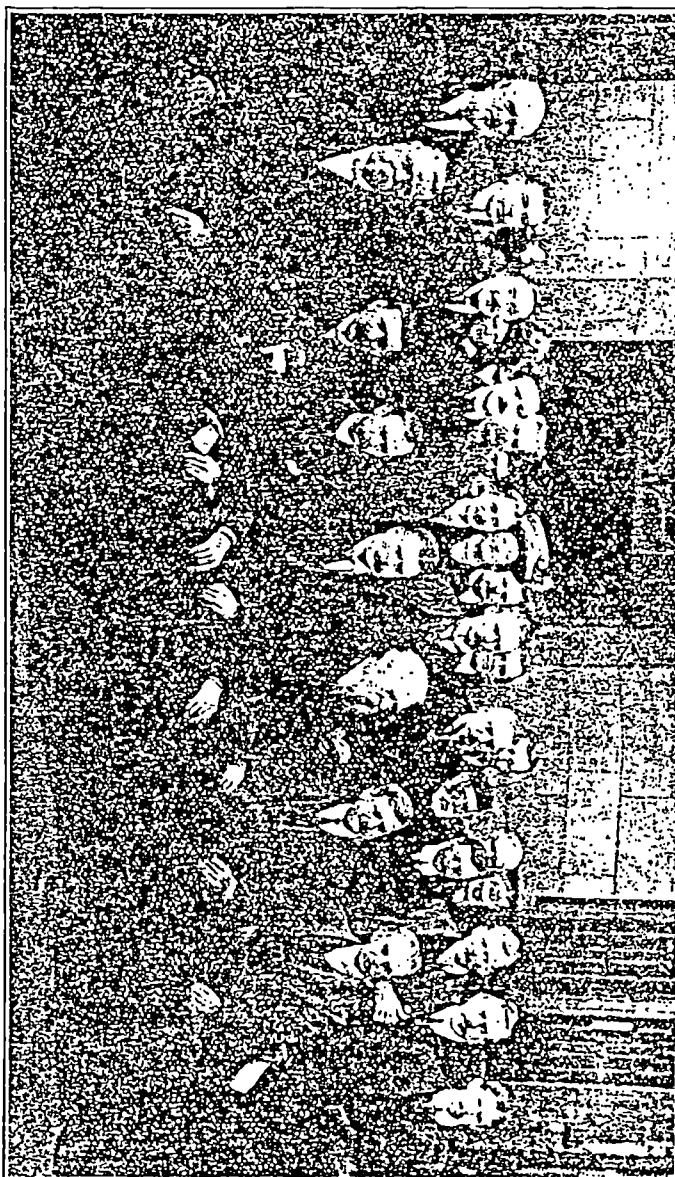
Tha used to play some funny tricks
Wi' lad, an' chap, an' woman;
Tha gaw an' took thi share o' kicks;
Eh, Tim, tha wore a rum 'un!

Tha painted nice, tha painted feaw,
Tha drew booth sweets an' bitters;
An' if tha'rt Boggart paintin' neaw,
Tha'll find a lot o' sitters.

Hast gotten Tum an' Meary thee?
Tha fairly took 'em through it;
Poor Tummas cost mi mony a tear
-Wi' hawkin' th' Bandy-hewit.

Two hundred yer sin' tha wer' born,
An' yet we arno' wary
O' twistin' laurals to adorn
Tim Bobbin an' his Mary!

Sam Fitton.



LANCASHIRE WRITERS AND FRIENDS

At the "Tim Bobbin" Bi-centenary, Rochdale, April 3, 1909.

Front Row:—*J. Leigh, Teddy Asstun, *R. H. Brodie, *W. Baron, *Gov. Fishwick, *Sam Hill, *Joe Georshaw.

Second Row:—A. Askew, R. G. Berry, Arthur Smith, (**Mrs. Allen Clarke), J. M. Parry, Arthur Laycock,
(Miss Spence), *Fred Plaut, (**Sam Fitton), Thomas Hooper (Robert Atterton), _____, *J. T. Baron, *Joseph Baron,
W. M. Williamson (Hochkule Librarian).
* Now deceased.

EXTRACT FROM "THOMAS AN' MARY."

Thomas, after many amusing misadventures, has described how he spent a night at an inn.

M. Well, on heaw went'n ye on ith' Mourning when eh wack'it?

T. Whaur, as I'r doaning meh throoanish Cloas, I thowt I'll know heaw meh shot sons ofore I'll wear moor o meh brass o meh breckfust: So I cawd, on th' landledey coom, on kestit up to Throoatpence: So, thowt I t' meh sein, o weawnded Deecoll! Whot strushon hav I mede herel, I cou'd ha fund meh sein o how Wick weh bus for that Mooney. Ist naw hav one Beadle t' spare o meh hoyde Silver: On neaw I'r in os ill o Kele os meeshad! Wur eh naw!

M. Now mary, naw yo: In idd'n mede strushon, on Benzill owey moor Brass inney hadd'n, yo met'n ha tawkt.

T. I find teaw con tell true to o Hur, into will Meary; for byth' Miss, when of eh coom't grope eh meh Slop t' pey ur, I'r weawndedly glopp'it, for the Dule o hawpunny had eh! On whether eh lost it ith' Bruck, or weh scrambling o'er th' Doych-backs; I no moor know in th' Moon ith' Moon: But gon it wur! I steart like o Wilcat, on wur welly gawmluss: On of last I towd hur I'd lost meh Mooney. Sed hoo, whot dunneh meon Mon: Yeast naw put *Yorskar* o me; that Tole winnaw fit me; for yowr liket' pey o sunheaw. Sed I, boh is true, on yo meh grope eh meh Breches in eh win. Theaw't some mismanert Jacksonapes I'll uphowd tey sed hoo; Ney, dey, I'st naw grope eh the Breches not I. Whaur, sed I yowr lik't ha now, beawt yean tey meh Woollen Mittins, and meh Sawt Cleawt: Thoo's'n naw doo, sed hoo, they're naw booth worth oboon two Groats.—I nowt. elze, said I, beawt yean ha meh Saeze hum, on I'm loath t' part weet; becose Seroh o'Rutchots gaight me th' last Keranus. Let's see um, sed hoo, for theaw't some arron Rasock I'll uphowd teb, So I gea um hur; on still this broddling Fussock lookt feaw os Tumor when id done.

M. Good-Lorjus-o-me! I think idd'n th warst Luck of ewe Keranus Soul had!

TRANSLATION

by ELIZABETH BIDDINGS, from "The Works of Tom Bobbit Ray," published in 1862.

Mary.—Well, and how went you on in the morning, when —you awoke?

Thomas.—Why, as I was doaning my damp clothes, I thought I'll know how my shot stands before I'll order my breakfast: so, I called, and the landlady came, and cast up my shot to thirsen-pence: So, thought I; a wonderful deal! What destruction have I made here? I could have found myself a whole week with us for that sum. I shall not have one bodle to spare of my *hide-silver*. And now I was in as ill a turn as anybody—was I not?

Mary.—No, Mary, not you: if you had made destruction and embazzled away more money than you had, you might have talked.

Thomas.—I find thou canst tell true to a hair, if thou wilt, Mary: for by the Mass! when, that, I came to grope in my slop to pay her, I was astounded, for the devil a halipenny had I: and whether I lost it in the brook, or with scrambling over the ditch-banks, I no more know than the man in the moon: but gone it was. I stared like a wild-cat, and was nearly senseless. At the last I told her I had lost my mooney! Said she, "What do you mean, man? you shall not put *Yorksire* on me: that tale will not fit me: for you are like to pay in some way." Said I, "But it is true, and you may grope in my pockets if you will." "Thou art some mismanerted Jack-an-apes, I will be bound," said she. "Fiel nay! I shall not grope in thy breeches pocket—not I." "Why," said I, "then you are like to have nothing, except you will take my woolen mittens, and my salt-cloth." "Those will not do," said she; "they are not worth above two groats." "I have nothing else, except you will have my sneeze-horn; and I am loth to part with it, because Sarah O'Richard's gave it to me, th' last Christmas." "Let's see them," said she, "for thou art some arrant rascal, I will be bound." So, I gave them to her; and still this broaddling fussock looked as foul as thunder, when I had done all I could.

Mary.—Good Lord! I think you had the worst luck that ever christened soul had.

JONE O' GRINFILT.

SAYS Jone to his woice on a whot summer's day,
 "Aw'm resolyt i' Grinfilt no lurger to stay;
 For aw'll goo to Ow'dham os fast os aw can,
 So fare thee weel Grinfilt, an' fare thee weel Nan;
 For a sodger aw'll be, an' brave Ow'dham aw'll see,
 An' aw'll hate a battle wi' th' French."

"Dear Jone," said eawr Nan, un' hoo bitterly cried,
 "Wilt be one o' th' footc, or theaw meons for t' ride?"
 "Ods eawns! wench, aw'll ride oather ass or a mule,
 Ere aw'll keaver i' Grinfilt os black os th' owd dule,
 Booth clemmin' un' starvin', un' never a fardin',
 It 'ud welly drive ony mon mad."

"Ay, Jone, sin' we coom i' Grinfilt for t' dwell,
 Wey'n had mony a bare meal, aw con vara weel tell."
 "Dare meal, ecod! ay, that aw vara weel know,
 There's bin two days this wick 'or wey'n had nowt at o':
 Aw'm vara near sided, afore aw'll abide it,
 Aw'll feight oather Spanish or French."

Then says my Noant Marget, "Ah! Jone, theaw't so
 whot,
 Aw'd ne'er go to Ow'dham, boh i' Englon'd aw'd stop."

"It matters nowt, Madge, for to Ow'dham aw'll goo,
 Aw'st ne'er clem to deecho, both sunbry [somebody]
 shall know:
 Furst Frenchmon aw find, aw'll tell him meh mind,
 Un' if he'll naw feight, he shall run."

Then deawn th' broo aw coom, for weh liven't at top,
 Aw thowt aw'd rich Ow'dham ere ever aw stop;
 Ecod! heaw they staret when aw getten to th' Mumps,
 Mch owd hat i' my hont, un' meh clogs full o' stumps;
 Boh aw soon tow'd 'um, aw're gooin' to Ow'dham,
 Un' aw'd hate a battle wi' th' French.

Aw kept eendway thro' th' lone, un' to Ow'dham aw
 went,
 Aw ax'd a recruit if they'd made up their keawnt?
 "Nowe, nowe, honest lad!" (for he lawked like a king),
 "Goo wi' meh thro' th' street, un' thee aw will bring
 Wheree, if theaw't willin', theaw may ha'e a shillin'."
 Ecod! aw thowt this wur rare news.

He browt meh to th' pleck, where they measurn their
 heigh't,
 Un' if they bin reight, there's nowt said abeawt weight;
 Aw ratched meh un' stretch'd meh, un' never did finch:
 Says th' mon, "Aw believe theaw't meh lad to an
 inch."

Aw thowt this'll do; aw'st ha'e guineas enoo!
 Ecod! Ow'dham, brave Ow'dham for me.
 So fare thee weel, Grinfilt, a soger aw'm made:
 Aw getten new shoon, un' a rare cockade;
 Aw'll feight for Owd Englon'd os hard os aw con,
 Oather French, Dutch, or Spanish, to me it's o' one;

Aw'll mak' 'em to stare, like a new started hare,
 Un' aw'll tell 'em fro' Ow'dham aw coom.

In several copies, both in print and MS., the song
 ends here, but in others several stanzas are added, of
 which the following will serve as a sample:—

When aw went for a soger, aw ment for to ride,
 Soa they brought meh a tit, un' aw gat on at wrang
 side,
 Aw geet at wrang side, boh aw soon tumbled o'er;
 Meh officer said aw should niver ride more.
 Aw thowt, that's quite reet, aw con goo o' meh feet
 As fur as aw wish for to goo.

Soa they browt meh a gun, and caw'd lift an' reet,
 Theaw mun howd up thy yed, and keep slippin' thy feet;
 Oh! they wheelt me abeawt till aw leant to one side,
 An meh officer said aw could noather walk nor ride.

Peace is proclaimed, and John goes home again:—
 Soa neaw aw'm at whoam, an' th' loom's set agate,
 Wey'n plenty o' prates, an' dumplins to ate;
 And now peace is made, th' weyvers may laugh
 At Billy's brown loaf, made o' bran an' o' chaff.
 Etc. etc.

The Rachde Kronikul,

UN
WORKIN MON'S LANTRUN.

No. 1.

Oktobur, 1852.

NOBBUT O PENNY.

HEDETUR'S HADRES.

Aw dar sa us mony o won ul thynk it quare fur me to start o Pappur, seein ther is sich o rook o Pappurs oreddy, o won mak ur onuther. Aw kno wele enuf us we han lotts o Pappurs, bwoth Wig Pappurs, un Tore Pappurs, un Raddikul Pappurs un o; saime toime, ony boddi we ony wit, knoes wele enuf us t'one have on um, han naut mich in um, un o deyle o wat ther is in, us eldur kalkilatud fur to doo mischeef ith kuntry nur aut elze. But we han no Pappur ut o e Rachde, fur o us its sich o greyt plaze, aw dar say o moile lung, un welley us brode us lung. Neaw ol ax ony boddi just fur to unbethynk um, iv it seawnds to rezzun fur sich o rook o foke to goo on groping ther rode ith dark, beawt ony boddi hausin fur to insens um hinto wat's gooin on bwoth e forin parts, un e ther oan nativ lond. Aw gues auv us mich reet fur to start o Pappur us ony boddi elze has, un iv auv getten moore e me yed, nur auv ony 'cashun for, fur me oan pertikler use, it leets me fur to let o bit eawt, eych neaw un then, fur th' benefit o me feiley kratur. Un so neaw o us aw getten fur to say moore oppo this footin, is, us aw shol doo me best hindavur fur to fit yo op we o Pappur us ul kest o deyle o leet oppo wat's gooin forrud ith kuntry, un thoose us dus'nt loike maw Pappur, mun start won fur thersels; that's wat aw getten fur to sa.

Aw gues maw reedurs ul want fur to kno neaw, wat soide the "Rachde Kronikul" us beawn fur to be on, o Polyticks loike; un sum ul be sayin us it shud be red, un uther sum ul rekkon us it shud be blu, but ol tel yo

wonst fur o, us awm fur havin o soide o me oan, un aw shol noathur goo we th' Wige, nur th' Toris, nur we th' Raddikuls, obut wen they dun that uts reet. Auv bin o chap wat's watch'd o on um o greyt deyle, un auv sin o greyt deyle o thyngs omung um o, us aw cuddent otogethur howd we. Aw shol olis be fund howdin we that, us dus moyst gud tuth greytest rook o foke.

Oppo th' Warr systum, om noane fur feightin ut o, fur od eldur run, nur ston un feight, un wat aw wod'ent doo mesel, aw wod'ent ax ony mon livvin fur to doo for me, ith feightin loine. Oppo keawnt o that, awm ogen listin, un aw shol doo o us evur aw con fur to insens foke, us o mon's o greyt foo, pertikler neaw wen ther's so mich wark un chep meyte, fur to goo hinto th' Melishaw. Om hoff we Sodierin otogethur, ony end op.

Oppo th' ekonomy systum, aw shol be fund fur to be o gradely gud un, fur aw welley loyse me tempur, wen aw studdi wat o greyt deyle o brass mony o won gets fur so littul wark, un sum on um fur no wark ut o. Om fur puttin th' qualuty foke oppo th' saime footin us poor foke, un od pay um O be th' pese, okwordingly to wat they dun, un thoose us did naut, shud ha naut.

Oppo wat they koen th' Eklesiastikul systum, aw shol be furevury mon helpin to kepe his oan Preychur, un otogethur ogen th' Parlyment settin op won mak o religun oboon onuthur. Let um O av o fare chaus to ston oppo ther oan legs, un thoose us ur noane okwordingly to th' Skripter ul be shure fur to fo deawn th' furst. Om fur havin evury Preychur wele pade we thoose us gwos fur to yer um preych. Om hoff we th' hact o Par-

THE BOWTON LUMINARY

An Inn Fowt Telegraph.

No. 7.]

MAY 22, 1852.

[PRICE 1D.]

THE HISTORY O' TUM FOWT.

CHAPTER I.

Though its as true as th dickshunary as th city o' Tum Fowt has howden up its toime-honoured yead for at least above two centuries, still, aw raily believe as there's very few foak i' England as knows owt abeawt it. Aw'll be bun fort there's mounny a ome livin i' this Christian country as never knowd afore aw begun a publishin th *Luminary* as there wur sich a place. Aw raythur think, too, as it all be weel known up at Lunnun; un awm rayther surprisot as th Queen un Prince Albert un th royal babbies didnt think it wuth their whoile t' pay it a visit afore Manchester, at th toime as they coom deawn to their tay at Wusley Haw, because my seyther uset say to me when aw wur a lad, "Billy, theaw out to be preawd o' thy native place; for its not omy celebrated for makin th best sowen un th noicest caddows i' Lankshire, but its often mentioned wi greight respect up at th palace on akeawnt o' th loyalty o' th citizens, un th service as wen done th state."

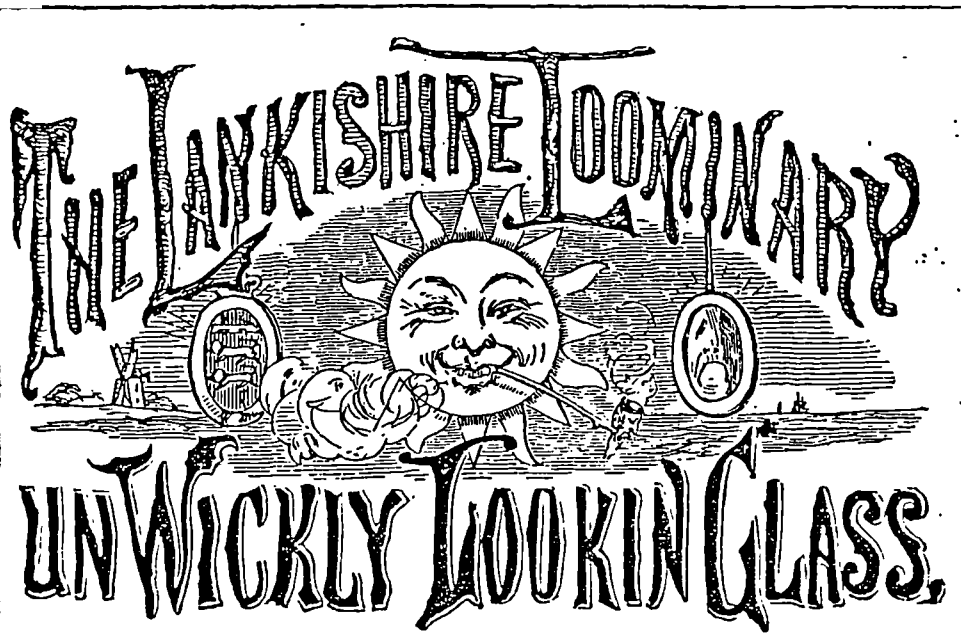
Heawever, that's noather my shoof nor my geawters; if th place is little known, its toime as it owt t' be known better, so aw've taen int my yead to give a bit of an akeawnt out.

Tum Fowt stons on a hill, abeawt a moile fro Bowton, on th east soide o' th Bowton un Bury turnpoike road. Its beawnded on th south by th river Eagley, Fleurbotton, un th Hollins; on th north-east, by its principul un only dependancy, Tumblin Fowt un

Undershore; on th west by a Tow Bar un Tung Studs; un on th east, by Dercey Layver Haw, or as sum foak uset caw it, Bradshi Haw, cause they sayn it wur gien to th notorious Judge Bradshaw at th toime as Oliver Crumwell wur kickin up his dusts.

When th place wur built nobuddy knows; th chap's name as built it never wur known, un heaw it wur built has puzzled aw th bricklayers, hod-men, trowel-makers, un herkitects as ever lookt at. Its bin thowt by some as it wur pitched together by a earthquake, un browt to where it is by instalments, on a truck. Thoos as is examined th heawses closely aw come to one tale—they sayn as they're aw built in an original stoile, un as they're of a pattern as is never bin copied by anybuddy else, un never will be. Its supposed by some as dabbles i' antiquities, un as reckons t' be a little bit fawser than their neighbours, as it sprung up loike a mushroom one neet i' Charles the fust's reign; but this is nobbut a spekilashun, as there's no records, oather ancient or modern, as throws any leet on its origin.

There's one thing known—it wur a city at toime as Charles Second peerched hissel up ith oak, un managet t' get comfortably keawrt deawn on th throne ogen; for when that event took place, th inlabitants welly went mad wi' jeigh, un establist a fair to commemorate it, which has bin howded up ever sin on th twenty-nointh o' May.



EDITED BY J. T. STATON.

No. 2.—Vol. I.

SETTURDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1863.

PRICE 1d.

NORTH UN SOUTH; OR, QUARE IDEOS UV NON-INTERVENSHUN.

It's not a very uncommon thing to meet, espeshully in newspapers, wi th' remark that "we live in strange toimes." He wur, no doubt, a clever sort uv a felly that fust geet it into his yed that it wur necessary to tell everybuddy wot everybuddy knowd. He wur a generous chap, too—fond uv woide-spread cullectunment—mitch gien, eawt o pure love for his speshees, to sow broad-cast oer th' lond the seeds uv gradely sterlin owd news. Its to be hoped, heawever, that in quickenin into growth there'll be no mischoance, that they'll not produce hemp, in fact; for, if so, he may meet wi that rope's-end fate which is said to be th' common reward uv aw thoose who publish news that's owd.

Everythin's a bit quare just neaw; its loike as if there sprung up a whoile sin a koinid uv mania, strungly infecabus in karricktor, un no respecter uv persona. It begun wi th' Merriky war; but where it ull cend, un when, goodness only knows. Awn no prophet, nor yet kunjurer, though aw wunst wrote an Awme-back, un made bowd to tak a glent as fur into futurity as a pair o good human een un th' gambiet uv a truth-seetchin moind would le' me. To give a list uv aw th' symptoms o this mania would be to fill a book uv itsel big enough to fot a shillin a copy ith literary merkit; so aw'll not gie mysel th' trouble to gather together a yep o facts that ull so reddily get into manun un pass in review before th' meinds o thoose who have made a practice o

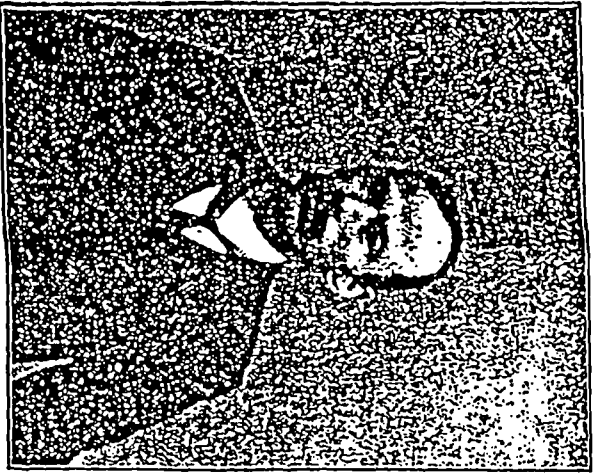
peepin into th' newspapers or keepin their yers oppen. But aw may, aw hope, be pardont, if aw menshun just a toothrey; though it would puzzle an owd skoomestur to tell where to begin. A doive among th' ruck ull praps be th' best thing uz aw could do, if nobbut for this reason, that it ull put me in a fair way for gettin th' job off my honds in as short a toime as possible.

Th' kick-up wi Brazil is one oth symptoms; th' French invashun o Mexico is another; th' fiendish un unperdonable bearin uv Roosha to poor Poland is another; th' tyrannical un crackt-braint cantrips oth King o Proosha un his impident puppet-ministers is another; th' strangulashun oth King o Madagascar, th' hangin uv aw his ministers, un th' promoshun uv his widow to th' throne is another; th' visit uv Roebuck un Lindsay to th' French Emperor, un their assumpshun oth funcshuns uv diplomacy is another; un th' manner in which, i' Lankshire espeshully, foak have poked their nose into th' American stroife, lost aw appearance uv brotherly-feelin, un carried on as if gooin in for th' honour o bein deemt worthy to become fittin tenants uv a loonatic asylum, is, to my moind, th' creawnin symptom; it puts th' copin-stone uppo th' entoire faybric.

There's a class o foak i' this country who proide theirsels on never moindin anybuddy's bizness but their own—on never pryin into their naybur's movements, mixin theirsels up wi their quarrels, takkin note o their domestic management, their love affairs, or any o their

"Th' Bowton Loominary" and Its Author.

By BILLY BUTTON.



The following article of his is about the Lancashire dialect and some of its exponents.]

I KNOW there's some folks as caaws th' Lancashire dialect vulgar, but th' best reply to sich ignorant attacks is to give some samples of our folk-speech. Th' Lancashire dialect needs no defence. Let it speik for itself, an' it'll settle aw critics.

Just look at that picture as Ned Waugh drew: A alichaerse kitchin; a clean, tidy wife come to plead for her husband to come whoam; watch her lay' her hands gently on his shoulder, an' notice th' love an' pathos in her voice, as hoo says:—

"I've broot thy top-coat, does ta' know,
For th' rain's comin' deawn very droo,
An' th' harston's us while us now snow,
Come whoam to thy chiller an' mu."

Talk' another pictur' by Sam Laycock. In his "Ode to th' Sun," hoo says—an' yo' con note here th' capabilities o' th' dialect:—

"Mony a time I've soon thee blashin',
When thouwrt lawvin' us at th' mout;
An' no wonder, for th'ew's noised,
Things w'en done 'at's noun bin root.
After aw, theaw comes to own us,
Though we do so mich 'at's wrong;
Even now thouwrt shinin' broely,
Helpin' me to write this song."

["Billy Button"

was the pen-name of R. Henry Brodie, who was born at Eagley in April, 1876. He wrote Lancashire sketches for the *Bolton Journal*, *Liverpool Weekly Post*, and other papers. He also published a book of recitations. He was one of the founders, and first honorary secretary, of the Lancashire Authors' Association, originated at Rochdale in 1909. In 1912 he went to live at Blackpool, but in two or three years returned to Eagley, where he died, and is interred, in June, 1916.

I need only say that Marshall Mather an' John Ackworth could find no better vehicle for their humour an' pathos than the homely dharic which once were th' babies o' our new cosmopolitan language.

J. T. STATION.

However, my object i' writin' is to draw attention to th' fact that there's nowt to remind folk that there were once a champion dialect writer cawd Jim Station, an' that fro' his printin' place i' Exchange Street, issued "Th' Bowton Loominary."

There were some droll stuff even cant' i' that publication, notably "Owd Shunt," a clever an' comic tale; "Do as My Mann Does," "Soup for a Sick Man," an' "Number Three," a tale o' Bowton Pair.

J. T. Station were left an orphan, an' he were broot up i' Methuen's College. He were th' first editor o' th' "Bowton Evening News," which were one o' th' pioneers o' th' cheap press, followin' Billy Blackstone's Reprint o' th' Paper Duty an' th' abolition o' Stamp Duties.

Oh, what a freight that were, an' heave Holywank, Hetherington, James Montgomery, an' others gladly went to prison for their freedom o' speech an' thought.

Station rendered greit service to Bowton, for th' Associated Burial Societies o' Bowton made him a present of a handsome writin' desk; an' he also translated for Prince Lucia Bonaparte "Th' Song o' Solomon" into th' Bowton twang.

The Lancashire Authors' Association has helped to create an stimulate interest i' Lancashire literature, an' when we have a meetin' i' Bowton the teawn met tak' th' opportunity o' presentin' me an' "Paddy Ashton" wi' a whal purse o' gowd apiece, th' freedom o' th' Borough, th' Teawn Ha' debt, or some property, if only a brick at a time.

A BOOK OF DELIGHT.

Press and readers say:—"A fascinating and delightful book."
"MORE WINDMILL LAND." By Allen Clarke ("Ben Ashton") and "Speedwell".
300 pages, 50 illustrations.

"Windmill Farm," the first of the series, is out of print, and there are only a few left of the second volume, "More Windmill Farm," which is just as good as the first, some say better. The book is complete in itself, but it is well worth buying to read the other four, for they read like the best of our poetry, and it describes Landis and his adventures, the farms and old hells and on the banks of the River Wyre, from the mouth of Fleetwood to its source beyond Carleton. There are also stories and legends in the book, and poems, including "Boss Noah," "Lawyer's Hall," "A Tale in Arady," "Pleasant Field Paths," "A Valued Harvest," "A Strange Visit," "The Old Ferry," "Old Tins and Old Toys," "The Royal Hebron sound the Water-bell," "The Ship Who Shook a League of a Windmill," "The Wind Farm," "Lozgers and Ghosts," "Little Forester Path," "A special Soap for every heart," "The Masherum Man," "Blackberry Mazie," "Stars and Soots," "The Tough of Bowland," "Purple Hills and Silver Waters," "Moorlands and Water Mills," "An Easter Feast," etc., etc., etc.

The price of the book is 7s. 6d., but readers of this Annual will have it by sending 6s. 9d. direct to Tendry Ashton, Faldern Books Company, Blackpool.

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COME WHOAM TO THI CHILDER AN' ME.

W'VE just mended th' fire wi' a cob ;
 Owd Swaddle has brought thi new shoon ;
 There's some nice bacon collops o' th hob,
 An' a quart o' ale-posset ith oon ;
 Aw've brought thi top cwof, doesto know,
 For th' rain's comin' deawn very dree ;
 An' th' harstone's as white as new snow ;
 Come whoam to thi childer an' me.

Lancashire Songs.

When aw put little Sally to bed,
 Hoo cried 'ose her feyther weren't theer ;
 So aw kiss'd th' little thing, an' aw said
 Thae'd bring her a ribbin fro' th' fair ;
 An' aw gav her her doll, an' some rags,
 An' a nice little white cotton bo' ;
 An' aw kiss'd her again ; but hoo said
 At hoo wanted to kiss *thee* an' o'.

An' Dick, too, aw'd sich wark wi' him,
 Afore aw could get him up stairs ;
 Thae'towd him thae'd bring him a drum,
 He said, when he're sayin' his prayers ;
 Then he look'd i' my face, an' he said,
 " Has th' boggarts taen hound o' my dad ?"
 An' he cried whol his e'en were quite red ;—
 He likes thee some weel, does yon lad !

At th' lung-length aw geet 'em laid still ;
 An' aw hearke't folks' feet at went by ;
 So aw iron't o' my clooas reet weel,
 An' aw hang'd 'em o' th maiden to dry ;
 When aw'd mended thi stockin's an' shirts,
 Aw sit deawn to knit i' my cheer,
 An' aw rzy'ley did feel rather hurt—
 Mon, aw'm *one-ly* when theaw art'nt theer.

Lancashire Songs.

" Aw've a drum and a trumpet for Dick ;
 Aw've a yard o' blue ribbin for Sal ;
 Aw've a book full o' babs ; an' a stick,
 An' some bacco an' pipes for mysel ;
 Aw've brought thee some coffee an' tay—
 Iv thae'll *fell* i' my pocket, thae'll *see* ;
 An' aw've bought tho a new cap to-day,—
 But aw olez bring summat for *thee* !

" God bless tho, my lass ; aw'll go whoam,
 An' aw'll kiss thee an' th' childer o' reawnd ;
 Thae knows, at wherever aw roam,
 Aw'm fain to get back to th' owd greawnd ;
 Aw can do wi' a crack o'er a glass ;
 Aw can do wi' a bit ov a spree ;
 But aw've no gradely comfort, my lass,
 Except wi' yon childer and thee."





EAWR FOLK.

EAWR Johnny gi's his mind to books;
 Eawr Abram studies plants,—
 He caps the dule for moss an' ferns,
 An' grooin' polyants;
 For aught abeawt mechanickin',
 Eawr Ned's the very lad;
 My uncle Jamie roots i'th stars,
 Enough to drive him mad.

Eawr Alick keeps a badger's shop,
 An' teyrches Sunday schoo';
 Eawr Joseph's welly bynt, poor lad;
 Eawr Timothy's—a foo';—
 He's tried three different maks o' trades,
 An' olez missed his tip;
 But, then, he's th' nicest whistler
 That ever cocked a lip!

Eawr Matty helps my mother, an'
 Hoo sews, an' tents eawr Joe;
 At doin' suns, an' sich as that,
 My feyther licks 'em o'!
 Eawr Charley,—eh, there cannot be
 Another pate like his;
 It's o' cron-full o' ancientry,
 An' Roman haw-pennies!

Eawr Tummy's taen to preitchin',—
 He's a topper at it, too!
 But then,—what's th' use,—eawr Bill comes in
 An' swears it winnut do:
 When t'one's bin strivin' o' he con
 To awter wicked men,
 Then t'other mays some marlocks, an'
 Convarts 'em o'er again.

Eawr Abel's th' yungst; an' next to Joe,
 My mother likes him t' best;
 Hoo gi's him brass, aboon his share,
 To keep him nicely drest;—
 He's gettin in wi' th' quality;
 An' when his clarkin's done,
 He's olez oather crickein',
 Or shooin' wi' a gun.

My uncle Sam's a fiddler; an'
 Aw fain could yer him play
 Fro' set o' sun till winter neet
 'Had melted into day;
 For eh,—sich glee!—sich tenderness!
 Through every changin' part,
 It's th' heart 'at stirs his fiddle,—
 An' his fiddle stirs his heart.

When th' owd brid touches th' tremblin' streng,
 It knows his thovt so weel,
 It seawnds as iv an angel tried
 To tell what angels feel;
 An', sometimes, th' water in his e'en,
 'At fun has made to flow,
 Can hardly roll away, afore
 It's weel wi' drops o' woe.

Then, here's to Jone, an' Ab, an' Ned,
 An' Matty,—an' eawr Joe,—
 My feyther, an' my mother; an'
 Eawr t'other lads an' o';
 An' thee, too, owd musician,—
 Aw wish lung life to thee,—
 A mon 'at plays a fiddle weel
 Should never awse to dee!

POEMS AND SONGS

IN THE LANCASHIRE DIALECT.

LANCASHIRE LYRICS WRITTEN DURING THE
COTTON FAMINE, 1861-5.

1.

WELCOME, BONNY BRID

THART welcome, little bonny brid,
But shouldn't ha' come just when tha did;

Toimes are bad.

We're short o' pobbies for eavr Joe,

But that, of course, tha didn't know,

Did ta, lad?

Aw've often year'd mi feyther tell,

'At when aw coom 'ith' world misel'

Trade wur slack;

And neaw its hard wark pooin' throo—

But aw munno fear thee,—iv aw do

Tha'll go back.

Cheer up! these toimes 'll awter soon;

Aw'm beawn to beigh another spoon—

One for thee;—

An', as that's sich a pratty face

Aw'll let thi have eavr Charley's place

On mi knee.

God bless thi, love! aw'm fain tha't come,
Just try and mak' thisel awhoam:

Here's thi nest;

Tha't loike thi mother to a tee,

But that's thi feyther's nose, aw see,

Well, aw'm blest!

Come, come, tha needn't look so shy,

Aw am no' blamin' thee, not I;

Settle deawn,

An' tak' this haupney for thisel',

Ther's lots of sugar-sticks to sell

Deawn 'ith' teawn.

Aw know when first aw coom to thi leet,

Aw're fond o' owt 'at tasted sweet;

Tha'll be th' same.

But come, that's never tow'd thi dad

What he's to co thi yet, mi lad,

What's thi name?

Hush! hush! tha mustn't cry this way,

But get this sople o' cinder tay

While it's warm;

Mi mother used to give it me,

When aw wur sich a lad as thee,

In her arm.

Hush-a-babby, hush-a-bee,—

Oh, what a temper!—dear-a-me

Hearw tha strikes!

Here's a bit o' sugar, sithie;

How'd thi noise, an' then aw'll gie thee

Owt tha likes.

We've nobbut gotten coarish fare,

But, eavr o' this tha'll get thi share,

Never fear.

Aw hope tha'll never want a meal,

But allus fill thi bally weel

While tha't here.

This feyther's noan been wed so lung,

An' yet tha sees he's middlin' thrung

Wif yo' o.

Besides thi little brother Ted,

We've one upsteers, asleep i' bed,

Wif eavr Joe.

But tho' we've childer two or three,

We'll mak' a bit o' reawn for thee,

Bless thee, lad!

Tha't'r th' prattiest brid we have 'ith' nest,

So hutch up closer to mi breast;

Aw'm thi dad.

LAYCOCK'S LANCASHIRE SONGS.—No. 75.

[COPYRIGHT.]

TH' PEERS AN' TH' PEOPLE.

BY SAMUEL LAYCOCK.

Clear us a ring, lads, an' let's have a feight,
 An' we'll soon have it sattled whou's wrong an' whou's reight;
 Th' People or th' Peers—which is it to be?
 Let's have a reound or two, then wo shall see.

Must these prouad Peers tak' possession o' th' helm,
 An' quietly say whou's to govern this realm?
 Are th' Bees to eat th' lean, an' th' Drones to eat th' fat
 To pleas a Lord Salisbury?—we'll see about that.

Widen that ring, lads; neww up wi' your sleeves
 An' we'll soon mak' short wark o' these lordlins' an' thieves;
 Lancashire lads can march up to their graves,
 But can never be ceawards, or traitors, or slaves!

Comrades' an' friends, shall we give up for nowt
 That freedom for which eawer brave forofathers fowt?
 Nay, never, so long as these feet are well shod,
 We'll outhor win th' battle or dee upo' th' clod!

But why talk o' desin', or have any fears
 While there's nowt i' eawer way but a hon'ful a' Peers?
 Let 'em only feel th' tips o' eawer famed wooden shoon,
 An' they'll look for a road eawt o' th' field, lads, an' soon.

Clear us a ring, then an' let's have a feight,
 An' we'll jolly soon sattle it whou' wrong an' who's reight.
 Th' People or th' Peers—which is it to be?
 Let's have a tussle, an' th' world shall soon see!

PRICE ONE PENNY.

Th' Vicar's Son an' th' Grand Owd Mon.

The following lines are written in reply to a speech delivered by Mr. H. H. Wainwright, of Blackpool (son of the Vicar of Christ Church, in that town), at the Christ Church Schoolroom on December 15, 1890. His audience was composed of members of the "Stanley" Habitation of the Primrose League, who were edified by an address literally bristling with scandalous personalities and foul epithets. After expressing a hope for the continuance of the "split" over the Parnell Crisis, and some extraordinary championing of the cause of Mrs. O'Shea, he proceeded to some vile and vulgar abuse of Mr. Gladstone, whom he pleased (among other names) to designate "a slippery old devil," afterwards speaking of the "cant and hypocrisy of that righteous old Pharisee, Mr. Gladstone."

WHAT! at it agen wi' thi damnable squirt?
 Con ta find nob'dy else to bespatter wi' dirt
 But England's great statesman an' worthiest son—
 A grey-yeaded vet'ran o' eighty-one?
 Is there nobody younger? Aw fancy there's some
 That would gladly oblige thee, a bit nearer whoam.
 At onyrate, Henry, let Gladstone a-be,
 For tha connot expect him to bother wi' thee.

Iv tha feels i' nice trim for a good set-to,
 Aw've noan mitch objection to ha' thee a "do,"
 An' tho' tha may think thisel' moderate smart,
 Aw think aw con gie thee a few yards start.
 It would do me noa credit to lick thee, aw know,
 For a child wi' a giant would mak' a poor show;
 Still, iv tha feels anxious to meet me, it's reight,
 Soa rub up thi wits an' we'll have a good feight.

Aw know this is brag, but its my blunt way
 O' sayin' streight eawt what aw have to say.
 Had aw felt a desire to betray wi' a kiss,
 Aw met ha sent th' challenge on summat like this:
 "Iv yo' pleos, Mr. H., will yo pleos condescend
 To discuss a few points wi' a naybur an' friend?"
 But one isn't accustomed to talkin' so fine,
 An' goin' reawnd th' corners isn't mitch i' my line.

Neaw aw'll gie thee fair play; tha'll i' noa ways be beawnd;
 Tha con choose thi own backers, an' pick thi' own greawnd;
 Tha may try ony "dodges" or "fakes" tha sees fit;
 Slang, personal insult, bad logic, or wit.
 Aw claim noa great larnin' nor owt o' that mak'—
 Nor aw haven't a parson to stond at mi back;
 There's no sect nor party aw'm beawnd to obey,
 Lest they threaten to knock off mi sugar an' tay.

'Aw'm as free as th' west wind 'at comes sweepin' along,
 Aw think mi own thowts eawt, an' pen mi own song;
 Neaw aw just mention this to thee soa as tha'll see
 'At tha needn't be freeten'd o' tacklin' me.
 Tha con ha' thi own way as to whoa tha strikes—
 Pity Mrs. O'Shea just as mitch as tha likes,
 Get th' ill-used woman a new pair o' wings,
 An let her go live among angels an' things:

For—judged bi thy standard—there's one thing sure,
 That—like Potipher's wife—hoo's far too pure
 To live in a world wheer tricks are done
 'At need whiteweshin' o'er wi' a parson's son!
 Soa tha pities a brid that can "foul" her own nest,
 An' tha fancies tha's met wi' a theme for a jest;
 Tha'rt "delighted" wi' th' business, an' hopes they'll go on
 Till that "slippery old devil," Will Gladstone's gone!

Neaw it strikes me tha'd ha' to search th' plains o' hell
 For another like thee—'at could chuckle and yell
 O'er th' downfall o' woman! Sich jackasses' brays
 Must bring up a smile on the devil's face.
 An' a parson's son too! Come get thisel' stripp'd,
 An' aw'll tak' good care 'at tha'rt jolly well whipp'd;
 Aw'm nobbut a plain-spokken chap, as tha'll see,
 But aw fancy aw'm just abeawt weight for thee.

Aw'd a licked thee long sin' if tha'd come up to th' scratch,
 But tha'd just sense to see at tha'd met wi' thi match.
 Let's ha' noa back-dur work; come eawt into th' leet!
 What a ceawrdly action tha did th' other neet,

When—surreawnded with th' parin's o'th' primrose crew—
 Tha flung eawt thi filth i' thi feyther's skoo!
 Strong language? Of course, mon, it's meant for that;
 Tha started this game, soa it's "tit for tat."

But tha's feawnd a new word; well, aw am soa glad!
 It's "Nemesis,"—wheer did ta find it, lad?
 Why, bless thi life, it's a godsend, mon!
 Soa use it when speawtin' as mitch as tha con.
 Aw shall tak' it on th' stage when aw'm actin' as "sham,"
 An' want to convince folk heaw clever aw am!
 It strikes me tha's dropp'd on a capital thing,
 After scrapin' soa long on one lone string.

Then "Nemesis" seawnds quite pleasant to th' ear;
 Did ta find it i' Lunnon, or Ireland, or wheer?
 Neaw, iv ever tha gets on to ards Hambleton way,
 An' happens to meet wi' thi friend Dark Day,
 Just mention that word as a word 'at "takes,"
 An' owt to be put 'i ole th' speeches he makes.
 My word!—wouldn't clodhoppers gaup an' stare,
 As that grand word "Nemesis" rang throo th' air!

While th' "mashers," 'at reckon to "boss" o'er th' land,
 Would sheawt "He-aw! he-aw!! Magnifiswent! Gwand!!"
 Tha's money a time scared us wi' th' way 'at tha hits;
 But "Nemesis" freetens us o' into fits!
 What a pity tha hadn't that "sop" i' thi spoon
 When at Burnley i' Eighty, an' Barrow i' June:
 For even a Primrose League dame con see
 'At that word i' thi speech would ha' made thee M.P.!

But tha'rt eawt o' thi sphere, mon—tha's gotten th' wrong trade:
 What a parson a fellow like thee would ha' made!
 Iv th' "brimstone" run short, tha could get eawt thi squirt,
 An' blind thi "dear bretheren an' sisters" wi' dirt;
 An' some "hypocrite" theer would go deawn on his knee,
 An' thank God for a "lime bag," iv flung theer by thee.
 Well, when Gladstone shuts up, tha'll have had thi day—
 There'll be nob'dy to clod—tha'll ha' nowt to say.

Theaw insulted Charles Bradlaugh a year or two sin'
 But tha geet smartly wholopp'd an' had to "cave in;"
 Iv tha'd had ony pluck tha'd ha' come eawt then;
 But tha said nowt wi' noather thi meawth nor thi pen.
 An' why? 'Cause tha feawnd tha'd committed a wrong,
 An' th' feelin' against thee i' th' tawn wur strong.
 Dost' think 'at this latest mean trick 'at tha's done—
 Insultin' a statesman, neaw turned eighty-one—

Dost' think this attempt to soil Gladstone's good name
 Con either hurt him mitch, or add to thy fame?
 Well, aw think 'at tha'll just abeawt do for this time:
 Iv tha feels 'at tha'd like a bit moor o' my rhyme,
 Keep on flingin' dirt;—never mind whoa tha strikes,
 Mr. Gladstone, or Parnell, or me iv tha likes;
 An' o' one thing, at least, tha may feel pretty sure,
 An' that is—o' havin' a shot or two moor.

Sit thee deawn till thi "wisdom teeth" gets throo thi gums;
 Spend a year eatin' toffy, an' suckin' thi thumbs;
 An' at th' end o' that time,—if tha hasn't moor wit,
 Ax thi mother to gie thee a sope moor "tit."

SAMUEL LAYCOCK.

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A STRANGE DREAM

BY AN OWD PEAWER-LOOM WEYVER.

En aw had a strange dream th' other neet !
 Soa strange 'at aw hardly dar' tell ;
 An' aw saw sich a terrible seet,
 For aw dream'd aw'd a peep into hell.
 An' that chap they call Dizzy wur theer,
 Offrin' Turkey an' Cyprus for sale ;
 He wur coawered on a red-whot cheer,
 An' appeared to be dreadfully pale.

He'd a book aw could see, an' a slate ;
 An' seemed to be up to some trick.
 An' if yo' don't moind, aw'll relate
 What took place between him an' Owd Nick.
 "Neaw awwe warned thee," said Nick in a rage,—
 "Keep thyself a fair distance fro' me !
 Doesta think aw shall sully my cage,
 Wi' a meawntibank trickster lolke thee ?

Nay, aw'll have no Imperialists here ;
 Keep thy bluster an' brag to thyself ;
 An' away wi' thee cawt o' that cheer,
 For aw'll ha' noan o' thy lot i' hell."
 "Well," says Dizzy, "what am aw to do ?
 Awwe tried to get in up aboon ;
 But aw soon feawned 'at that wouldn't do ;—
 Aw wur ordered fro' theer very soon.

Aw went up as far as th' front dur,
 But a chap wi' a bundle o' keys—
 As soon as he saw whoa aw wur,
 Slamm'd th' dur to, reet slap i' mi face.
 Then mi feyther coom makin' his din—
 'O Benny, dear Benny, my son !
 Awm afraid lad tha'll never get in,
 For they'n yeard o' thoose tricks 'at tha's done.

Awve been pleadin', but ole seems i' vain,
 For Peter won't oppen this door ;
 He says tha's thi countrymen slain,
 An' been laughin' at th' sufferin's o' th' poor.
 An' besides, father Abraham says
 'At thaw hasn't th' leost bit o' a chance ;
 For th' moment they looked on thy face,
 Ole th' angels would turn eawt at once.'

"Soa," says Dizzy, "What am aw to do ?
 For wheer awm to go aw can't tell."
 "Weel," says Nick, "theaw's made followers enoo,
 Get some brimstone an' start for thyself ;
 For sin thee an' thy lot coome i' peawer,
 Wi' yore war-songs, an' jingoes an' beor,
 There's hardly bin one single heawer,
 But what somb'dy's bin bundled deawn here.

Tha may do a fair business aw think,
 For there's lots o' foalk hastenin' to ruin !
 An' while doctors an' parsons praise drink,
 There'll be fuel to keep us boath goin'.
 When that Radical, Gladstone, wur in,
 Eawer trade deawn i' hell here wur slack ;
 But we've started ole th' spindles long sin',
 An' shall run 'em till th' Liberals come back.

Heawever thee go to thi wark,
 An' tha'll soon get thi hond in, tha'll see ;
 Moind an' keep ole thi followers i' th' dark,
 An' tha'll soon be as clever as me."
 Then the devil set up a leawd yell,
 An' aw wackened misel' wi' a scream ;
 But wur mad when aw coom to misel'
 An' feawnd it wur nobbot a dream !

PRICE ONE PENNY.

OWD DAVID-AT-MAJOR'S.

BY R. R. BEALEY.

Th' yung spring sun's fun its way to th' fowt,
 An' kisses th' window cheek,
 An' seuds across my sauded floor
 A thin, breet gowden streak.
 My fire is burnin' low i'th' grate,
 An' wears a thowtful look ;
 An' aw'm just thinkin' to mysel,
 Keawer't deawn i'th' chimbley nook.

Aw'm thinkin' its lung, lung ago
 Sin aw wur i' my teens,
 An' backward i' my life aw goo
 To owden days an' scenes.
 Aw'm seven-an'-eighty yer of age,
 An' every yure's gone gray ;
 They once wur dark—God help my heart—
 Aw've awther'd i' my day.

But though aw'm owd, my yunger daya
 Come to me neaw an' then ;
 An' here, on th' hearthstone, oft aw play
 Yung marlocks o'er again.
 Aw'm robbin' brid neests up i'th' trees
 (Aw'm sorry that wur done) ;
 Aw'm spinnin' toys an' flyin' kites,
 An' up to th' ceu i' fun.

Aw'm off "pace-eggin'," donned so fine,
 An' in my crown aw play
 King George, an' wi' a wooden sword
 Aw th' famous dragon slay !
 An' neaw my mother (bless her heart),
 Hoo sends me off to schoo',
 An', jumpin' up to kiss my hond,
 Eawr dog it will go too.

An' lots of other daya i' life
 Aw'm livin' o'er again,
 To cheer my latter eend a bit,
 Afore Deewth says "Amen ;"
 But moor ner onythin' beside,
 Aye, ten times moor ner o',
 Aw court my sweetheart o'er again
 Till tears ull oftentimes flow.

Aw feel her soft, young hond i' mine,
 As walkin' side by side ;
 We goo through mony a shady nook,
 Eawr love fro' th' world to lude.
 We tak' along fro' "Hugh's i'th' Wood,"
 An' through "Holebottom" stray—
 A quiet walk, "noan wur so nice"
 Upon a summer day.

Noan ever tried to stop us then,
 That path wur aulus free,
 An' every single inch of it
 Is sacred greaund to me.
 Hoo's trodden on it day by day,
 An' while aw've power to goo,
 Aw'll walk along that quiet path
 To mak' owd times look new.

There may be mony a nicer place,
 Ut other folk can see ;
 But noan can ever be so nice
 As yon owd path to me.

Aw've walk'd it i' my childish days,
 Aw've walk'd it as a mon.
 Aw've walk'd it wi' my darliu' wife,
 An' now to heaven hoo's gone.

Aye, theer hoo is i' heaven al-soon
 An' angel bruet an' fair ;
 A place beside her made for me,
 Of that hoo'd tak' good care.
 But if they tow'd her th' owd footpath
 Wur stopp'd a single day,
 Hoo'd ler her place, an' come to th' yearth,
 To clack clack "right o' wey."

An', Derby, let me tell yo' this,
 That path aw co my own ;
 Aw've made it mine, so stond aside,
 An' let my path alone ;
 Aw've gotten th' "writins" i' my heart,
 Love's finger wrote 'em there ;
 Yo've got o'th' fields, so be content,
 An' dunnot touch my share.

Yo've got yer mansions, three or four,
 Aw've but one little cot ;
 Yo've got yer parks to ramble o'er,
 Aw've noan a garden plot.
 What ma'es yo be so peewish then,
 Wi' weyver-chaps like me ?
 Aw'd be ashamed if aw wur yo,
 An' let poor folks a-be.

Yo shouldn't do such shabby things,
 Lord Derby, lemme say,
 As fill a public well wi' dirt,
 Or tak' a path away.
 Yo'll say it's Statter, an' not yo :
 Well, mak' him do what's reet,
 Or yo'll be like to bear o'th' blame,
 An' that ull be no treat.

We're hardish warkin' sort o' folk,
 An' honest fellys too ;
 An' if yo'r mon, 'ud treat us weel,
 He'd find us strung an' true ;
 But if he keeps on plaguin' us,
 As up to neaw he's done,
 He'll find eawr patience all wear eawt,
 An' then it waint be fun.

Just treat a gradely Lanky lad
 Wi' what aw co fair play,
 He'll ax no favours, but be kind
 An' civil o' th' lung day ;
 But try to cheat him, an' yo'll find
 He's noan a bit a foo,
 He'll square an' feight to keep his reet,
 An' win his battle too.

Aw'm just a Lanky lad mysel,
 An' what aw say, aw know ;
 An' if yo' do me wrung aw'll feight,
 An' gradely gam aw'll show.
 Aw'd rayther not—aw've gotten' owd—
 It's time for me to rest ;
 But if there's feightin' mun be done,
 To th' eend aw'll do my best.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

TO WILLIAM BARON.

(The following poem, from the pen of the late Samuel Laycock, was originally published in the *Blackburn Standard* of January 4th, 1890. An abridged reproduction of it is also included in the Collected Writings of the poet, under the title of "Extracts from Poem to a Brother Bard.")

DEAR Baron, aw've long been delighted
Wi' th' "Bill o' Jack's" rhymes 'at aw see ;
An' for these an' for th' paper 'at's sent me
Aw think aw'm indebted to thee.
Soa, not havin' seen thee here lately,
An' probably may not do yet,
Aw thowt aw'd send one or two lines on,
An' try to get cawt o' thi debt.

Neaw, th' "Standard's" an excellent weekly,—
Not only good paper an' print,
But aw find some well-chosen selections,
An' reet deawn good articles in't.
Of course, it's a Tory production,
An' doesn't chime in wi' my views ;
But it seems to be ably-conducted,
An' contains a great lot o' good news.

Well, food 'at goes deawn an' digests weel,
To me never comes much amiss ;
It matters nowt wheer it may come from,
It's valued for just what it is.
There's to' mitch party-feelin' amongst us,—
To' mitch o' that pig-yeaded pride,
'At thinks 'at ole th' wit i' creation
Can only be feawnd o' one side.

But this isn't th' subject, friend Baron,—
It isn't what aw'm wantin' to say ;
Still, it favvers my blunderin' wark, mon,
Aw'm noted for ramblin' astray.
Mi object is simply to thank thee,
An' this aw most heartily do,
For th' paper 'at's sent to me weekly,—
Sent on withewt charge to me to'.

Well, iv tha'll excuse an opinion
Sent on bi a grey-yeaded friend,
It's here,—'at th' last poem tha sent me
Is th' best 'at tha's ever yet penn'd.
When aw read it to th' wife an' mi childer,
Aw wish tha could only have seen
Thi' effect 'at it had on ther feelin's,
An' th' tear-drops 'at fell fro' their ecn.

Get on, mi dear lad, wi' thi rhymin',
Keep on i' thi own simple way ;
For tha's theawsands o' readers already
'At know heaw to value thi lay,
But, Baron, just one word o' caution,—
Don't look for a *livin'* i' song ;
If tha's gotten a job 'at brings brass in,
Stick to it, or else tha'll be wrong.

BLACKPOOL,
December, 1889.

Mon, it's ole very weel to get honour,
For it certainly cheers an' elates,
But money's a lot moor convenient
When one's payin' his rent an' his rates.
Neaw aw'm noan windin' yarns off at random,
Aw'm writin' abeawt what aw know ;
One may labour for fame, an' may get it,
But it keeps him as "poor as a crow."

Keep on wi' thi rhymin' bi ole-means,
An' tha'rt certain o' mackin' thi mark ;
But tak' an owd scribbler's advice, lad,
An' see tha gets *paid* for thi wark.
We've theawsands o' drones drawin' pensions,
But what a commotion one sees,
If some Socialist ventures th' opinion
'At none should eat th' honey but *bees* !

Well, these are th' conditions at present :
A lot o' things seem eawt o' tune ;
But we 'at are known as reformers,
Would alter these matters, an' soon.
We want to see labour rewarded,
Be it done wi' a hammer or pen,—
In a schoo', or a shop, or a factory,
In th' earth, oi on th' top on't,—what then ?

Why, th' paupers 'at draw these big pensions
Are sendin' their tools up an' deawn,
To tell us 'at th' country's i' danger,—
'At we're aimin' at th' Bible an' th' Creawn !
But we meon to go on as we have done,
Keep workin' an' peggin' away,
Till th' toiler gets th' fruits ov his labour,
An' th' poet gets paid for his lay.

But aw'm ramblin' ogen tha sees, Baron,
As aw towd thee, aw do soa at times,
When aw'm ridin' mi favourite hobby,
An' spinnin' mi Lancashire rhymes.
Well, aw hope thi fine feelin's aren't hurt mitch
Wi' th' few simple thowts 'at aw've penn'd ;
It would pain me to find aw'd been guilty
O' weawndin' the heart ov a friend.

We can each go wi' th' party 'at suits us,—
Each have his political fad ;
Theaw may pose as a cool-yeaded Tory,
An' me as a hot-yeaded Rad.
Well, here's to thi health, mi friend Baron,
May theaw have one o' th' happiest o' whoms ;
A reet merry sort ov a Kesmas,
An' a Happy New Year when it comes !

SAMUEL LAYCOCK.

LANCASHIRE AUTHORS ASSOC.

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BEN BRIERLEY

INTERVIEWED BY
TEDDY ASHTON.

I'd lung wanted for t' see Ben Brierley for one or two reasons, happen three. He were at top o' t' tree as a Lancashire writer; I were just beginnin' to sprawl about t' roots, thinkin as I could climb up if I tried; an I daresay Ben buckled when he seed me begin to make t' attempt, an maybe he thout to hissel that I should find mysel "up a tree" even before I get my feet off t' ground.

Ben Brierley's name had been familiar to me ever sin I were a lad. I'm not much moor yet, out that's my parents' fault for poan latin me long sooner: an when I read his dialect sketches, an seed his name on 'em in t' shop window, I thout to mysel what a greight man he must be, an uaw very, very far he were away fro' me an my hiddish world. That I should one day he reckoned a successor of his, an spoik to him face to face, never entered my wildest dream; an I should ha' thout that person cracked as had suggested such a thing. Yet, in t' course o' ten year there's a deal take place, beside what loss t', an it didn't seem have at aw miraculous when th' orbits o' my life an Ben Brierley's intersected t' other day, an he gripp'd my hand in a friendly clasp.

Me an a mutual friend o' boath on us, a genial chap caw'd Shackleton, an artist, what's done some drawings for t' present paper, rode up to Harpurhey on t' top of a Manchester tram, through a wilderness o' shops, an streets, an folk. It were a Tuesday afternoon. Th' moorin had been due, but that's nowt to go by, for th' afternoons in this climate are generally nowt akin to t' mornings, an noan related to any weather at aw. Th' wind blowed bleak as me an th' artist seed smookin cigar pipes on t' top o' t' tram, an t' clouds o'eryed were given us their blackest looks, an threatenin for t' throw coud wayer on us any minute; for th' atmosphere in this part o' t' world has no manners at aw, an doesn't care who it degs nor how many fine days it spoils.

We get off t' tram at t' side of a new stone church, walked down a street, an then past a wide, desolate common, uglier till t' "blasted heath" o' Macbeth; but in a bit we reiked a country lone, an my een breutened up at t' seed o' fadin green leavos an home-cured (I mean smooked) trees. Th' lone were uncrossable for sluch; I never seed so mich loud an I were at a political meeting.

We turned round a corner, an coom to some neat benches wi' little baby gardens t' front on 'em; an at one o' t' wicket gates th' artist stopped, an said "This is it."

I weren't tell yo a lie an say my heart but-tered, for it didn't. It would ha' done some yer em under similar circumstances, but it didn't on this occasion.

Ben Brierley hissel coom to t' dur. I recognised him as soon as I clapped my een on him. A figure o' middie height, stoopin just a wee bit, a reddish face an grey whiskers, an a touch o' totterin in his limbs that betrayed owd age, which were contradicted to some extent by t' youthful brightness an sparkle of his humorous blue een; body an limbs in a trim suit o' black, wi' grey stockings peepin o'er his slipper tops, an

a gold chain runnin across his waist like an equator—but above aw, t' rosy face an merry blue een—that's t' picturo o' Ben Brierley as I just seed him.

We went into t' kitchen an seat down. Fro' t' sheets o' papper strowed o' t' table, I inferred as Ben were writin' when we knocked at t' door; but he wouldn't admit that we'd interrupted him, so we aw begun chatlin'. Mrs. Brierley were cut, an we'd th' heause to earsels.

An indubitably dry, droll way o' talkin' Ben has; though I couldn't catch everythin' he said, for he had a stroke two yer sin', an' that's afflicted his speech, an' he's noan as many teeth as he had when he were younger, which is some time sin'. But we managed very weel for aw that, an' I get t' followin' facts out on him:—

Ben Brierley were born in Failsworth, on June 26th, 1825, but he couldn't help it, not him' responsible for his actions at that time. His parents were in humble condition, an Ben begun to work early, whether he liked it or not. At th' age o' seven, however, he'd read his Bible through seven times, cut his teeth, had t' mayels, an otherwise enjighed hissel. At th' age o' fifteen he went back to Failsworth Owd Skoo—which he'd attended when he were a youngster—an formed a Mutual Improvement Society there; which shows as things were improvin' just then. His first sketch were written at th' age o' 24, an were caw'd "My Uncle's Garden," but no reference to t' pop-shop. Ben worked as a hoodlum weigher, a piecer, an' a warper; an get wed in 1855, an a ne'er regretted it.

After this he worked for th' Manchester Spectator an Manchester Weekly Times—a good deal for t' latter publication. In 1869 at th' age o' 44 he started Ben Brierley's Journal which continued till 1891, an in which we his famous sketches has appeared. It may be mentioned here, as a coincidence, which means nowt, that t' Trotter were born in th' very same year as Ben Brierley's Journal ceased breathin'; one coom in as t' other went out.

Ben Brierley's been a Teaw'n Ceauuncillor too, but we mustn't let this prejudice us again him; for he only did it once, an were nobbut in t' ceauuncil six yer, been elected in 1875, an retired back to respectability in 1881.

He's been an actor in his time, an those that's yer'd him read his own sketches will know at once that he'd make a good 'un; for he's a capital elocutionist an a rattlin mimic, an could make an audience lowf an cry at will.

Ben's noan does much writin' lately, but he's re-publishin a selection of his tales an sketches in t' Cotton Factory Times at t' present time. He's been to America; but he's never been to 'um Fowt. He's missed a trate. He knows Bill an Bat Sprigg, though; for he's read about 'em in t' Trotter.

As we set chatlin' I jokily remarked, "I've coom for yer mantle, Ben, though I deaut it will be a lump too big for me."

"Thouart welcome to it lad," returned Ben wi' a snail, "but I duran't think there's much on it left."

I corn't tell yo gradely what I thout as I seed thee talkin' wi' Ben that autumn afternoon. Visions o' "Daisy Nook," an t' "Doggart on t' Stump," an "Al o' th' Yate in London," which Ben thinks his best work, aw rushed through my yed like a swift panorama; an then I thout o' my own weak sketches an felt like a chilt in t' presence o' t' daddy of aw us dialect scribblers.

Then Ben took me into t' parlour an showed me some testimonials an a poem of his finely written on vellum, wi' charmin dainty watter-colour illustrated borders by Shackleton; an next my glance looted on t' piano.

"Who plays t' piano?" I axed, thowtlessly.

"What Ben played I didn't yer, but I could see th' emotion in his face; an' then he tow'd me as th' piano had never been touch'd sin' his only child, a dowter, deed when hoo were but eighteen yer owd; for hoo used to play on it, but it had been locked up ever sin' hoo were buried, an' would never be played on any moar. I felt tears in my een, an' sympathy in my heart as I realised t' greight an' lastin' sorrow o' Ben's heart; an' I referred to t' piano no moar.

After this we had a drink somewhere, an Ben tow'd one or two brides in his own inimitable style. Here's one, said Ben! "At t' time when hoo-beach were bein' sowed pretty extensively, owd Grime th' butcher, met a brother butcher caw'd Ribbs, an says to him, 'heav' hoo-beef sellin' to-day?' Parso. 'Thean out for t' know that,' says Ribbs, an then there were lootin'."

It were gooin' dark when I coom away, an' there were a rain-storm ridlin' t' skies, an' just were gatherin' fast; but warn' an' hret in my memory, as it will be as long as I live, were th' recollections o' th' pleasant two or three

hours I'd spent in t' company o' Ben Brierley. Just a toothy tuneless rhyme o' mine, an' then I've done:—

Thouart up at th' top o' th' tree, Ben,
I'm but beginnin' to climb,
Yet fro' my little perch below,
I sing to thee this rhyme.

Give me a quill fro' thy glorious wing,
An a touch o' thy pathos an' fun,
That I may sing an' writ like thee
Before t' swift set o' t' sun.

I'm only a young an' haave-flegged brid
But thean art owd an' wise;
An has winged thy flight an' sunned thy plumes
In fauv'a allurin' skies.

So give me a quill fro' thy wing, Ben,
As thean sits o' t' top o' t' tree,
Thean's a neest in every Lancashire heart.
As thean has in th' heart o' me!

TEDDY ASHTON.

N.B.—Th' photograph of Ben Brierley at t' yed o' this article were tan some years sin'; he's owd'er now a bit.

THE BATH OF BLOOD.

About the year 1610 Elizabeth Bathori, sister to the King of Poland, and wife of a rich and powerful Hungarian magnate, was the principal actor in the most singular and horrible tragedy mentioned in history. She occupied the castle of Csejta, in Transylvania. Like most other ladies of that period, she was surrounded by a troop of young girls, generally the daughters of poor but noble parents, who lived in honourable servitude; in return for which their education was cared for, and their dowry secured. Elizabeth was of a secure and cruel disposition, and her handmaidens led no joyous life. Slight faults are said to have been punished by most merciless tortures.

One day, as the lady of Csejta was admiring at the mirror those charms which that faithful monitor told her were fast waning, she gave way to her ungovernable temper, excited, perhaps, by the mirror's unwelcome hint, and struck her unoffending maid with such force in the face as to draw blood. As she washed from her hands the stain, she fancied the part which the blood had touched grew whiter, softer, and, as it were, younger. Induced with the credulity of the age, she believed she had discovered what so many philosophers had wasted years in seeking for. She supposed that in virgin's blood she had found the *divin' vein*, the fountain of never-fading youth and beauty. Remorseless by nature, and now urged on by irresistible vanity, she thought no sooner flushed across her brain than her resolution was taken: the life of her luckless handmaidens was not to be compared with the precious boon her death promised to secure. Elizabeth, however, was wary as well as cruel. At the foot of the rock on which Csejta stood was a small cottage, inhabited by two old women; and between the cellar of this cottage and the castle was a subterranean passage, known only to one or two persons, and never used but in times of danger. With the aid of these old crones and her steward, Elizabeth led the poor girl through the secret passage to the cottage, and, after murdering her, bathed in her blood. Not satisfied with the first essay, at different intervals, by the aid of these accomplices and the secret passage, no less than three hundred maidens were sacrificed on the altar of vanity and superstition.

Several years had been occupied in this pitiless slaughter, and no suspicion of the truth was excited, though the greatest amusement pervaded the country at the disappearance of so many persons. At last, however, Elizabeth called in to play against her two passions even stronger than vanity and cunning. Love and revenge became interested in the discovery of the mystery. Among the victims of Csejta was a beautiful virgin, who was loved by and betrothed to a young man of the neighbourhood. In despair at the loss of his mistress, he followed the traces with such perseverance that, in spite of the hitherto successful caution of the murderers, he penetrated the bloody secrets of the castle, and, burning for revenge, flew to Presburg, boldly accused Elizabeth Bathori of murder, before the palatine in open court, and demanded judgment against her. So grave an accusation brought against a person of such high rank, demanded the most serious attention, and the palatine undertook to investigate the affair in person. Proceeding immediately to Csejta, before the murderer or her accomplices had any idea of the accusation, he discovered the still warm body of a young girl, whom they had been destroying as the palatine approached, and had not time to dispose of before he apprehended them. The rank of Elizabeth mitigated her punishment to imprisonment for life, but her assistants were burned at the stake.

I had had experience of very bad spinning at Benson's, Droylsden, where, on the wet mules, it was so bad that I refused to stay, and was transferred to twist mules. But that was Surat cotton—not shoddy. At Boundary Mill, Mills Hill, I very much doubt whether there was any cotton whatever in the mixing. The poem which follows is a composite picture of my experiences as a piecer at Robin Ogden's, Set; Benson's, Droylsden; and Boundary Mill, Mills Hill. The ill-usage described was all experienced at Robin Ogden's, where I had an Irish minder named Dillon. He was the only man who ever laid a finger on me in the way of chastisement. I was then under ten years of age. Later on it would have been dangerous for any man to assault me.

With this preface I reprint "Ther's Nowt Loike Spinnin' Shoddy," which has now survived half a century and is still going strong.

THE'S NOWT LOIKE SPINNIN' SHODDY.

Shoddy, shoddy, shoddy, that's the soart to spin,
Ther's nowt loike spinnin' shoddy if yo' want to mak'
yo'r tin.
Ne'er moidn heaw hard yo' work-un yo'r honds for little
wage,
"Ther's nowt loike spinnin' shoddy i' this spekiatin'
age;
Aber aw' would loike to see thoose 'at beigh an' sell
sich stuff
Start o' spinnin' it thersels, for they'd soon have had
enooft,
An' noan be hawve as ready at givin' us ther jaw,
Tho' neaw they're loike th' Egyptians when they fun'
their slaves no straw.

Top-clearer laps an' rovin's, under-clearer waste an' fly,
Mak' a very harmless mixin' if they're nobbo' let-un
lie,
But' when they're scutcht an' carded o' purpose to be
spun,

It's us poor shoddy piecers as lectun in for th' fun.
Th' ends drop-un deawn loike snow-flakes, whiz upo'
th' spindle point,
An' we run abeawt an' piece-un till we're cramp't i'
ev'ry joint,
Till, if we'd but a minie to do in as we'd loike,
If it wer't for bein' laaft at we should sit us deawn an'
scroike.

Aw'm a shoddy piecer 'at's singin' yo' this sung,
But' tho' aw'm one at present, aw' durn't intend't be
lung,
For, ere aw'll stop at piecin', aw'll tell yo' gradely
straight,
Aw'll start o' sellin' idleback, an' sheawin' "weight
for weight,"
For what wi' speed an' o'ertoime, an' what wi' dust
an' dirt,
Workin' bar'foot upo' th' floor, i' yo'r breeches an'
yo'r shirt,
Fettin' ev'ry blessed mealtoime four an' five days in a
week,—
If yo' say'n that is no' slav'ry yo'n a toidy lot o' cheek.
An' if aw'm e'er so lucky as to have a fittle lad
To coam at neet an' meet me, talk' mi' hont an' co me
"Dad'!"
Afore he'st piece on shoddy, an' stew i' th' mill o' day,
Aw'll ax the Gentle Shepherd to talk' His lamb away,
For ere be made a piecer to know what aw have known,
If God'll nobbo' tak' him aw'st think 'at mercy's shown,
For loife's a deeor bargin when th' proice yo' han to
pay,
Is piecin' uppo' shoddy for a bob or two a day.
Aw've seen when aw've bin wakkent at foive o'clock
i' th' dark,
On bitter frosty mornin's, an' packt off to mi' wark,
An' if, ere th' engine started, aw had no' eylt'mi tops,
Mi moulder 'ud a cusst me, an' cleawted me i' th'
chops.

An' what wi' th' engine chettin' abeawt ten minits then,
An' runnin' o'er at breakfast toime at leust other ten,
Wi' seven or eight at six o'clock, an' full fifteen at
noon,
It wer' very, very seldom as aw' geet theer too soon.

An' when th' reawm's bin so whot aw' cud hardly get mi
woynt,
An' th' spinnin's bin so bad 'at aw've piect till welly
bloynt,
If aw'd happent let mi ends deawn an' made a nick or
two,
Mi moulder 'ud ha' punst me till aw' wer' black an'
blue.
An' ere a choilt o' moine 'at had striven o' it cud,
To add to th' meshur's profit by makkin' bad wark
good,
Should be trayted loike a slave i' freedom's native isle,
Aw' cud lay it in its grave an' feel relieve enooft to smolie.

Why! A fact'ry's loike a prison, yo' con noather see
nor yer,
(When yo'n getten once insoide it) owt 'at's passon'
gawr o' th' dur,
For they're filled wi' frosted windows, an' built insoide
a yard,
Wi' a wall yo' conno' get o'er, an' a dur 'at's allus
barred.
So, aw'm beawn to save mi oddie 'at when aw' get
upgroon,
Aw' con bid good-bye to shoddy an' to workin' beawt mi
shoon,
An' hopin' yo' as yer'n me 'll think aw'm doin' reet,
An' clap me leawd an' heartily, aw'll weesh yo' o'
good-neet.

Father having no work, mother had to turn out at half-past five in the morning to a weaving job at Newton Heath. The youngest child, a girl, could not yet walk. Mother took her out on her way to work, and left her at Sally Schofield's to be nursed, bringing her home in the evening. Fifteen years later, June 6, 1874, I made this incident—one common to many mothers in those days—the background of one of my "Lancashire Lyrics." It was entitled:—

TEN HEAWRS A DAY.

As aw wur hurryin' on i' th' dark
 Won mornin' to begin mi wark,
 Just turnin' th' corner ov a street,
 A facth'ry lass aw chanc't to meet,
 Carryin' a baby on hur arm,
 Lapp't in hur shawl to keep it warm,
 Which to a nuss hoo had to ta'e
 So's hoo met w'ave ten heawrs a day.

To addle hur dear baby's bread,
 Hoo'd ta'en it gently eawt o' bed,
 An' dun hur best to get it dress't
 Beawt br'akin' it's unconscious rest;
 Bu' aw cud yer it's wailin' cry,
 An' her deep groan as hoo pass't by,
 To think hoo cudno' wi' it stay,
 Bu' had to w'ave ten heawrs that day.

Brave heart, aw thowt, theaw bears thi fate
 Berther nor mony a won co'ed great;
 Theaw doesno' grumble hawve as mich
 As lots o' ladies 'at are rich.
 Through wind an' rain, through sleet an' snow,
 Theaw bears that baby to an' fro,
 An' from thy wages has to pay
 To have it nuss't ten heawrs a day.

Content, when stoppin, toime did coam,
 If hoo cud tak' hur baby whoam,
 I' wind an' rain, 'i snow an' sleet,
 Aw met that mother every neet,
 An' notist, as hur shawl grew shabby,
 Hoo lapp't it closer reawnd hur baby,
 Wholeie hur pale lips appeared to pray
 For strength to work ten heawrs a day.

Bu' soon the subject o' my tawk
 Wur absunt fro' mi mornin' walk,
 Nor cud aw yer hur heavy feet,
 Returnin' fro' mi wark at neet,
 An' soa a sattl in mi moind
 As hoo'd laft facth'ry wark behind,
 No mooar to swallow china clay
 Or shoddy dust ten heawrs a day.

Yet hardly had a month gone when
 Aw met hur upo' th' road agen;
 Aw met hur as a did afore,
 Bu' hoo no baby wi' hur bore;

It slept beside the churchyard tree
 Wheer hur consumptive husbant lee;
 Oh! what a proice hoo had to pay
 Throo workin' hard ten heawrs a day!

Shall tragedies loike these disgrace
 The vanguard o' the human race?
 An' England sacrifice to greed
 Loives 'at hoo will hereafter need?
 Up, working men, yo'r needs assert,
 No moor be tramp't into dirt,
 Bu', banded in a bowd array,
 Refuse to work ten heawrs a day.

Aw dunno' meon by a stroike,
 Which ruins booth soides alike;
 Nor even mutual arbitration,
 But by imperial legislation.
 Choose members to draw up yo'r laws
 'At feel an interest in yo'r cause,
 An' then they'll have a chance to ma'e
 An Act agen ten heawrs a day.

Yo' moind 'at M.P.'s arno' sent
 To sit for you i' Parliament
 'At winno' raise their hands to tell a
 Vote for the measure ov Mundella.
 Humanity demands the grant,
 Then let no odds yo'r courage da'nt,
 Bu' feight until yo'n dun away
 Wi' workin' hard ten heawrs a day.

There is a certain fitness in quoting the foregoing verses. My life's best constructional work was bound up in the formation of the Independent Labour Party, and I point to "Ten Heawrs a Day" as proof that so far back as 1874 my mind was working along the lines on which ultimately the I.L.P. was founded.

Bill Spriggs as a "Minder."

By TEDDY ASHTON.

AS there maybe a twothree on yo what's never yerd o' this famous character cawd Bill Spriggs, a word or two abeaut him an his antecedents may come in useful. Well, then, Bill Spriggs is a native o' Tum Fowt, which is not in Africa, but on t' map o' Lancashire. Tum Fowt's never been discovered by no greight traveller yet, but it's theer aw t' same, an has a population of males, females, childer, cats an dogs, and other human beins. Th' wife o' Bill Spriggs is christened Bet, an hoo's celebrated everywheer because hoo enforces her woman's reets wi a rowlin-pin, which may be a wooden affair, but is t' best Home Rule measure ever yet invented for aw that. Bet Spriggs is so weel known in Bowton, Owdham, Preston, Chorley, Leyland, Bury, Wigan, an aw them soart o' tip-top civilised localities that it's neaw a common remark in those places for anybody to say when they yern of a woman that sits on her husband or is a public warnin' against matrimony, "Oh, hoo's a regular Bet Spriggs." Moorover, Bill and Bet is so popular that they'n figured in May Queen Festivals and Rose Creawnins at Leyland, Horwich, Chorley, etc., also in waxwork shows, likewise on ice-cream stall fronts, an been recited abeaut at dozens o' chep tay parties aw o'er t' wide world an mooar too.

T' other neet Bill an his mates were ceart talkin in t' "Dug an Kennel" (that's t' name o' t' pub they meet at; an wheer their renowned Debatin Menociation howds forth words an wisdom in unequal proportions) when a factory manager fro' Black Lane popped in, an stood drinks aw reaund. This at once constituted him a gentleman in th' een o' t' Tum Fowters, though some on 'em knowed him, havin seen him afore, an Ben Roke axed him heaw business were.

"Oh, just abeaut middlin," he replied.

"I thout t' cotton trade were very brisk just neaw," said Joe Lung (he has a wooden leg).

"There's nowt brisk neaw," observed Cock-Eye (he skens), "for trade's bad aw reaund."

"Has ta ever worked in th' factory?" said th' manager to Bill.

"Neow," said Bill. "I've allus behaved mysel up to neaw."

"Theau's never followed th' spinnin-mules then?"

"Neow, nor hosses noather," said Bill, "I've allus had mooar sense."

"Well, theau con have a job at mindin'," said th' manager.

"I've done nowt much for a middlin bit," said Bill, "but I wouldn't mind doin two or three days at summat just for exercise. I'm gettin rayther stiff an want eilin."

"I con find thee a job if theau likes," said t' mill manager.

"But I've never done no mindin'," said Bill.

"Ger away," said Ben Roke. "There's nowt abeaut mindin. Any foo con mind a pair o' wheels. Aw as theau has for't do is for t' lie deawn at t' back o' t' wheel-yed, get up every two heurs an cuss thy piecers, an run a 'shot' on at t' nearest pub; that's aw there is in mindin."

"Oh, is it?" exclaimed t' factory manager; "that's aw theau knows abeaut it. Will ta come, Bill?"

"Oh, ay, I'll come," replied Bill. "When do I start?"

"To-morn, at six o'clock."

"That's rayther soonish, isn't it? I durn't want no job as theau has for t' start afore thy breakfast. They're crazy jobs them."

"Theau con start at breakfast time, if theau wants."

"Aw reet, I'll be theer abeaut nine o'clock. But who'll show me what for t' do?"

"Oh, there's nowt much to larn; theau'll soon get into it."

"Didn't I tell thee?" said Ben Roke. "There's nowt in mindin. My fayther used t' be a spinner. If theau con tak snuff an sup a pint, theau'rt qualified to be a minder."

Th' factory manager smiled. "I'll tell thee what it is, Bill," he said. "This is t' truth on it. There's a bet on betwixt eaur mestur's son an another young swell that theau couldn't manage a pair o' wheels for five minutes; that's t' top an bottom on 't."

"Oh, if that's so," responded Bill, "I'll come wi' pleasure, an just thee tell yore mestur's son for t' have a bit on me. If I corn't manage a pair o' wheels, I'll eit 'em beaut saut, I will that. I'll be theer at breakfast time certain."

"That'll do then," said th' manager. "Will ta have another drink?"

Th' drinks were had, an everythin' settled, an th' factory manager geet up to goo.

"Oh," sheauted Bill, as th' manager went eaut at th' dur, "have I to bring my own piecers?"

"Ay, of course."

"Aw reet," said Bill.

When th' manager were gone Bill begun thinkin.

"I wonder wheer I'st get my piecers," he said.

"Well," said Cock-Eye, "I'm playin me to-morn. If theau likes I'll goo a-piecin for thee."

"An so will I," said Joe Lung, "I've nowt on to-morn."

"Aw reet," assented Bill, "that'll do. But does oather on yo know owt abeaut a factory?"

"I seed one afire once," answered Cock-Eye.

"An I used to tak my feyther's breakfast to th' gates," said Joe Lung, "so we're booath on us experienced men."

"Isn't there summat cawd 'cops' in a factory?" inquired Bill. "I wonder what a 'cop' is."

"It'll be summat as theau cops howd on," said Joe Lung.

"Certainly," said Cock-Eye.
 "An theau warks in thy shirt," remarked Joe Lung.
 "Oh, not in th' factory then," cried Cock-Eye.
 "Ger off, theau yorney," said Ben Roke; "a bonny piecer theau'll make, weren't ta? Con ta put bobbins in?"
 "Ay, if they'll show me wheer for t' put 'em."
 "Theau owt for t' know wheer for t' put 'em."
 "Well, I do know," said Cock-Eye defiantly.
 "Well, wheer will ta put t' bobbins then?" axed Ben, wi a sneer.
 "I'st put 'em on t' spindles," answered Joe, an Ben roared.
 "I'll bet yo make a sawney afore yo'n been in t' place three minutes," said Ben.
 "What's a sawney?" inquired Cock-Eye.
 "Why, Ben Roke's a sawney," said Bill Spriggs, makin a random smack, but it hit reet as it happened.
 "If theau caws me a sawney," exclaimed Ben, "theau'll have for t' apologise."
 "I'm noan doin no apologisin'," said Bill.
 "Well, theau't a mule then," yelled Ben.
 "An theau't a sawney," retorted Bill.
 There were beaund t' be a row, but Joe Lung quietened 'em deawn, an after a while they aw went whoam, Bill tellin Joe Lung and Cock-Eye for t' be sure an meet him at eight o'clock t' next mornin for t' go t' factory. They promised that they wouldn't forget, an dispersed.
 Th' next mornin they aw three met on Bury Road an seet off for t' factory, which they reicher abeaut nine o'clock.
 Th' manager met 'em at t' gates an smiled when he sead Joe Lung wi his wooden leg.
 "These is my piecers," said Bill, peintin to Joe and Cock-Eye, "an they're booth good uns; aren't yo?"
 "We are that," answered Joe an Cock-Eye together.
 "Aw reet, come in then," said t' manager, "an we'll soon see what yo can do."
 He led 'em in t' factory, an up t' steps to t' top storey.
 "There's a blöomin lot o' steps," said Joe Lung. "I'st want a new wooden leg by I get to t' top; this ull be worn away."
 "We met ha' coom up in th' hoist," said t' manager, "but it docsn't matter ncaw, we're nearly theer."
 They soon reicher t' top o' t' steps and went in t' spinnin' reaum. What a roarin din there were.
 "Eh, what a row!" said Bill, puttin his honds to his yers, "it's just like eaur Bet snorin!"
 "Eh, sithee!" cried Cock-Eye, "what's them lung things creepin backart and forrard?" He were alludin to t' carriages.
 Th' manager took 'em into a wheelgate wheer t' mules were stopped. Deawn at t' bottom end were t' mester's son an two or three others waitin for t' see t' fun, but they kept eaut o' t' seet an only peeped reaund corner o' t' creel.

"Neaw, what han we for t' do?" axed Bill.

"Fust of aw," said t' manager, "poo yore clooas off."

"What, 'em aw?"

"Neow, keep yore treausers an shirts on."

They look their garments off an hung 'em on a stump, rowled their shirt-sleeves up, an waited further instructions.

"What do they caw them?" axed Bill, peintin to t' spinnin-mules.

"They caw them mules," said t' manager.

"An haven't yo donkeys here too?" inquired Cock-Eye.

"Happen them as looks after 'em," replied Bill.

Th' manager grinned and took 'em to t' wheel-yed, and showed Bill t' settin-on rod. "Just shove that," he said, "an everything ull start workin beautifully, an aw us yo'll have for t' do ull be to stond here an watch it spin."

"That seaunds very nice," said Bill; an t' manager hurried eaut 'o' th' wheelgate; but he stopped at t' top to see what happened.

"Well, should I set it on?" axed Bill, "an thee jerk that other rod at t' other side, Joe. We mun booath start fair, and ha' no foul play."

"An what mun I do?" inquired Cock-Eye.

"Thee keep thy eye on eaur clooas," said Bill, "an see that nobody snakes in an steils 'em.—Neaw, Joe, are ta ready?" an he turned to Joe Lung.

"Ay," answered Joe.

"Then jerk that bar an set it on."

They seet booath wheels on at once, an t' carriages immediately begun creepin eaut towards wheer they stood.

"By gum," said Bill, "t' bloomin fence is runnin at us."

"Eh, an so is this behind us!" cried Joe Lung in alarm.

"They'll meet an croosh us to deeach between 'em!" yelled Cock-Eye.

"They're coming ner!" skrieked Bill.

"Run for yore lives!" sheauted Joe Lung.

"Help, murder!" roared Cock-Eye.

Th' carriages were slowly drawin' up, an t' space betwixt 'em went less and less. For hauce a minute Bill an' his piecers were dazed. Then wi a howl they aw three turned tail an' climbed up a stump, one under t' other, Bill being at t' top, Cock-Eye t' next, an' Joe Lung at t' bottom. Joe's legs were just on a level wi' t' carriages an he skrieked eaut that they were gooin t' out his other limb of, an nearly knocked Cock-Eye deawn wi tryin for t' get heigher up t' pillar.

They aw three looked deawn i' terror, an seed t' carriages nearly meet below 'em.

"They'd ha' squeezed us as flat as a poncake," said Bill. "It's a gcod job we aw run up here."

Meanwhile t' mester's son an t' manager were lowfin heartily at far end o' t' wheelgate, an t' carriages rushed back wi' a mighty crash.

"Sithee! they'n gone back again," exclaimed Bill, "let's jump deawn an run eaut o' t' road."

"But they're comin eaut again!" gasped Joe Lung, "just look at 'em, roarin' like wild lions and tigers!"

"So they are," said Bill in amaze. "What shall we do? We corn't peearch up here aw day. My arm's warchin awready."

"We met jump deawn an run afore they goo back, an get away afore they come eaut again," suggested Cock-Eye.

"Nay we couldn't," said Joe Lung, "they'd be on us afore we geet ten yards."



"I'll tell yo what," proposed Bill, "let's get deawn as soon as they run back an shove at one on 'em. We met stop it then, an if we did that, there'd be reaum enoof for us to get eaut."

After a bit of discussion they agreed for t' try this plan, so they aw dropped deawn when t' carriages run back, an begun shovin at th' reet hond un.

"Poosh wi' aw yore might, chaps," said Bill.

But it were no use. Th' carriage coom on, an t'other were drawin eaut too. So aw at once they aw threë leet go and flew up t' stump again. Th' hidden spectators nearly split wi' lowfin, but Bill an his mates couldn't yer 'em on acceaut o' t' din o' t' machinery.

"I fear as we're fast, chaps," said Bill, sadly; "there's no gettin eaut. I wonder wheer that manager is. Let's sheaut of him."

They sheauted an bawled; but th' neise o' t' machinery dreawned their cries.

"Let's have another try at shovin back," said Joe Lung, "an we'll try t' other side this time."

This were agreed on, so they aw descended when t' carriages run back, an tried for t' shove that back on t' left-hond side. It were no go. They couldn't stop it, though they tried lunger, an were so eager abeaut it that t' carriage were eaut before they knowed it' an deawn went one o' th' fallers on t' Bill's thumb. He uttered a mighty yell, while Joe and Cock-Eye darted up t' stump.

"Good heavens!" cried Joe, in horror; "it's copt Bill, an he corn't get loase!"

"Hoo-oo!" yelled Bill; "it's bitin me. It's geet my finger in its meauth. Come an purr it off, chaps, afore it swallows me!"

But Joe and Cock-Eye were sweatin i' freet, an couldn't stir. Then t' carriages run back wi a bang, and Bill were obliged for t' follow it; but it released his finger when it run up. Soon as he were free Bill took to his heels, never thinkin abeaut his cloas an were eaut o' th' factory an awhum at Tum Fovt i' less than ten minutes, tellin an awful tale to his wife Bet.

As for Cock-Eye an Joe Lung, t' manager coom an stopped t' wheels for them, for they wouldn't budge fro t' stump till he did; an then they flew eaut o' th' mill i' quicksticks.

"Never no mooar mindin for me," said Bill Sprigs at t' 'Dug an Kennel' that neet. "I wouldn't do it for ten peaud a week. Mindin, eh? Theau corn't mind nowt else, for it taks thea aw thy time for t' mind thysel, an then theau't lucky if theau gets away beaut a harm or leg missin. No mooar mindin for me. I'll be spun up afore I goo a spinnin any mooar. I've had enoof."

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AN ELECTION ADDRESS TO TH' RACHDA FOLK.

Dear Fellow sufferers i' this vale o' tears, an' factories an' steam trams, yo're gooin to be allowed to have a bit o' recreation in th' shap of a General Election; an we hope it'll give yo noather th yead-warch or ballywarch; though yo'll have to listen to aw sorta o' speeches fro' them gents what caws theirsels candidatas, kindly leavin it to their opponents to caw 'em other things.

Wi' two o'th' chaps that's puttin up we'n nowt to do, an we hope yo'll ha nowt to do wi 'em noather. Bankers is aw very well in their way, we daresay, but they have a deecal o' brass in their coffers that owt by rest to be in workinlass pockets. But yo con depend upon it that bankers an railway directors ull never do owt for yo except pay yo a bit o' th' interest they mak theirsels, an keep railway fares up, not because they want to charge yo dear for ridin but because they know that walkin's healthy an good for yo. Factory-maisters is aw very weel, too, but yo never see 'em sendin their own childer haue-time, nor rannin after yo to double yore wages.

Th' third chap that's puttin up is *Teddy Ashton*, his gradely name bein Allen Clarke. Neaw, we know this mon, an we know he's one of eoursels, that is to say a workin-chap. We know he's towd yo some rare buzzes abeaut us what's gettin this address up, an made yo lowf some oft at eaur marlocks, but as he's only done it for fun, we'n nowt to say again it. We say that yo can safely frust Teddy Ashton to Parliament. Th' chap that likes to see folk merry, that does his best to make 'em lowf, that makes tens o' theasousands o' folks lowf every week corn't be other than a good sort. Just as he's made yo lowf on th' rest side o' yore face, he'll make them as doesn't do fair to yo lowf on t' other side o' their face if yo'll only give him th' chance. He's jannock, is Teddy. He doesn't like to see anybody miserable or poor, he wants to see everybody happy; an his object is to get everybody wages enoof to lowf heartily on. Yo corn't lowf heartily on an empty pocket, con yo? Teddy Ashton likes them lines o' Trafford Clegg—one o' yore own clever writers what wrote some bonny tales:

"It's what aw ne'er could understand,
That folks wi heases, brass or lond,
Con sit wi lifted e'en an hond
On t' top o' t' wo',
Forgettin there's a common bond
That binds us o'."

We know that if Teddy Ashton had his road he'd give yo aw five peound a week an a month's holiday every fortnest; an he'd pay yo for holidays at o'ar-time rates. He con hardly do that at present, though, because th' lords, an dooks, an aristocracks, an bankers, an factory maisters weren't let him. These folks tells yo at election times heaw they love yo an what they'll do for yo if yo'll only let 'em, but as soon as they get into Parliament their promises fizzes away like th' wynd eaut of a punctured bike or t' flour eaut o' Bet Spriggs' bag—it had a hole in it, anone day when hoo went to th' Co-op. for a dozen o' flour it leaked aw th' road whum, an hoo landed at th' Fowt wi an empty flour bag. But Bet said hoo didn't care for losin th' flour; hoo'd geet her cheque on it, an th' divi. would be aw rest, so's heaw.

Mooast Liberal an Tory candidatas is like Tum o' Traale Fowt an his cocartin o' Sally Pickinpeg. He towd her that if hoo'd wed him hoo should live like a lady, never goo to t' factory no mooar, have two new dresses every summer an spend aw th' Wakes at Blackpool. Sally, bein young an ignorant i' matterimony, believed him; an they geet wed. But t' very fust mornin after they were wed Sally were roused up by Tum shakin her. "Its five o'clock," he said, "theau'd better be getting up an off to thy looms." Sally stared. "Tha said tha'd keep me awbum like a lady," hoo said. "Theau were a foo if tha believed me," said Tum; "I'm eaut o' wark mysel, an I'm not goin to do noan so long as I've wed a four-loom weaver what con keep me. Get up this minute afore I punce thee eaut o' bed."

An that's what the capitalists do—they trick yo wi nice tales, and then punce yo eaut o' bed to keep 'em.

If yo like it, yo're welcome to it. It's a free country, an any mon's free to be a mug if he wants.

But if yo object to being mugged, if yo like good trade an fair wages, three square meals a day an a gradely supper, an brass enough for a nice holiday neaw an then, then rowl up in yore theasousands an vote for TEDDY ASHTON, that's ALLEN CLARKE.



Th' Patent Automatic Cemetery Looms.

Bill Spriggs Sweeps th' Manager Eaut o' th' Shed.

By TEDDY ASHTON.

THE Menoclation members were sit talkin' at th' "Dug and Kennel," at Tum Fowt, when Tum Bibbs said, "Haw yo yeard o'th bother that's gooin on at th' Model Factories?" "Neow, what's up?" axed Jos Lung.

"Ob, ruotions," said Tum. "Th' boss has introduced some patent automatic looms fro' America."

"Dang America!" said Bill Spriggs, "It's allus sendin its rubbitoch o'er here—to mak mooar wark an less brass!" "That's just it," said Tum Bibbs. "Well, th' Model Factories has just geet a lot o' these patent looms. They reckon as one welver oon manage eight looms, an they're makin 'em try. Some o'th welvers has turned eaut, but there's others that's too soft l'th' stick up an too thick l'th' yead to protest, an they're killin theirsels to mind these eight looms"

"Eight looms!" said Bill Spriggs. "Why, they'll be wantin a welver to manage a whole factory soon, an cleean th' mestur's boots l'th' bargain. When I did that bit o' taeklin at Black Lone a wothree year sin, I thowt one loom were enoof for any wench, an I leet 'em put as mony shuttles in as they liked"

"Well, that's what they're doin' neaw," said Tum Bibbs "Eight looms. There's one o' my dowters tried 'em for a week, an hoo had to give o'er. Hoo's wolly deead. We'n had th' doctor to her, an he says that there's nowt th' matter w' her except too much wark. I'm towd that these patent automatic looms,—or cemetery looms as th' welvers caws 'em,—has made greit trade for th' doctors an th' undertakers. There were two poor lasses deead last week, an one chap suggested th' followin epitaph—

Th' welvers are runnin to their tombs,
Aw through th' automatic looms.

It's noan th' fair thing in a Christian country, an it owt to be stopped"

"That it owt," said Bill Spriggs. "I'm a mon o' sympathy, an I weren't see folk put on. Heaw cou we upset this slave-dreivil, am I?" "I durn't know," said Tum Bibbs. "But I'll tell thee what theau could do, Bill. In th' shed wheer they have these automatic terrors, it take th' welvers aw their time to mind th' looms—they're continually runnin fro one to t' other—they've no time to sweep up—an so there's men engaged to do th' sweepin-up for 'em. Neaw, here's what theau could do, Bill. Theau could goo an get engaged as a sweeper-up, an then theau'd see for thysel what this patent Yankee system is. Goo an get a job as sweeper-up. Durn't gie thy own name—give an alessauce (alias) as they caw'n it—that's another name."

"Ay, I'll do that," said Bill. "I'll goo an see for mysel heaw th' poor welvers are bein punished. An I'll do it to-morn."

Next mornin Bill went up to th' model factories an seed th' manager.

"I yeard yo were wantin some sweepers," he said

"That's so," said th' manager. "What's thy name?"

"Bill Mugg," said Bill, "an a dal good name, too, for a warkin-chap, isn't it?"

"I've no't aguin it," said th' manager. "Has ta had any experience o' welvin sheds?"

"Lots," said Bill. "I've clipped th' wings o' mony a hundred flyin shuttles to stop 'em fro runnin away; an I've been hit w' th' pokkin-pog mooar than once"

"I should gouse so; an th' barmatlock, too," said th' manager. "Heawever—there's noan much sense needed for th' sweepin we han here."

"Neow, I should think not," said Bill, grinlin, "what yo want is folk that's strong in th'

back an wake in th' yead, an noan partioklar about th' pocket. Are yo gooin t' tak me on?"

"I think we'll try thee," said th' manager. "Th' job is to sweep th' alleys about th' patent automatic looms."

"Ay," said Bill, "I've yeard about them looms. Heaw are they gooin on?"

"Fast rate," said th' manager. "Beautiful." "I've yeard a different tale," said Bill, "but it's a lyin world, isn't it?"

"A slanderous world," said th' manager, hotly. "Them looms is ohampion, an th' welvers is delighted w' 'em. They worship 'em."

"Say their prayers o'er 'em," said Bill.

"They dote ou 'em," said th' manager.

"They'd sooner have eight o' them looms than goo to a picnic an get a chap. They're makin double an treble brass on 'em. There's hundreds o' young women every day at me, gooin deawn on their knees an beggin me to let 'em ha some o' th' new patent automatic looms, an they're heartbrokken when I have to refuse 'em."

Just as th' manager spoke a welver-lass ooom up an said, "I'm gooin whum; I've had enoof o' yore patent Yankee executioners. Another day on 'em an I'at be a corpse; an I corn't see th' use o' makin a buryin o' mysel just yet—"

"Here, stop a minute," said the manager.

"Not a second," said th' wench.

"I'll summons thee if theau leaves beaut notice."

"Summons me if yo dar, an I'll expose yo!" an off hoo went

"That one doean't seem so satisfied w' th' patent looms," said Bill.

"That one's noan gradely rest," said th' manager. "I'm weel shut on her. Well, if theau'n't gooin to start as a sweeper, come on."

Th' manager took Bill into th' welvin-shed, rigged him up wi a brooch, an left him.

Bill looked round at th' patent automatic looms. Th' welvers hadn't a minute for owt. No sooner had they seed one loom agate than another stopped; an th' lasses were runnin about like mad till they were lagged eaut.

"Why, it's wuss than outchin a regiment o' fides," said Bill. "I never seed such wark in aw my born days"

A number o' th' welvers were importations fro other teawns,—an some on 'em were gems. One that had made a hole in her "out" were stichin th' white rent up w' red thread. Then others, as soon as th' taokler's back were turned, put th' patent automatic eaut o' operation, an run th' looms as if they were ordinary,—which were rayther aggravatin to th' mestur that had gan so much money for th' patent.

Bill, after he'd swept a bit, geet careless, an gawped about w' his brooch o'er his shouder. Then as he were walkin along, he leet his brooch slip, an soas it went into one o' th' looms, an there were a bonny smash

Bill tugged at th' brooch, to get it loose, an aw at once, it jerked free, an Bill went flyin on his back, an th' brooch shot o'er his yead, an dropped into another loom. Just as Bill geet it eaut, th' manager ooom horrylin up, an yelled, "What are ta tryin on, theau idiot?"

"I've never worked among patent looms afore," said Bill, "an I did'n't know as they'd smatch th' brooch eaut o' my hond."

"Get eaut o' my seat," said th' manager, "afore I punce thee eaut o' th' shed."

"Will yo?" said Bill, brandabin his brooch, "try it on, if yo dar, an I'll blow yer brains eaut. Come on, yo coward!—Theau'n't noan talkin to freaten women neaw,—but to a mon,—to a hero,—to Bill Spriggs!"

"What I!" said th' manager. "What mank's this? Bill Spriggs!"

"Ay," said Bill, "an I'm thinkin o' sendin eaur Bet up to tackle eight looms. Does ta want any welvers? Try eaur Bet,—an hoo'll show thee what to do w' eight looms. Hoo'll scatter 'em aw w' th' rowlin-pin, an thee too, if theau says owt. An what theau needs is a dose o' Bet Spriggs,—it would do thee good,—thee an thy automatic looms. Say another word, an I'll split thy skull," an Bill lifted th' brooch up threateninly.

"Clear eaut," said th' manager, "afore I send for th' police. Somebody shall smart for playin this trick. Be off w' thee!"

"Thee be off," said Bill Spriggs, an advancin on th' manager, he begun to sweep him eaut o' th' shed. Th' manager tried to stop Bill, but every time he halted Bill stuck th' brooch-yead into th' back o' th' chap's neck, an thus run him eaut o' th' shed.

"Then he chuckt th' brooch at th' manager, an cleared off for Tum Fowt an whum, wheer he towd th' tale o' his exploit.

"An I nobbut wish," he said, "that I could ha swept aw them patent looms away as yessy as I shifted th' manager. But th' welvers ull ha' to do that theirsels,—an they can do it if they'll nobbut get howd o' th' trade union brooch an sweep away for aw they're woth."

MR. H. M'DOWELL'S CASE

Has caused deep and widespread interest throughout Scotland.

THE MOST REMARKABLE CURE OF RECENT YEARS.

Thousands of Letters of Congratulation, and an unprecedented demand for VENO'S SEAWEED TONIC.

Not for many years has such an extraordinary cure been performed in Scotland. Mr. H. M'Dowell, the well-known N.B. guard, 130, Barriack Street, Dennistown, Glasgow, laid in bed fourteen weeks with inflammation of the kidneys, dropsy, and weak heart, and was in such a critical condition that his life was despaired of. Several doctors gave him up, and said they could do no more. When the last doctor left his doorstep, Mrs. M'Dowell sent for a bottle of VENO'S SEAWEED TONIC. In a few days after taking it he was able to walk about, and take his meals with his family. That is four months ago. Today, Mr. M'Dowell is absolutely cured. He returned to his work several weeks ago. This critical case defied eminent medical men, but yielded like magic to VENO'S SEAWEED TONIC. Mr. M'Dowell wrote to Mr. Veno, as follows, a few days ago:—

MR. VENO, Dear Sir,—Thanks to VENO'S SEAWEED TONIC, which has, I believe, saved my life. It is now over four months since I was cured of inflammation of the kidneys and dropsy. When I commenced taking it I was lying in bed helpless. Doctors had given me up. They told my wife they could do no more for me. My first letter to you was strictly correct; my case will stand the strictest investigation. Your SEAWEED TONIC cannot be too widely known; it is simply a marvellous medicine. Hundreds of people have flocked to see me, and all along the North British system people come and ask me about my recovery, and inquire about your medicines. I have been the means of a great deal of your SEAWEED TONIC being sold in Glasgow and other places.

VENO'S SEAWEED TONIC is a medical invention of far-reaching power. Many years were occupied in perfecting this remedy, and although a proprietary medicine, many doctors do not hesitate to prescribe it. It has been tested, and is used extensively in hospitals. It is the great healing medium by which the most distressing cases of stomach, liver, kidney, and blood diseases are cured. It strengthens, invigorates, removes inflammation, cures weak back, headache, and general debility, and is especially good for "Chronic Constipation." It is having such an enormous sale that chemists have a difficulty in obtaining supplies to meet the demand. All persons suffering should, in their own interest, secure a supply as early as possible. It can be obtained from Chemists and Drug Stores throughout the country. Price—1/1½ and 2/6 per bottle.

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KNITS Sweaters, Socks and Clothing in Wool, Silk and Cotton. Makers of Unshrinkable Wooll.

LISTS FREE.

HARRISON KNITTER WORKS, 31, UPPER BROOK ST., MANCHESTER.

DOBBILL WEIVERS AN YANKEE LOOMS.

Duck Fowt, Swan Lane.

DEAR MESTUR EDDITOR,—As edditors is moostly an ignorant lot—excuse my bluntness, but it's my style, an I corn't change my pattern, like th' leopard knocks spots off—I darasay yo'n never yeard tell o' Dobbill, but unless I'm sadly mista'n it'll have a front seat again in history yet, as it's had afore, for on this Dobbill Moor, so we're towd by them truthful chaps that roots up owd ancient facts, Oliver Cromwell, or Prince Rupert, or some o' them feightin chaps, planted his caunon when he besieged Trotter-teawn two or three hundred year sin'. An there's some folks as wish them caunon were still theer to-day, so as they could be turnt on a certain twothree factorles wheer some new patent Yankee looms is makkin bother,—yo'd a bit in yore papper abeaut 'em a twothree month sin',—if I recollect reetly, that theer crazy gobbin, Bill Spriggs, went an tried to get a shop as a weiver on th' patent looms, but geet sacked for sweepin th' tackler eaut wi a lung broosh.

Well, if Bill Spriggs is oppen to try again, there's neaw an oppenin for him, for th' bulk o' th' weivers has neaw coom eaut on strike, an th' bosses, so I'm towd, is ready to tak anybody on at present. It does'n matter whether they're proficient weivers or not; if they coon nobbut tell th' difference between a loom an a donkey, they'll do. For th' mesturs means to run their looms someheaw; I wouldn't like to caw 'em stupid, but they're chaps that'll have their own road,—if they coon nobbut get it.

Drat these patent looms, say I! I've nowt to say again patents that lessens wark an increases th' wage, but when it's t' other road abeaut, why, I say, drat it, an I meean it, an summat stronger too.

Well, these here Yankee patent looms may have made moor wark,—I'll grant 'em that,—but they've certainly noan made moor brass; not for th' weivers so's heaw. Indeed, I'm towd that sin these looms were put in, th' Dobbill weivers has gan o'er havin pockets in their frocks, because there's no need for 'em,—they've never owt to put in 'em.

I'm nobbut a plain-spokken sort o' chap, an I've never been to colloge, but I like fair-play, an I can tell when I'm hurt, or when other folks is oather; an it's my opinion that th' Dobbill weivers has been put on lately. Well, if they hadn't, done yo think they'd have had no moor sense than come eaut on strike?

Folks durn't goo on strike for amusement neawadays; an I durn't think they ever did.

I've a wench that's been warkin at Dobbill; so I know what I'm writin abeaut; an it's nowt but truth I'm tollin yo when I say that hoo's ne'er had no peace sin th' patent looms were put in, an as for th' brass hoo's browt whum—why, if I trated yo an me to a spree on poigh-soup eaut of it there wouldn't be eacof left to beigh th' heathen—th' foreign heathen I meean; noan th' factory-mesturs awhum—a dacent rig-eaut o' chp cotton pocket-hankers at three-hawpence a dozen.

Well, I'll say no moor just now. I'll be writin to yo again next week.

Hopin this finds yo gradely weel, as it leaves me at present, except for th' patent looms,

Yores, an setra,

BILLY PICKINFG.

Th' Dobbill Marionette Show.

UPSETTIN A POLIEMAN.

Duck Fowt, Swan-lane.

DEAR MESTUR EDDITOR,—By gow, yo. mun keep puttin my letters in yore papper, an then yo'll soon ha brass enoof to start a weivin-shed (but no patent looms, think on); for aw th' newsagents up here is sowl eaut an corn't supply th' demand.

Heawever, that's nowt to do wi th' dispute, which is still gooin on, an likely to be, till th' mesturs ull raise th' wages, which were forty per cent. below standard rates when th' weivers coom eaut afore Christmas.

Th' mesturs an manager are dooin as weel as they coon wi knobsticks, an aw sorts of help, as I've towd yo afore.

There's been pantomime eautside th' factory as weel as in. Three wenches,—whose feyther, I'm towd, reckons to be a Trade Unionist,—were booced an oocd whum t' other neet; an stones thrown at th' heause—but th' wrung heause as it happened.—Heawever, this soart o' wark does no good, an I should advise th' folk to drop it. Let th' three wenches goo on warkin if they want, an other ohumps,—they'll soon be under th' doctor or in th' ceme-tery wi th' job they han on.

Then there's others that's fretent o' losin their pensions—but it's better to do reet by yore fellowmen even if yo lose a pension. There's lots of other things I could tell yo,—but I at write again; unless th' bother's settled by th' weivers winnin, which I hope'll be th' case.

But I murn't forget to tell yo abeaut th' bobby that geet his nose brasted, mun I!

As yo'll know, there's yards o' policemen an detectives knockin abeaut to protect th' knobstick weivers when they're gooin whum. T' other Setday dinnertime a woman begun "booin" 'em, an a bobby towd her to give o'er. But this woman weren't o' th' givin-o'er sort. Then th' bobby pooshed her, wheerat hoo went for him like a torpedo, uncorked his nose, tore his tunic, an slit on him, sayin hoo weren't used to bein pushed abeaut awhum, an hoo certainly wouldn't be knocked abeaut by a bobby. Th' poor mauled policeman had to whistle for help—th' woman were arrested, an fined five bob an costs, which were soon paid by a collection. An it were wo'th th' money.

By gow, but we want some Labour members o' Parliament, durn't we, to stop games o' this sort!

BILLY PICKINFG.

I'd set beside owd "Lanky's" best
"Eaur Sarah's Chap."
It's true to life, an' that, that knows,
Stons Number One l' verse or prose,
The memory monny a scene recaws
At thy narration,
Some weel that babby's thrick th' shows
By implication.
Tha' touched a funny bone or two
For every line aw chuckled through,
So for mi pleasure tak thi due
Without restriction;
That closing touch o' pathos drew
A benediction.

Farnworth. W. C.

Since sending the above our friend has sent a P.S. verse, which to me is very pathetic.—for the little one he tells me to kiss for him was dead when I got his letter. Ah me! Here is the verse:—

F.S.—
I'm tain thy brid's on t' mandin' side,
Should ought thi life an' thine divide,
Aw know by sad experience thud,
Heave th' would miss it!
For me, an monny moor beside,
Dear Teddy, kiss it.
I will "kiss it," for you, dear friend,
though it will not know that I am kissing it.
And yet—who knows?—who shall say that it does not know?

I can only say that these letters touch me very much; for it is a sweet thing to give pleasure to others. And I certainly feel proud—for I'm quite human,—but not conceited. Thanks for the poem, W.C.; I have read with pleasure other poems of yours in other papers.

Here's another letter:—
School Lane Co-operative Society Ltd.,
Walton-le-Dale, Sept. 14, 1897.
Dear Sir,—In the issue of your Journal of Sept. 4th, (No. 66, Vol. II), you had some verses entitled "The Wife's Surprise." We were so interested with the lines as setting forth the benefit of co-operation in one of its phases, that we should very much like to re-publish them in the monthly issue of our Record with your kind permission. If you kindly consent we will state the source from which it was taken.—Yours truly, pro p.,
Jas. E. BRIGGS, Sec.

Of course I consent. Any papers may use any pieces that appear in T.A.J. if they will acknowledge the source.

The other day, Mr. Lennox, the manager of the Ohme Chemical Co., was in Blackpool, and he went to have his palms read. On this topic he writes to me thus (and I print his letter because I think it's clever):—
Nottingham.

Dear Teddy,—In judging the merits of such a science—or art, or charlatanism, which ever you prefer—as palmistry, the only criteria that could be accepted by the man of science, would be certain teaching practical tests. To attempt to prove the truth, or otherwise for that matter, of palmistry by theory would be on a plane with the wisdom that attempted to give a practical demonstration of the truth of the statement that the earth is 99 millions of miles from the sun by actually measuring the distance with a twelve inch measure. And a single fulfilment of a prophecy would not, to the man of science, be sufficient to attest the truth of any particular professor's claim to inspiration. On the contrary, the man of science would be immeasurably surprised were no prophecies ever to be fulfilled; for it can be mathematically demonstrated that a certain number of prophecies—or shall we say "long shots"—are absolutely bound to come true. All this rigmarole is but the prelude—and the softening down of the blow I am about to administer—to my conclusion of conversation. I want to Madame—confirmed sceptic, a cynic, a scoffer, and of stoney heart. Now all is changed. I have put on the robe of righteous meekness; am of a weak heart, humble, a believer, and content to await the fate the gods allot me. For how could one be otherwise when he sees that two of Madame's prophecies—namely, that I should never have any money left to me, and never have any children—have been so wondrously fulfilled within the short space of three weeks. I—I have not had a legacy left me; I—I have had no children. If Madame—like to take use of the following testimonial, I shall feel proud of being a humble servant in helping on so noble a cause as that which she so grandly espouses.—Three weeks ago you read my palms, since when I have had no others.—Yours faithfully,
W. L. de S. L.

Sam Brierley writes:—"At a meeting held last Saturday at Longsight permanent

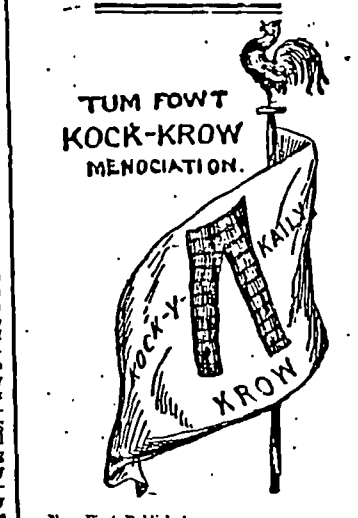
Way Dept. it was resolved to censure C. Allen Clarke for ending the tale entitled 'A Curate of Christ's' without any explanation as to how the strike ended, what became of the curate, and a hundred other questions. I was asked, as secretary, to write to you, as the railway-men are anxious to know."

Here's another letter about "The Curate."

Hanley, 18/9/97.
Dear Teddy,—As one who has taken a deep interest in "A Curate of Christ's" I may tell you that I have been both surprised and disappointed at the abrupt way in which the tale has ended. It is not for me to dictate to C. Allen Clarke yet I cannot help thinking that it was a most inopportune time for the death of Melody. Why not have sacrificed the curate's father, which would have brought a bad life to a noble end, and have spared the curate with Melody to pursue a life which could still have been made interesting and instructive? My impression is that Mr. Clarke has been in a hurry to conclude, and has consequently crowded too many events in the last day of his story, with the result that he has left his readers with mixed feelings. In conclusion I may say that I consider the sacrifice of Melody at that part of the tale as bad as, if not worse than the death of Little Nell in Dickens' "Curiosity Shop." With kindest regards to yourself, and wishing success to your paper.—I remain yours faithfully,
JOHN HOLZ.

Well, if none of the readers of "A Curate of Christ's" can answer the preceding for our friends I'll try myself; though I shall have a job. But I'll see first if any other readers can settle the matter. I may say, however, that I did not hurry the conclusion as our Hanley friend supposes; for, the last chapter of the story was written first.

I hope that if you don't find my part of T.A.J. up to par this week you'll kindly make allowances. As I told you last week, our baby has been very ill—and is very ill yet—and I've had to sit up with her many nights, and help to nurse her during the days, and so, when a man is dying for a good sleep, and is full of anxiety for his child,—well, he's not exactly in the best form for writing either serious articles or comic sketches, is he?



Now First Published.
By TEDDY ASHTON.

BILL SPRIGGS ON TH' ENGINEERS' LOCK-OUT AN TH' COTTON CRISIS.

Th' Tum Fowt Kock-Krow Menociation met last Wednesday meet, Bill Spriggs belin in t' cheer, an' t' rest o' t' furniturs belin occupied by t' various other members.
"It's been very bad weather lately," said Joe Long, "for I've got t' rheumatism in my wooden leg; an' it never aches there unless things is very damp."
"Ay, it's been grady weat," remarked Jack Tyke, "I've been weat through at least eight morales this last week."

"Get away, theau chump," said Ben Roke, "there's noan eight days in a week."
"Yab there is," returned Jack, "if theau goes by sear owd eight-day clock."

"There's moor things bad beside t' weather," observed Bill Spriggs. "I were talkin to an owd pedlar last meet what tramps up an' down t' country, an' he said as things were very bad indeed, an' he'd never seer less helpin' this last ten year. This engineers' lock-out! makin a bak of a mass o' things. An we'n hardly got o'er t' Jubilee jollip yet. To bak wi'aw Jubilee, say I, if there's to be this sort o' bother wi' em. There's beand t' be trouble in t' cotton trade too, an' that'll be very aggravatin. They say there's goods t' be a reglar big strike, an aw t' factories all stop."

"Oh, well than," said Ben, "if they stop they weren't goo away, will they? They'll be here when we want 'em."
"Thee durn't be frivolous, Ben," answered Bill, "for this is a serious question. It's noan a nice thing for t' be out o' work an' havin no money comin in. Trade's a tickle thing, an I wish we could do beant it."

"What's t' cause on it?" axed Tommy Dod.
"I durn't know," replied Bill, "What's at t' bottom on it. Some says over-production an some says t' silver problem."

"Oh silver's at t' bottom of it then, is it?"
"I durn't know," said Bill. "They say as moor's t' rest of aw evil, so very likely it's true that silver's at t' bottom of this."
"Not it," cried Ben Roke, "neither silver nor gold's got owt for t' do wi it. It's t' mesturs what's greedy, that's aw, an doesn't like losin a bit. Why should they have aw t' brass an us noan? I were yerrin some socialists talk t' other meet, an I've had my sen oppened."

"When a chap gets his sen oppened he should keep his mouth shut," said Bill.
"Lord deliver us fro them socialists!" exclaimed Tum Bullfowt, "an fro everybody else as wants for t' divide what isn't theirs. When I've got a penny for a gill man I divide it wi everybody else? Not me. An man I divide my breeches, an my shirt, an my pigcote? Not me. I supporte t' Queen, an t' Constitution, an t' Church, an them's what I believe in."

"That's nowt t' do wi what we're talkin about," said Bill Spriggs, "th' subject of our discussion is t' cotton trade, what's in a very bad way, just neave an' some doctors, though happen too much t' stem all kill it, same as it's done moony a poor Christian what's neave lookin for fair-roads. Th' factory-mesturs is talkin about reducin wages everywhere, an t' spinners says they weren't have no reduction; they'll do beant just. But I know what I'd do if I'd my road. I'd let th' mesturs what their factories up when they wanted, but make 'em pay wages just t' same as if they were runnin; an I'll bet that would soon put an end an' finish to aw lock-outs. Weat this country wants is moor wages an moor holidays. We're too t. ink t' t' yed an too thin t' t' pocket, that's t' top an bottom on it. We work too much an play too little, an then we get t' world full o' cotton goods an has for t' sit down an' alem till they're aw used up an worn out an' fresh cloose, is wanted. I object to clemmin. I think every chap as aems owt for t' be fined five bob, an t' nearest justice o' t' pieces should be made for t' pay it. For what good is a clemmic man to his country?"

"Noar at aw," said Jack Tyke, "an there's a lot clemmic through this engineers' lock-out; an no seet of it endin yet."

"I'd soon and it if I'd my road," said Bill Spriggs. "I'd fine every mestur a hundred pound for every day as t' strike lasted, th' money to be spent t' provisions for t' labourers an others what's hard up through t' strike. Th' dispute wouldn't last moony minutes then. A fine of a hundred pound as would soon bring t' biggestascal t' world into a Christian frame o' mind."

"An would that be rest?" axed Tommy Dod.
"Would it be just?"

"It would be just as rest as havin wyan an childer starvin," said Bill. "Let them pay what has t' brass, is my sentiment. Them what has money should be made to keep them what has noan; there'd be less clemmin grabbin after gold then. Some says there's too moony folks t' this country; an if that's true that we'n moor population than we're entitled to, why, let aw them what's alive an soon warkin an yet no money, beaxed for livin—so much a day like—unless we can get t' wogon to goo on strike agaln, havin babies. A plan like that would soon put things rest."

"What!" roared little Tommy Dod, "does it mean for t' say, Mestur Oneerman, that a chap like me, weat's livin restre, havin made mysel independent t' t' sweat o' my loce—"
"Prodn, that sweat for," said Bill, "an then I'll believe rest. Where is that sweat? Has to get it on thee?"

"Just yer him!" bellowed Tommy Dod, "whoever's yerd of anybody axin for t' look at sweat. Where's t' sweat Mestur Spriggs—show us that sweat!"
"I have noan," replied Bill sooly, "I'd alter moor sense than sweat. They're noobal loce what's—ate."
"Allow me to rise," yelled Tum Bibbe, "for I weren't sit still as be learned. They're noobal loce what sweat, are they? That's a personal insult, an I demand a hapology. My feet sweat a greight deal,—an our barb if yo durn't believe



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TH' INVASION BOGEY.

BY BILLY BUTTON.

"WHAT'S aw this talk as Lord Bobs has bin comin' out wi'?" axed Tummy Harrop 't' other neet 't' ear heasus.

"Why," I said, "he's on th' owd tune. He's feared last we'd be invaded wi' th' Germans; an he wants everybody to larn how to shoot. There's a mon written a book, an in it he describes how easy it would be for foreign countries to conquer us, an break up our noble an mighty empire. But s'ich a tale as that's nowt to be thowt at. Lord Bobs an his tribe 't' Heasus o' Lords know that if they can nobbut get folk freest o' some invasion they'll aw tak to swordjers, an like patriotic countrymen feight to a finish to defend our country."

"Eaur country?" said Tummy. "Why heaw much on it belongs to thee, or me? He knows that if him an aw th' big men can nobbut get folk takkin' interest 'n national defence they'll forget aw about th' land laws, th' unemployed, an aw them measures o' reform. It's aw very weel as workin'folk talkin' about empire an larnin' to shoot, while we help to keep a lot o' dukes, lords, an Government officials."

"Ay," I said, "it's aw very fine for them to go gassin' up an dawn th' country, but heaw mony on 'em knows that their ancestors 'n return for th' land as they geet used to find a certain number o' swordjers. And neaw they dun nowt, but draw rents through their agents, an spend their time motorin', shootin', fishin', an playin' at swordjers wi' a lot o' volunteers. If they want to play at war why durn't they buy a lot o' tin swordjers an drill them?"

"Well, dost see," said Tummy, "they can alms find enough simple folk as'll be made playthings on. Look at aw these factory-measthers an bits o' gaffers as reckons to tak an interest 'n th' volunteer movement."

"Some on 'em do it because they daren't do owt else. An th' same wi' th' warkin'-folk. They oather join because they're freest o' their shops, or they're after a better berth. I've known mony a red-jacket goo as far as a good technical education."

"Ay, I can believe thee," I said, "but what I corn't understand is that folks can be bossed o'er 't' th' factory, an mony a time driven like slaves, an then they'll spend their spare time doin' th' goose-step an generally makin' mugs o' themselves to th' command o' th' same mon as they'n mugged for aw th' week through. But they sen, does these patriotic folk, that this new system would be nobbut supplementary to th' volunteer system. They propose that every mon as is able 't' carry a gun should goo in for a month or two's trainin', so that if th' Germans or th' French coom to Blackpool or Liverpool we should have a great lot o' men ready to dee for their country's cause. Fancy th' piers an th' Tower at Blackpool full o' Owdham an Bowton trippers wi' cannons mounted, an th' sandhills dotted wi' men an lads armed wi' guns. I think I'd be like that Quaker I yerd about."

"What were that?" axed Tummy. "He were on board a ship, an it were 't' time o' war. Th' captain tow'd him to arm hissel, when a foreign vessel coom tort 'em. He said 'Nay.' It were against his religious principles to tak th' offensive. At last they geot to close quarters, an one o' 't' sailors fro 't' other ship were scramblin' o'er th' side just close to wheer th' 'brother' were stood. He couldn't see lettin' him get any further, so he dopt how'd of an axe, an choppin' at th' chap's bonde, said, 'Friend, thou art not wanted here!'"

"I should be like him. I wouldn't larn how to handle a gun, but th' fust German or French as coom tort Dumphin Fowl, I'd akewer 'em wi' a hay-fork, or b'rain 'em wi' th' poker."

"But here," said Tummy, "dost not think a twothree months' drill would do a chap good?"

One chap's as good as said an National Defence would do away wi' slums. He says that if everybody were examined, an aw thoses as were physically unfit had their environment made healthier an moor decent, it would gradually work a great change 'n th' physique o' th' nation."

"Wall, there's happen summat 't' what he says, after aw! But I remember, some years sin', Charley Beresford said that th' best feighters were th' sunn o' society. It seems to me that thoses 'av's bin knocked about an bin sent o' wark, carlin' for nowt nor nobody, an moor brutal nor th' general run o' folk, make th' best murderers—for it seems to me feightin' is nowt else. Th' bottom-dog, as Blatchford caws him, is after aw th' maststay o' th' British Empire. Accordin' to Lord Charley's logic, if we want a real good feightin' race, we owt to make moor slums. Th' pity on it is to me that folk get so low an so disgustin' wi' th' state o' things that they list an offer their services to th' King for 't' sake o' meight an cloos. If we want a good line o' defence, why not give aw th' unemployed guns, an let 'em be fust to tackle th' enemy? We should happen solve one o' our big problems then."

"Ay," said Tummy, "but that wouldn't fix. Suppose they took it into their yeds to use their firearms 'n shootin' dawn aw th' big capitalists an th' bosses o' these Trusts an Combines! "Suppose they drilled an manipulated their weapons like th' owd Chartists did afore they went to Peterloo. Why mon, if they made up their minds they could soon have a Revolution an be th' measturs o' th' situation."

"There's not much fear o' that," I said. "Look at th' trouble 'n Russia. Did th' Army theer stand up for th' workin' folk? Not they; when they were ordered to fire, they shot their own peaceable an innocent countryman. An it would be just th' same here. Th' poor folk has bin so used to 'bein made dur-mats-on, till they'n not enuff moral courage to defend th'irsel. Let's ha' less talk o' National Defence, an a bit moor about Rational Reform. Let's put things reet awn; let's set about makin' th' owd country a decent livin' shop; let's make it a Merrie England; let's gie th' "bottom dog" a chance to live up to his best; let's feed aw th' hungry, an find cloos for aw th' naked; an when Britain is made 't' every sense a Christian nation, then every mon will defend his country beant ony coacin' or conscription. If we han to feight for our country let's make it worth powder an shot. Th' Owd Book says that 'Righteousness exalteth a nation,' an it seems to me that if we done our best to carry out that injunction we'd not never be without a safe an sure defence."

"By th' mon!" said Tummy, after I'd done, "that's Socialism, isn't it?"

"It may be," said I, "but them's my sentiments. Let Lord Bobs retire and gie somebody else a chance. No deant he's aw reet accordin' to his line o' thinkin'; but a big nation like ours instead o' preachin' so much Peace an Goodwill, owt to try an set a better example nor spendin' aw these millions on ships an swordjers."

"National Defence! what a trumpet call to th' poor collier an th' factory bonds o' Lancashire crushed by combines! Heaw such a message owt to stir up some o' these coawnter-jumpers, an agricultural labourers under th' thumb o' th' parson an th' squire! Wouldn't it look fine seein' a collier wi' his dirty face, next to a duke in a shootin' jacket! Heaw would one o' our young factory-men look next to a navy smookin' a black clay dodger! What a theme for Rudyard Kiplin! Heaw he'd make our souls stir wi' patriotic passion as he spun out his Tommy Atkins lingo."

"I darn't know about 'Pay, pay, pay,' said Tommy, "but it seems that 't' other bit wrote in what we're moor in need on."

"Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet. Least we forget, least we forget."

"Ay, I believe thou'rt reet too, Tommy; well, 'good-neet,' if thou'rt gooin'; then let me know when thou get's thy mobilistic paper," I said as he went dawn th' fowl.

Housing the People.

THE question of Housing Reform is one th' is demanding more attention every d' from individuals and from those in authority and those interested in the subject should re. the article on the "Problem of Housing th' Poor," which appears in the April number "Pearson's Magazine." The dangers and evils of the slum dwellings in our big towns a pointed out—and beside the danger there is th' enormous cost in hard cash of every slum to th' community:

"It is a stock controversy—does the slum make the slum-dweller, or does the slum-dweller make the slum? Practical reformers know th' both propositions are true, and work to app remedies, not only to the slum people (as education, temperance reform, or lessons in hygiene) but also to the slum-houses.

"What a slum costs the community is show by the following figures dealing with a slum ar of 76 acres in a large English town, the ar having a population of about 7,000

"The death-rate in the area was 32 per 1,000 as against 16 per 1,000 for the whole town.

"The infant mortality rate was 252 per 1,000 births, as against 157 per 1,000.

"A medical mission treated in less than thr years 1,140 cases of sickness, the greater pr portion due to preventable causes. All t densities of the area lived in a state of unde health or non-health.

"Out of a population of under 7,000, th' ripients of public or private charity numbers 2,500 in these proportions:—

General hospital	625 cases
Workhouse infirmary	150 "
Orders for workhouse (half-year)	227 "
Orders for medical relief (half year)	37 "
Orders for poor relief (half-year)	48 "
Cases treated by Medical Mission	280 "
At Oldy Asylum	9 "
Children Clothed	163 "
Children fed at school in winter	236 perda
Convictions of all kinds	388 cases.
Complaints investigated by Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children	21 "
Charity in money or goods	£2600 a year
Cost to the public not less than	£10,000

"What is true of this one city is true of mo great cities. The penalty paid for overcrowd and insanitary homes are consumption, hig rate of infant mortality, high general death-rat fever and other epidemic diseases, intensificat of tendencies to drink and gamble, and find and vice, ill-treatment of children, an generally, physical deterioration in extrer degrees. Preventative action is far better th the cures enumerated above. To secure healthi people we must have fresh air and sunligh public playgrounds, home gardens, and Moth Nature."

The largest searchlight in the world is that c the top of Pike's Peak, Colorado.

Marriage is a safety-pin that often comes u fastened.

GASTRIC CATARRH AND INDIGESTION.

The root of all physical weakness is indigestion and exhausted nerve cells; when the stomach gives out innumerable troubles follow. A health stomach is our best investment.

Mrs. J. W. BEAUCHER, 24, Frederick Row, Godstone-on-Sea, was suffering from loss of food chronic indigestion and nervous weakness, with severe headaches. Nothing appeared to do her good until she took Vemo's Stomach Tonic; th famous remedy accomplished a complete cure.

Vemo's Stomach Tonic possesses marvellous strengthening and healing properties. The mo successful remedy for stomach, liver, kidney an blood diseases; especially successful in famal weakness and constipation. For purity, medicinal activity and all-round potency it has not its equ anywhere. Cures permanently. No return Price 1/1 and 2/2, at Chemists everywhere.

War's a Grand Game.

War's a grand game for those 'at stond.
Spectators viewin' th' bloody strife,
Inactive, raisin' not a hond,
Nor riskin' self, nor barterin' life.

War's a grand game for statesmen great,
'At dunno hondle sword or gun,
But bungle o'er th' affairs o' State,
While battles stern are fought an' won.

War's a grand game for millionaires
'At prize gowd more nor human lives ;
As balance souls wi' stocks an' shares,
An' sell our sons to sordid Dives.

War's a grand game for those 'at shout
Insensate, jingoistic songs,
Not knowin' what the war's about,
Or thinkin' owt o' "rights" or "wrongs."

War's a grand game for those 'at seek
To blind our eyes to "home affairs,"
When reformers loud begin to speak,
Then's th' time for layin' forrin snares.

War's a grand game for th' schemin' knaves
'At work for base an' sordid ends,
Who'd mak' us freemen into slaves,
Whilst posin' as our dearest friends.

War's a grand game for every mon
'At's gotten a loyal axe to grind,
Who shouts to those in front "Push on !"
But keeps hissel' safe far behind !

War's no grand game for those 'at mourn
For father, husband, brother, son,
Who never more will see return
The man who fought 'neath foreign sun.

War's no grand game to these lone souls ;
They rally not when th' joy bell rings
A vict'ry peal. The bell that tolls
A sadder message to them brings.

War's no grand game at th' best o' times,
An' sad it is we conno see
'At wholesale slaughter's th' worst o' crimes
When done by men 'at owt to agree.

War's no grand game for Christian folk ;
"Give life, don't take it," Jesus cried ;
"Give life, take up another's yoke,"
For others th' Saviour lived an' died.

War's no grand game for human kind,
It may do weel for savage brutes :
Let's use our powers o' heart an' mind,
With reason settle our disputes.

Let's end war's game an' learn to fight
Wi' th' nowbler weapons God has given ;
Throw out th' Dule's gospel "Might is right,"
Make peace on earth as 'tis in heaven.

SAM FITTON

HUMORIST, AUTHOR, DIALECT
READER and RECITER, Etc., Etc.

Is prepared to give whole or part Evenings at
Concerts, Co-op. Parties, Literary Gatherings,
Etc. Repertoire consisting of Humorous Songs,
Patter Sketches, Monologues, Etc., Etc.

Sam Fitton is also open to give whole or part
Readings from his Original Writings, consisting
of Humorous Sketches, Short Stories, Poems, &c.
both in and out of the Dialect.

Peter Pike, Billy Blobb, Sally Butterworth, Etc.,
of "The Cotton Factory Times."



TESTIMONIALS.

Highfield,
Haslingden,
July 14th, 1921.

As a Lancashire Humorist and Entertainer, Sam Fitton is incomparable. I have had the pleasure of hearing him on several occasions. He is certainly, in my opinion, the highest and brightest exponent of the Lancashire Dialect left to us; equal to any before him, and superior to all remaining with us. This Artist, Writer, Poet, Caricaturist, Actor, Humorist, Tragedian, Comedian, and the only great master of the Lancashire Dialect, and goodness knows what else, is, to my thinking, far ahead of all other Lancashire Entertainers. His Dialect is free from slang which so many reciters take for the genuine article. It is a treat to hear him recite his poem "My Owd Case Clock." A poem full of Humour, Pathos, Mirth, and Tears. This poem will always rank in my estimation as equal to Waugh's "Come whoam to thy childer an' me." To hear Sam Fitton tell his Funny Stories, sing his little Songs, his Monologues, his Dialect Recitations, and his Readings is one of the intellectual joys of Lancashire. Try him and get ready to laugh.

DAVID HALSTEAD,
Vice-President, Lancashire Authors' Association.

Ivy Lodge,
Helmshore,
Near Manchester,
June 4th, 1921.

During last winter Mr. Sam Fitton gave us two "Lancashire Evenings" at our Primitive Methodist School. The crowded audiences were delighted.

As an exponent of Lancashire humour, he is unrivalled, but he as easily passes from the lively to the grave and is heard to perfection in that gem of his own "My Owd Case Clock."

As a Dialect Author and Poet he is in the front rank. We are looking forward to his next visit.

SAMUEL PILLING.

To say that Sam Fitton was as good an entertainer as a writer would be saying much, but it would fail to do him justice. How could the pen convey the magic of speech and gesture? Sam is real Lancashire stuff, of course, but with a capacity for humour that simply fascinates. His genius for this kind of thing suggests a certain degree of mesmeric influence. At any rate, he is exquisitely funny, and it all seems so natural to him. I'll wager he could make the veriest misanthrope laugh, just as, when so inclined, he can draw tears of sympathy from the gayest and make the lump rise in one's throat. His repertoire is wide and varied and clean. What is more, his pieces are mostly original. Put in a nut-shell, an hour with Sam Fitton is something to dwell upon, and those who have not experienced his charm have a treat in store. Is there need to say more?

Editor, "COTTON FACTORY TIMES."

MY OWD CASE CLOCK.

BY SAM FITTON.

[COPYRIGHT.]

We o' han' cherished things no' deawt
 We someheaw feel we corn't do 'beawt ;
 Some furniture we value heigh,
 We'n things at money couldna' beigh.
 I have an owd case clock a-whoam
 I wouldna' sell for ony sum ;
 It stood ith' corner, so I'm towd,
 When first I coom to live ith' fowd ;
 It stons theer yet ; an' neet an' day,
 It measures time, an' ticks away—
 Tick ! tock ! tick ! tock !

It's cheery dial seems to say,—
 "Let's laugh to whiile the time away !"
 An' though it hasno' changed its chime,
 It's sin some changes in its time ;
 It's gazed on o' eawr heawsehold crew,
 It's watched 'em come, it's watched 'em goo ;
 When little Jack were taen one day
 It watched us side his things away ;
 An' when eawr tears begun to flow,
 It said—"Cheer up ! time heals ! I know !"
 Tick ! tock ! tick ! tock !

It's like a sentinel ith' nook ;
 Th' owd lad con read me like a book ;
 An' when I've had an extra glass,
 It seems to know, it does bi' th' mass ;
 That clock's both human an' divine ;
 One neet I geet a bit o'er th' line,
 It chuckled as it winked one ee—
 "Tha's had a drop to' mich I see !"
 It hiccupped—"Well, tha' art a fo' !"
 The beggar seemed to wobble too,—
 Tick ! tock ! tick ! tock !

When little Bill were born, th' owd clock
 Seemed fain to add one moor to th' flock ;
 But, while it smiled, it little knew
 His mother wouldna' live it through ;
 It watched us lay her in her shroud,
 An' someheaw, didno' tick so loud ;
 It seemed to say—"There's trouble here ;
 They'n lost their main-spring too I fear ;
 I'll howd my noise till t' trouble's o'er ;"
 But neaw it ticks on as before—
 Tick ! tock ! tick ! tock !

It's sin some marlocks in its time ;
 When I were young an' in my prime,
 It watched me courtin' eawr Nell,
 It seed us kiss,—but winno' tell !
 It seed me smile on th' weddin' morn,
 An' swell wi' pride when th' first were born ;
 It's sin o' th' childer in their pomp,
 It's watched 'em laugh, an' sing, an' romp ;
 An' when I've joined 'em in their play,
 It's said "I'm fain I'm wick to-day ;
 Tick ! tock ! tick ! tock !"

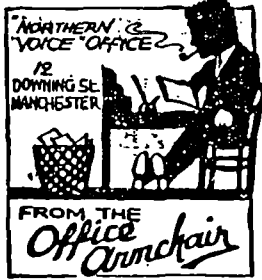
Alas ! there coom a time when trade
 Were bad, an' I felt mich afraid
 I'd ha' to sell my dear owd clock
 To pay for corn to feed my flock.
 I felt distracted ; things grew worse ;
 An' when a chap's an empty purse,
 An' hauf-a-dozen mouths to feed,
 If he's a heart, it's bound to bleed ;
 I sowd th' owd couch to beigh 'em bread,
 An' th' owd case clock looked on an' said—
 "Tick ! tock ! tick ! tock !"

I axed th' owd clock—"What mun I do ?
 I welly think tha'll ha' to goo ;
 I'm loth to part wi' thee owd lad,
 But th' childer starve, an' times are bad ;
 Say ! mun I sell thee too owd friend ?
 Or does ta' think 'at times 'ull mend ?
 I know tha'rt worth a pound or two,
 So mun we part ? come ! tell me true ?"
 I welly thowt it shook its yed ;
 It seemed to frown on me, an' said—
 "Tick ! tock ! tick ! tock !"

I didno' sell th' owd clock at o'
 For times improved ; it seemed to know ;
 It's like a dog, for work or play,
 It knows just every word I say ;
 When times are good it looks so glad ;
 It's dial drops when times are bad ;
 Then, like a sage, it ticks an' sings,
 Remindin' me 'at Time has wings ;
 An' when I've gone to—God knows wheer,
 Th' owd clock 'll still be tickin' theer—
 Tick ! tock ! tick ! tock !

Jones & Brooks Ltd., Market Street, Shaw.

PRICE THREEPENCE.



(Proletarians of all sizes! Be it known to you that there is a crisis amongst us once more. Our happy staff at No. 12 Downing Street is engaged in picking up its salaries and emoluments and preparing to "fit." No; there is to be no desertion of the one and only Voice, it is merely being transferred next door to No. 14. At present our working accommodation is so limited that we can't all squeeze in at once. We have to work on different evenings so that we may all be made to fit in as it were. Some of our male helpers are developing wonderful skill as contortionists in their efforts to perform their duties without too frequently endangering the safety of their female, or, should I say, lady colleagues. (This is not a goak.) It is a solemn truth that when the editor appears in the real work-shop and says "turn" to any individual cumrude, we all have to turn. So we're fitting to more commodious premises. And—a word in your ear—there is a real BATH in our new abode. As the poet saith, "And I declare I'm sorry for you. You very imperfect abolitionists."

What has this got to do with you? Only this: The fitting will cost money, as also will various new accessories for the new rooms. We haven't any, as you are well aware, so we are relying upon some of the bloated plutocrats in the party to send on some generous Christmas Boxes for t' Voice. Don't all speak at once. If you don't like to disclose the fact that you have a swollen surplus, you can take up some 2s. shares in our "Workers' Northern Publishing." There's no time like the present for a present. Having given you that almost imperceptible hint, I can now inform you that Christmas will be shortly upon us; on December 25th, to be precise. That means our printers will be eating roast turkey and quaffing champagne for two days. That necessitates us going to press EARLY during Xmas week. So that scribes, poets, ready-writers, and advertisement senders must have their dope, copy, reports, adverts., or whatnot, at this office No. 12 Downing Street, Manchester, not later than the first post on Saturday, December 21st, 1929. So now you know. I am giving notice in good time; for I hear the editor is shaking the dust or mud of Cottonopolis off his shapely heels on Xmas Eve, S.R. is going to Southport to study vamps, Sandham is to spend Yuletide reflecting on how to make everyone face up to their responsibilities, "Daisy Nook" is writing as a holiday task, "What a piece of Work is Man," Mack is going to Wigan with Mick, and

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PIN MONEY.

By DAISY NOOK.

Awn gettin' fed up wi' bein' axed why there's nowt i' th' Northern Voice fro' "Daisy Nook" these days. (Some on us has to wark for our livin'.) Aw tow'd ye ow were thinkin' o' standin' for th' Council again this last November.

Ye' know th' chaps i' eawr party say they durn't like women candidates because they have to do aw the wark for 'em. Well, that tale met do for the marines, but it won't go deawn wi' any woman as has had a packet. When ye've drafted aw your bills, written yore election address, booked yore speakers, canvassed every afternoon for a fortnight, an' gan eawt a lot o' th' poll cards ye' feel as if ye' were doin' a bit yoreself.

One woman candidate tow'd me as hood addressed seventy open-air meetings. "Aye," aw said, "yo're committee seed ye' comin', aw should think! Mugs wanted, eh! An' fun, too, aw rect."

Well, aw didn't address seventy meetin's, aw can tell ye'. Aw geet th' Northern Voice Edditor, an' toathree councillors, an' a parson or two, an' when they'd aw made a speech (an' they made some rattlin' good speeches), aw just geet up an' said, "Them's my sentiments, too," an' it saved me a lot o' trouble.

Well, aw were re-elected shushew, an' as there's nobbut been abeawt fifteen meetin's a week since th' election, aw went t' th' pictures one neet to see one of these "Talkies," an' aw wished as awd stopped awhoam an' saved my money. Aw durn't believe i' capital punishment, but if ever any chap did deserve to be hung it were him as invented "Talkies." S.R. says he's seen a picture co-ed "The Informer." Well, he'll see another next time he sees me. Aw've informed th' Police, th' Watch Committee, th' N.S.P.C.C., an' th' N.S.P.C.A., an' th' anti-Vivisection Society. Aw were goin' to join the anti-Vivisection, but aw shall wait neaw till th' inventor o' "Talkies" has been vivisected.

S.R. seems to know moor abeawt vamps nor one expects a decent middle-aged chap to know, but it's no wonder if he spends his spare time at th' "Talkies" he'll noan find many intelligent women theer, aw should think. He wants to be careful, he met happen meet one o' Mr. Thomas's pin money girls theer some neet, or one o' them married women as are so fond o' wark they'd rayther go an' scrub an office nor sit comfortable awhoam wi' nowt to eat in th' cupboard.

There's some rum folk abeawt these days. Why, look at them I.L.P. chaps i' Parliament as thinks an' out-o'-wark chap should have a pound a week. What would he do wi' it, aw wonder! Waste it on coal or beef, or summat like that, aw reckon. An' ten shillin' a week

for his wife! What would hoo do wi' ten shillin'! happen buy a new frock or summat wi' it. An' five shillin' a week for a child. Why, yo' could welly keep a dog on five shillin' a week.

Aw durn't know what th' world's comin' to. Warkin' folk seem to ha' gotten some idea i' their yeds as they've as mich reight to live as anybody else, an' yo' can't even make th' women understand as they ow't to stop awhoam an' starve quietly.

"What's Pin Money, 'Daisy Nook!'" says one o' these office cleaners to me. "Oh," aw says, "it's what th' Lord Privy Seal gets for nor bein' an' engine driver." "What's a Lord Privy Seal!" hoo axes then. "A Lord Privy Seal," aw says, "is a chap as goes to Canada lookin' for wark for other folk to do."

"Well, but," hoo says, "there's plenty o' wark wants doin' i' England; there's land wants cultivation, there's houses wanted, trees to plant, streets want cleanin', buildings want paintin', an' fetlin' up, an' th' roads want mendin'."

"Girls are doin' that," aw says, "for Pin Money."

"Look here, 'Daisy Nook,'" hoo says, "yo' can't help bein' a fool but ye' needn't be a liar as well."

An' that's what ye' get for tryin' to tell th' working class what causes unemployment.

A HATRY AFTERMATH.

Wakefield City Council are to promote a Bill in the coming session of Parliament to obtain statutory authority to borrow a sum of money sufficient to cover the loss which the city has suffered, or will suffer, in respect of the issue of the Wakefield 4½ Per Cent Stock, with a provision that all moneys so borrowed be paid off within a period of thirty years. For the purpose of regularising an overdraft from the bank, application is being made to the Minister of Health for a loan sanction under Section 3 of the Local Authorities (Financial Provisions) Act, 1921, for the sum of £250,000 to meet the Council's requirements, pending the enactment of the Parliamentary Bill.

After their Hatry experience, perhaps the Wakefield ratepayers will think of municipal banking.

EMPLOYEES IN H.M. DOCKYARDS.

The following figures, given in answer to a question in Parliament on November 20th, 1929, dispose of the Tory statements that the Labour Government's tentative disarmament policy has reduced the number of men employed in the Government dockyards:—

	Nov. 1st, 1929.	Nov. 1st, 1928.
Portsmouth	13,474	13,403
Devonport	11,700	11,729
Chatham	8,494	8,355
Sheerness	2,138	2,121
Pembroke Dock	105	157
Rosyth	605	561
	36,525	36,326

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WHY WOMEN SHOULD VOTE LABOUR.

By DAISY NOOK.

"Good morning, Mrs. Timms," said a weary-looking woman to her neighbour, as she opened her door and picked up the poll cards which had been thrust through the letter box over night. "What's this! Votin', is it! Eh, well, awve summut else to do nor bother wi' votin'."

"Aye, wench, we'n ow gotten plenty o' wark. There's noan many married women on th' unemployed list," replied Mrs. Timms briskly, "but yo' should try to find time to vote, aw allus do, it were hard enoof for women to get th' chance o' votin', we mun miss nowt as is goin', Mrs. Green."

"Oh, it's ow reet for yo', Mrs. Timms, wi' yore childer growin' up an' doin' their own, to worrit yore mind wi' such truck. But aw durnt howd wi' women meddlin' wi' such like things, an' as for women i' Parliament an' on th' Council— Eh dear! that's my babby skrikin again. Hoo's welly driven me mad, Awva noan had a wink o' sleep this last week. Come in an' look at her, win yo'!"

"Aye, to be sure," was the answer. "Why, whatever's to do wi' th' poor little thing! Hoo's like a bag o' bones, an' as sick as a dog. Why, Mrs. Green, why ever durnt yo tak' her to th' Welfare Centre an' see what they mak' on her theer. Yore goin' to lose her if summat isn't done for her, an' afore so long."

"Th' doctor said summat abeawt th' Welfare Centre," Mrs. Green said, "but awm noan goin' to be towd my business wi' a lot o' young hussies i' starched caps. Awve had five childer an' nowt ails tother four. There's noan finer childer i' th' street."

"Them are lads," Mrs. Timms retorted, "an' lads as will tak' a lot o' killin'. But this little wench is a bit finer stuff, an' hoo's in a poor way. Have a bit o' sense, woman, afore it's too late."

"Well, but it's a mile to th' Centre, an' it's weshin' day," said Mrs. Green, beginning to cry, "an' it's no use if they order milk an' stuff. Aw cornt get it wi' *him* on short time."

"Get your hat on, woman, an' away wi' yo'," Mrs. Timms said firmly, "if they order milk yo'll get it chep enoof. Ne'er mind whether their caps is starched or not if they done th' babby good, bless her. An' as for th' weshin', aw'll tell yo' what, it'll do her no good to have th' heawse full o' steam; leave her wi' me after dinner an' tak' th' clothes up to th' weshhouse, yo'll ha' done i' two or three hours. Machinery he banged! they'll show yo' heaw to use it, an' yo' con mangle an' iron an' bring 'em home dry. An' if yore a bit late them big lads o' yours mun get their own tea for once an' th' little uns an' ow. Yore too soft wi' 'em, woman, worritin' an' waitin' on 'em; no wonder yo' cornt feed th' babby yoursel'. An' yo' should pack 'em off to th' baths at th' week-end i' place o' leetin' th' boiler fire an'

inuckin' th' kitchen up. What dun yo' say! They'll noan goo, it's too far to walk! By gum, awd warm their onions for 'em if they towd me they wouldn't goo; they'd go to less o' them rubbishy pictures if aw had 'em to deal wi'. Send 'em into th' Park i' th' summer, there's plenty o' room an' o' mak' o' games for 'em. We'd nowt like that when we were childer, it were o' bed an' work. They durnt know they're born neawdays. An' different schoolin' to what we geet, an' ow."

"Aye," Mrs. Green sighed, "aw'r Jack's goin' in for th' scholarship, but what use will it be. Aw cornt afford to send him to th' Central if he wins it. An' there's noan mich chance on him gettin' it. Th' poor lad ne'er has a quiet minute of a neet, th' little uns kick up sich a row, an' th' babby cries till awm welly distracted, an' feyther grumbles at me; he says there's no peace awhoam, an' he fair goes mad on th' weshin' day if it happens to be wet an' aw have to dry inside. But aw shall get shut on him a bit while th' election's on. He likes goin' to th' meetin's, an' he says it's rare sport listenin' to these crazy Socialists at th' street corner. He says they know heaw to spend other folk's money reet enoof, an' th' rates ud be a bonny figure if they ow geet in. But he says they'll noan get his vote."

Mrs. Timms sniffed audibly before replying. "Well, Mrs. Green, awm a Christian woman, an' we mun ow bear us own cross, aw reckon. Bill Green's your husband, not mine, but if he left me of a neet wi' four rough lads an' a sick babby, he'd hear a better speech when he coom in nor them as he'd yerd at th' street corner. Aw th' same, it's a poor hearth wi' weat clothes hung reawnd it, but aw reckon he thinks yo' like it. So tak' my tip an' goo to th' weshhouse. Oh leave th' babby wi' me, an' as for your Jack if he wins that scholarship there's ways an' means o' gettin' a bit o' help. Send th' little uns to bed of a neet an' bring th' babby i' eawr heawse while Jack does his homework, an' if it's noan quiet enoof then for yore Bill tell him there's plenty o' pappers up at th' library, an' th' baths is next door, an' ow."

"It's a pity they're so far off," Mrs. Green said, "we seem to ha' *nowt* at this end o' th' teawn. Th' Welfare Centre's up i' th' top ward, an' th' library an' baths, an' weshhouse, an' ow. We'n nobbut a bit of a recreation greawnd deawn here, an' it's a penny car to th' Park; it hardly seems jannock. Heaw is it, Mrs. Timms?"

"Well, it depends a good bit what scoart o' folk we hau on th' Council, Mrs. Green. There's a toathree Labour chaps, wot yore Bill coos crazy Socialists on for th' top word, an' a woman or two. But you've no time to vote, yo' say, an' yore Bill's votin'

Continued in column 4.

CAN LABOUR RULE? Inquire at Birkenhead.

When Labour secured power on Birkenhead Town Council a year last November it set itself at once to introduce certain improvements. There were (a) Reorganisation of the Corporation Departments, (b) Formation of a Direct Labour Department, and (c) Formation of a Coal-purchasing Committee. The result of the reorganisation of the corporation departments has been that the profits of four departments, £53,879, have been handed over in relief of rates, and there has been a saving of 90 per cent on cartage costs. By means of the direct labour department the Corporation has saved £3,000 as compared with the lowest outside private tender. Before Labour formed its Coal-purchasing Committee each department bought its own fuel supplies. By the Labour plan of bulk purchase a saving of £18,000 has already been made. Because of its efficient financial policy the Labour-governed Council has (a) built 700 houses to let; (b) reduced house-purchase charges; (c) reduced tram, bus, and ferry fares; (d) reduced gas charges by 4d. per cubic foot; (e) reduced electricity charges by 15 per cent; (f) reduced water charges by 1d. in the £; (g) ensured a minimum weekly pension of 27s. 6d. for each blind person in the town; (h) thoroughly overhauled all the main roads. In addition, and in spite of an increased demand for money from the Board of Guardians, Birkenhead is the only town on the Merseyside to reduce rates. Can Labour rule? Ask yourself. The Birkenhead man or woman who dares to vote Liberal or Tory on November 1st needs attention from a brain specialist.

Continued from column 3.

Tory, along wi' a lot moor as wants their brains examinin'. They swallow ow this stuff abeawt th' rates goin' up if Labour gets in. An' who tells 'em th' tale, dun yo' think! Why, chaps as has baths i' their own heawse, an' sarvants to do th' weshin', plenty o' books o' their own, an' money to send their childer to Boardin' Skoos, an' a motor car to bring 'em to th' shop wheer they mak' their money, an' grudge payin' rates for. They'n moor sense nor live i' th' teawn like we han to. Aw tell yo', workin' folk are as blind as bats. By gum, it's welly ten o'clock, aw mun get a bit o' wark done, shushew. Yo'll tak' th' babby to th' Welfare reight away, wernt yo'!"

"Aw will that, Mrs. Timms, an' awm sum an' fain as yo' coom in. An' aw'll send th' lads to th' baths, as yo' say, for aw fair dread Friday neets. We mun have a bit of a talk abeawt this votin' afore th' election comes off. Aw'll tell eawr Bill what yo' say abeawt th' top ward, but so what th' men does it lukes to me as if women should vote Labour for th' sake o' th' little childer as cornt help theirsels."

"That's reight, wench. Good mornin'."

IN PRAISE O' LANCASHIRE.

By TEDDY ASHTON.

Eaur Lanky dialect's rough, but straight ;
 No lappin'-up o' nowt ;
 Swift fro' th' heart to th' lips it runs,
 Noan haue-a-mile reasund th' fowt.
 We ha' not time to waste i' words,
 We speik an' get it done ;
 An' Lancashire-folk an' their dialect
 Are as feyther an' as son.

There's gam an' prank in eaur dialect,
 There's t' breeze an' t' breath o' th' moor ;
 There's allus a merry joke or th' jump,
 There's pity for them 'at's poor.
 There's bit o' skit, a bank o' wit,
 An' sharp an' shut-up snaps
 For foes what thinks us gobbins, or
 Taka us for gawmless chaps.

Eaur dialect's strung an' stout i' sport,
 It glories in a game ;
 It con wrestle an' run, an' swim, an' shoot,
 An' hey for its footba' fame !
 An' it's tender enoof for courtin' wi'—
 Up, chaps, an' clink yore glasses !
 For that mun 'be a bonny talk
 That wins eaur bonny lasses !

By th' mak' who talks o' London fowt,
 Wi' its snidey sniff an' slang ?
 What's good i' London's Lanky-made—
 We con best it wi' a bang !
 It's Lancashire made England, lads,
 It's Lancashire keeps it gooin' ;
 An' when Lancashire gies o'er workin'—then
 Owd England goes to ruin !

For we were th' fust wi' railways, lads,
 Machines, an' thrutchin' trade ;
 There's not a foreign market, lads,
 But what it's Lanky-made.
 Eaur Lanky lads an' their gaffers
 Has built aw th' bloomin' earth ;
 An' there isn't a job that's wo'th owt
 But Lancashire gan it birth.

Eaut yon in dall'd hot Indy, lads,
 Wheer th' white mon pays a bill,
 Eaur lads has put up factories
 Wi' Lancashire word an' will ;
 Eaur boilers an' eaur engines
 Roars an' whistles in Japan ;
 To Russia—Amerikky—everywheer !
 Eaur talk an' trade we'n ta'n.

For Lancashire's clever fingers
 Has spanned aw' th' world wi' steel,
 Yo' oon yer eaur dialect whirrin'
 Wherever there's a wheel.
 An' England bosses th' world, that's true,
 But when aw's said an' spun,
 It's Lancashire runs Owd England,
 An' that's heaw th' triok's been done.

It weren't yore chirpin' Cockneys
 That fit up th' world wi' gear,
 Made Lancashire into th' engine-heause
 An' Britannia th' engineer ;
 Made Britannia th' engineer, lads,
 That sets th' fly-wheel agate—
 Not Cockneys—neow ! but Lanky lads,
 That's at it soon an' late.

An' though we're best at workin',
 We're fust at feightin', too,
 For Lanky dialect an' lads
 Fowt weel at Waterloo ;
 An' in th' greit European War
 Mony a victory were won,
 By a bit o' Lanky dialect
 At th' trigger end o' th' gun.

For freedom, too, we've fowt 'n,
 An' been th' fust its flag to raise ;
 Eaur hondlooms wove its banner
 I' th' brave owd Chartist days !
 Grand unions shield eaur labour neaw,
 An' it's truth we're speikin' when
 We say no workers nowheer
 Lives like Lancashire workin' men.

So give us th' good owd dialect
 That warms eaur hearts an' whums,
 That sawders us together,
 An' that cheeans us to eaur chums.
 It may be rough-an'-ready, lads,
 An' noan so fal-lal smart,
 But it's full o' goo an' gumption,
 An' gradely good at th' heart !

SUMMAT ABEAUT CO-OPERATION.

Ther's some folk at think they wouldno' be welcome in a co-op. society, simply becos' they helung to th' black-coat brigade. Bu' they're gradely mista'en. They forget as th' owd clog an' shawl days has gone, an' Lancashire wimmen folk, even iv they do go to th' mill in a shawl on wickdays, con turn eaut i' garments as 'ud mek sum o' them West End fine lasses stare above a bit. Neaw that th' C.W.S. is mekkin' ladies' clooathes ov all sorts ther's no deaubt at a' that Lancasher (ay, an' Yorksher, too) is as breet as Middlesex or any other ceaunty so far as dressin' up's concerned.

It's on'y another proof o' th' vally o' co-operation. Aw were fair capt t'other neet when aw met owd Nancy o' th' Lone End. Aw knew hoo'd lost her owd mon, an' aw naturally thowt hoo'd be a bit deawn i' th' meauth abeaut it. Bur i'stead o' that, hoo lookt as iv hoo'd lost a meg an' fund a bob! Iv my owd rib lookt as peart as her, aw shud expect nowt less than a C.W.S. kipper fur mi baggin'. (Bi th' mass, lad, has ta ivver tasted one o' them kippers? Yo' con buy a peaund in a cardboard wrapper, straight from Yarmouth, for eightpence, an' they fair mek' yo' brast yorsel' wi' eytin'.) Ha'ivver, let's get back to Nancy.

"Hello, Nancy," aw sed. "Heaw art ta gerrin' on? Tha'rt lookin' weel."

"Aye," shoo ses, "aw'm noan so bad considerin'. Aw've had a bit o' good luck."

"Heaw's that?" aw axes. "Aw thowt tha'd had sum bad luck lately," meanin' th' deeach ov her owd chap.

"Yigh, an' soa aw did," hoo ses. "But aw've had a bit ov help that's made things a lot easier for me. Yo' known as aw've allus spent a' mi wages at th' co-op. becos' o' th' divvy. When poor Jack deed aw had a nice bit o' divvy saved up, and it come in varry useful. Bu' when aw went for t' draw a bit to pay th' expenses, aw wur capt when th' secketary sed to me, he sed: 'Why, Mrs. Tomlinson, iv yor husband's deead ther's some money comin' to yo' from th' Co-op. He wor insured, yo' know.' Neaw, aw didno' know, bu' th' secketary were reet. Aw'd bin spendin', on th' average, a hundert peaund a year, an' they giv' me four shillin' in th' peaund o' that, on th' top o' mi divvy. It come to mooar than twenty peaund, did th' insurance. Why, eaur Jack wur one o' th' best, bur he nivver giv' me soa mich as that at one time in his life. Aw corn't tell yo' heaw mich it's chered me up. Iv ivver there wur a friend i' need it's th' Co-op.!"

Aw think hoo's reet, an' all. What aw say is this: What wi' th' quality o' th' goods they sell, th' productions o' th' C.W.S., an' th' divvy, an' th' Collective Life Insurance, aw think we shud a' do weel to join th' Co-op., whether we wear black cooats or not. Aw'm as praad as a pup wi' two tails becos it started at Rachda'!