

**A HISTORY OF WOOLLEN FRAMEWORK
KNITTING BASED ON NW LEICESTERSHIRE**



BY SAMUEL T STEWART – July 2021

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- A HISTORY OF THE WOOLROOMS IN WORTHINGTON PARISH

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AN OVERVIEW OF THE WOOLLEN FRAMEWORK KNITTING INDUSTRY

This publication only deals with the framework knitting of Woollen products.

Framework knitting was a characteristic industry of the English East Midlands. The knitting frame was invented in 1589 by the Rev William Lee of Calverton. It was at first a simple machine, but was steadily developed through the eighteenth century. The first cotton stockings were made on a frame in Nottingham in 1730 using cotton yarn imported from India. Samuel Unwin (1712-99) and Jedediah Strutt (1726-97), leading figures in Industrial Revolution in the East Midlands, were both concerned with development of knitting frames.

By the 1840s frames could be built for worsted, cotton, silk, lambs' wool, merino, angola and alpaca yarns, and they could be adapted to knit gloves, shirts, vests, shawls, cravats, drawers, children's hoods and night caps. Most knitters employed seamers' and stitchers' to finish the garments they produced.

Oliver Cromwell gave framework knitters their first charter in 1657; it was confirmed by Charles II in 1663. After this, the London Framework Knitters' Company regulated the trade and limited the number of apprentices taken on (who served a seven-year apprenticeship), and controlled fabric quality.

The early hosiery industry based on William Lee's knitting frame was centered on London, but for various reasons, the industry moved to the Midlands from the middle of the seventeenth century, and eventually the three counties of Leics, Notts & Derbys, became the main hosiery making areas of England. Leicestershire sheep provided a good supply of long stapled wool which was ideally suitable for worsted spinning and knitting. By 1851 there were knitters in 220 parishes in the East Midlands, with 4,000 frames in Leicester, 1,750 in Hinckley and 906 in Loughborough.

It is recorded that the first frame to be set up in Leicestershire was in 1640, and owned by William Iliffe at Hinckley. By 1750, there were reportedly about 1,800 knitting frames making woollen hose in Leicester and the surrounding areas.

In the late 18th century, the most prosperous industry in many Leicestershire villages was framework knitting. A framework knitter was often referred to as a "Stockinger". It was a semi-skilled industry, and children from about 12 years of age could be trained to do the work. In rural areas it was largely a family cottage industry. In the late 1700's, framework-knitters locally would have earned between 7s. to 17s. per week dependant on various factors such as efficiency and whether they were employed under the Putting Out trade (see page 17).

In the early 1800's though, the knitting industry was in crisis. Due to the Napoleonic wars, the demand for hosiery declined steeply, leaving framework knitters without work and falling into poverty. This was the period when the common phrase "*As poor as a Stockinger*" came into being. As a result of this, many hosiers increased the frame rents which only made the situation worse.

This financial distress often led to civil unrest. As early as 1779, angry framework knitters smashed 300 stocking frames and torched a house in Nottingham when Parliament refused to set a fair wage.

There were many different roles in the industry performed by both adults and children. Seamers stitched the seams of the hosiery; winders wound thread onto bobbins; and the intricate work of embroidering and 'chevening' (adding decorative raised stitching) was usually done by girls.

Framework knitters of all ages suffered from eye complaints because the stitches were so tiny; many became extremely short-sighted. To aid their delicate work, the knitters would suspend a large globe filled with water in front of a lamp to act as a lens to condense the light into a concentrated beam.

Trouble flared again during 1811–12 when cheap and nasty stockings ('cut-ups') flooded the market. 'Cut-ups' were made on 'wide frames', which had been previously used for making pantaloons before they fell out of fashion. Fabric made on these frames was cut into pieces, then sewn together to make stockings. Wages fell as a result of the influx of cut-ups and as a result this eventually resulted in the Luddite disturbances, thought to have been originally instigated by Ned Ludd in Nottingham. Luddite attacks continued for several years, but an act of Parliament introduced in 1812 that imposed the death penalty for machine breaking, helped to curb these activities (see the feature on the Luddites - page 17).

Wages varied hugely according to the type of goods made, the season, and changes in fashion. Knitters often struggled to make ends meet as they had to pay for frame-rent, candles, coals, needles, and other 'shop costs' out of their own wages. These frame-rents were a constant grievance because they had to be paid even if no work was available. Sometimes the knitters were paid in goods instead of money (the 'truck system' - see page 29). William Felkin, investigating in the 1840s, reported that the average weekly wages in the Midlands ranged from 4s to 8s weekly after costs and rent. In the 1840s, a narrow frame could make 480 women's cotton hose each year.

During the first half of the eighteenth century the textile industry in northwest Leicestershire changed rapidly from one often undertaken by by-occupational craftsmen on rural smallholdings to one based on a rapidly growing, proletarian workforce. However, in spite of the installation nearby of power-driven, worsted spinning mills from around 1790 onwards, hosiery factories were not established to any great extent until the middle of the nineteenth century. The transition from rural household to urban factory therefore took a long time to complete. It was by no means a logical, inevitable or progressive transition.

By the middle of the 19th century, competition was coming in from the introduction of the wide frame which enabled several items (stockings or gloves for example) to be made at once. These were difficult to accommodate in the small cottages of the framework knitters, and the rural knitters preferred the narrow frame, where only one stocking could be produced at once. Much domestic industry continued to operate alongside both factory and workshop operations. This was particularly so in the many rural areas, where it usually predated both the factory and the workshop operations of an industrial village.

A domestic worker may have worked from a room in a cottage (see following photograph), or from a dedicated workshop on the premises, depending on space available. Domestic production tended to be controlled by the hosiers and undertakers' in the eighteenth and nineteenth century through the "putting out" trade (see page 17).

Towards the end of the 19th century, steam driven-driven hosiery factories came into being which saw the end of the framework knitting industry, but one of the advantages of this was it also enabled those engaged in the hosiery trade to earn better wages. William Cotton's steam-powered 'rotary frame' (1860s) made ten stockings at once. By the 1890s, a self acting circular machine, tended by one person, created 120,000 stitches per minute. Mr Cotton's new machines spread worldwide and were used until after the Second World War. Only a few knitters were now using the old frames to make specialist items.

EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN

The stocking-frames were often worked by children. The Second Report of the Commissioners: Trades and Manufactures, an investigation into children's employment in the early 1840s, found that at Nottingham: "When the boys come to ten or 12 they begin to work in the frame; some begin at nine." At Leicester, framework knitter John Grant said that girls began knitting worsted stockings at "nine or ten" years old. Children worked the same hours as adults, which was often a 14-hour day excluding mealtimes.

It took children three to six months to master one of the most difficult skills on the machine: 'meeting the presser'. The knitter's hand and foot had to work together so that the frame moved up while at the same time bringing down the 'presser' and throwing the work over the needle heads.

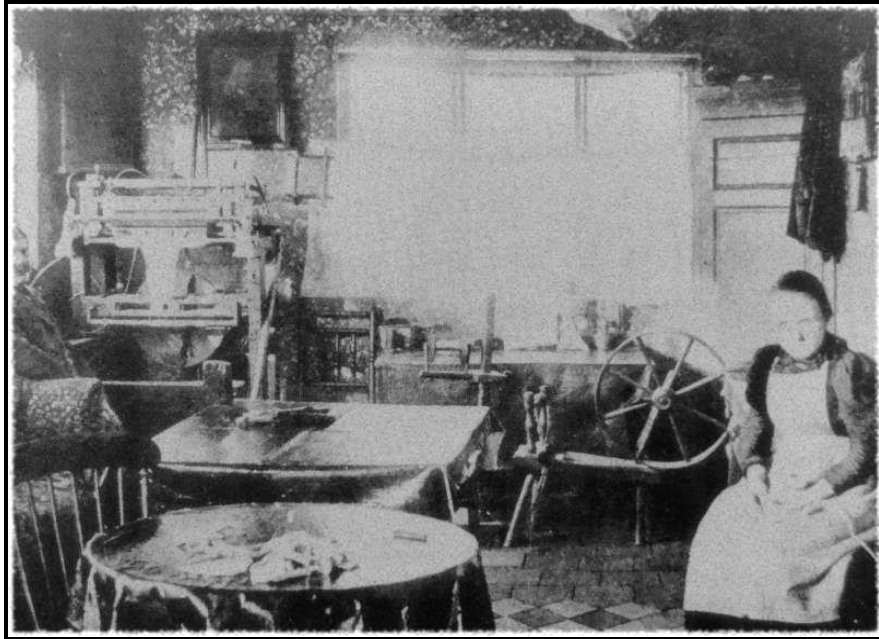
Very young children helped with the work at home too in the mid 19th century. Cornelius Smith, a silk glove maker, said: "It is a general custom in the hosiery trade for the mechanics to set their children, of both sexes, to seam and wind at the age of seven or eight; many begin at an earlier age."

The children who worked at seaming, chevening and winding earned from 1s (5p) to 4s 6d (22½p) per week, depending on their age and skill. By this date, very few children were apprenticed to framework knitters, except those bound by the parish authorities under the Poor Laws. In Leicester alone, nearly 13,000 under 18s worked in the industry.

In addition to the long hours, the workshops' dense, close atmosphere affected the workers' health and child cheveners' often fainted while stitching. Framework knitters of all ages suffered from eye complaints because the stitches were so tiny; many became extremely short-sighted. To aid their delicate work, the knitters would suspend a large globe filled with water in front of a lamp to act as a lens to condense the light into a concentrated beam.

The above information on children's employment was taken from an article on the internet by Sue Wilkes on exploring the world of framework knitting.

The 1833 Royal Commission on Children in Factories found that: '...They are, many of them, unhealthy and dyspeptic; ...from the long period of labour endured in a close and confined atmosphere....I can tell a stockinger well by his appearance; there is a paleness and certain degree of emaciation and thinness about them... hopeless poverty is producing fearful demoralisation....'



A TYPICAL FRAMEWORK KNITTERS COTTAGE



A FRAMEWORK KNITTER IN HIS COTTAGE

THE LUDDITE MOVEMENT

William Nunn, a Nottingham lace manufacturer, reported to the Home Office in London on 6 December 1811 that 'many hundreds of letters have been sent signed "Ludd", threatening lives and to burn and destroy the houses, frames and property of most of the principal manufacturers'. There are many stories relating to how the name of Ned Ludd originated but the general conclusion reached is that he was never thought to be a single real person. The term referred to a leader, and could be assumed by anyone leading a group of frame breakers. Contemporaries often used fictitious names like this to ensure that they retained anonymity. So, letters or visits in the name of Ludd were used to indicate where they had come from without giving away any particular people

The Luddite rebellion erupted in 1811. In Nottingham the hosiery workers took action, and the authorities, local and national, feared open revolution and every measure was taken against this group of people.

On 10th November 1811 the movement took a sinister turn when John Westley of Arnold was shot dead during a disturbance in Bulwell. This resulted in an increase in the ferocity of the breakers and troops were summoned, together with the militia and yeomanry cavalry to try to establish order, apparently without a great deal of success.

On 15 December 1811 the Prince Regent issued a proclamation offering a reward of £50 to any party instrumental in the conviction of a frame breaker, and notices to this effect were quickly distributed through the country.

The movement spread rapidly through Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lancashire, Cheshire and Yorkshire. It has been estimated (Durvall) that the Luddites destroyed between 1300 and 1400 frames, which amounted to some 4% of the total in the UK. In Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, where most frame breaking occurred, the destruction amounted to 12% of the two counties frames.

On the 28th of December, an agreement was signed between the hosiers and the knitters designed to ensure that average wages would rise. The Duke of Newcastle, the lord lieutenant of the county, hoped this would be the end of the unrest. Unfortunately, some Nottingham knitters remained dissatisfied and some hosiers refused to be bound by the terms of the agreement.

A new law was rushed through Parliament as an "emergency measure". The Destruction of Stocking Frames, etc. Act of 1812 was passed with an overwhelming majority and received royal assent on the 20th of March: frame-breaking became a capital felony (a crime punishable by death). All measures included in the Act were only to be applied temporarily, and were duly set to expire on 1 March 1814.

LUDDITES ARRIVE IN OSGATHORPE

This account has been compiled from the depositions of witnesses and accused which can be found at HO 42/119.

5th December 1811: Luddites soliciting contributions in Osgathorpe, Leicestershire

On Thursday the 5th December, framework-knitters in Leicestershire received visits from Luddites soliciting contributions for the cause. William Brown Junior of Osgathorpe was making his way through the village near to the home of a Joseph Woodcock when a fellow framework-knitter Thomas Maton Harris beckoned him inside to meet three strangers. Harris explained that he wanted Brown to gather together the head stockingers and bring them back to Woodcock's house, with a veiled threat that if he did not he "would be worse for it."

Brown collected his father, William Brown Senior, as well as William Hardy and William Davenport Senior and headed back to Woodcock's house for 5 p.m. to find others from the neighbourhood gathered there, including a Hosier, Thomas Gilbert. When there, Thomas Maton Harris took the three men into the parlour and presented them with a letter from Ned Lud, which read:

"Gentleman all — Ned Lud's compliments unto you and hope you will give a trifle towards supporting his army as he well understands the act of breaking up not just frames: if you comply with this it will be well, if not, I shall call upon you myself. Edward Lud"

Hardy had no money on him, and had to borrow a shilling from Maton Harris, contributing sixpence. Davenport had a number of frames in his workshop, and fearing they would be broken by Ned Lud's army if he refused contributed 1 shilling sixpence for himself and another shilling for his son. William Brown Senior gave 2 shillings. Hardy noticed that in total, 7 shillings and 6 pence had been laid upon the table by those present. Maton Harris asked Gilbert if he would like to contribute as well, but Gilbert said nothing and promptly left the house.

Hardy returned home and never saw the 3 strangers again. Gilbert however, returned later to Woodcock's house to find Maton Harris still present. Maton Harris told him 'in an apparent friendly way' that his frames, along with those of Messrs Johnson were to be broken by the Luddites.

THE FINAL EXECUTION OF LUDDITES IN LEICESTER AT THE NEW BRIDEWELL DROP NEAR THE INFIRMARY

The Leicester Chronicle - Friday 18th April 1817:

EXECUTION OF

Thomas Savage, Joshua Mitchell, John Amos, Wm. Towle, John Crowder and Wm. Withers, for entering Messrs. Heathcote and Co's factory, at Loughborough, and aiding and abetting the shooting at John Asher; Thomas Babington, for setting fire to a stack of oats belonging to Mr. John Moore, of Newbold Verdon.

About half past five o'clock on Thursday morning, the above unfortunate men were removed from the County Gaol in a covered cart, escorted by a squadron of Hussars, to the New Bridewell, adjoining the Infirmary, where they immediately proceeded to prayer and continued very devoutly engaged the greater part of the morning. About twelve o'clock, they made their appearance on the platform, chained together by the wrist. Savage was placed first; Mitchell, second; Amos, third; Towle, fourth; Crowder, fifth; Withers, sixth; and Babington, seventh.

After bowing to the vast numbers of persons assembled, Savage shortly addressed them as follows:—

"My dear Brethren, I am now addressing you as a criminal. I shall not say a great deal. I hope you will take warning by our untimely fate, and not regard Man, but God. I feel confident of meeting my saviour hereafter and hope to be forgiven. I did intend to say more, but I have since declined the idea. In behalf of myself and fellow sufferers, I beg to return thanks to Mr. Vaughan & Mr. Hayton, for the attention they have shewn to us.—Farewell!"

Amos addressed the spectators—"Friends and Fellow-Countrymen—You now see six young men going to suffer for a crime they are not guilty of, (alluding, we presume, to the firing at Asher) for the man who committed the crime will soon be at large. I would have you take warning by our fate, and be careful what company you keep. Farewell!"

Babington said, "Gentlemen—I am as innocent as God is true, and [looking up,] God will witness it.—Farewell!"

Mitchell wished to read a paper, but was not permitted. Amos then invited the crowd to join them in singing the following Hymn, which he gave out, two lines at a time, in a most audible and distinct manner, and was joined therein by Savage, Mitchel, Towle, &c. with equally firm voices.

HYMN

How sad our state by nature is!
Our sin, how deep it stains!
And SATAN binds our captive minds
Fast in his slavish chains.
But there's a voice of Sovereign Grace
Sounds from the sacred word;
Ho! ye despairing sinners come,
And trust upon the Lord.
O may we hear th' Almighty call,
And run to this relief!
We would believe thy promise Lord;
O help our unbelief!
To the blest fountain of thy blood,
Teach us, O Lord, to fly!
There may we wash our spotted souls
From sins of deepest dye!
Stretch out thine arm, victorious King,
Our reigning sins subdue;
Drive the old dragon from this seat,
And form our souls anew.

Poor, guilty, weak, and helpless worms,
On thy kind arm we fall;
Be thou our strength our righteousness,
Our JESUS and our all!

The last short offices of devotion being concluded, Mr. Musson and the Executioner proceeded to adjust the ropes about the culprits' necks, during which the prisoners shook hands with each other, and bade a last farewell to several of their friends whom they recognized before them, throwing to each some oranges, with a request that they might be given to their children, &c.

Having shook hands with the High Sheriff, Clergyman, the Gaoler, &c. one of the unfortunate men (Amos) at about half past twelve, gave a signal by stamping his foot, when the fatal board fell and they were launched into eternity without much struggling, with the exception of Mitchell, who appeared strongly convulsed for several minutes.

Almost throughout the whole of the awful ceremony they conducted themselves with a degree of firmness seldom witnessed on such a melancholy occasion. Though not insensible to religious impression, they appeared to await their approaching end with a composure we scarcely know how to express. Savage, who was a fine, tall, well-dressed, sensible looking man, appeared to be offering up his prayers with great earnestness when he was tied up. Mitchell, a well-made, bold-looking, well-dressed man, did not appear quite so devout. He assisted in adjusting Savage's rope, as well as his own, with an unexampled coolness, worthy of a better fate. Amos, a tall, strong, decently dressed man, witnessed his fate with a smile upon his countenance, and seemed to be a man possessing great strength of mind. Towle, a fresh looking youth, betrayed no symptoms of agitation, until towards the close of the tragic scene, when, on the cap being pulled over his face, he evidently seemed much affected. Crowder also seemed much agitated towards the last, as did Withers a little, which he evinced by a restlessness in standing.

It is to be hoped that the dreadful example now made, here and at Nottingham, will operate in putting an end to a system which has caused so much terror and alarm in this and a neighbouring county, and that Justice will now be satisfied. For ourselves, we are of opinion, with a celebrated writer, that "It is not the intenseness of the pain that has the greatest effect on the mind, but its continuance; for our sensibility is more easily and more powerfully affected by weak but repeated impressions, than by a violent, but momentary, impulse;" and consider we that "the death of a criminal is a terrible but momentary spectacle, and therefore a less efficacious method of deterring others, than the continued example of a man deprived of his liberty, condemned, as a beast of burthen, to repair, by his labour, the injury done to society. *If I commit such a crime, says the spectator to himself, I shall be reduced to that miserable condition for the rest of my life.* A much more powerful preventative than the fear of death, which men always behold in distant obscurity."

A troop of Huzzars were in attendance on the above occasion, and we understand the Yeomanry Cavalry were also in readiness in case any attempt to rescue or disorder should have been made.—happily, however, the whole passed over without any interruption, the unfortunate malefactors having experienced every accommodation which the humanity of the High Sheriff and the Gaoler, was capable of affording under such circumstances.

The execution being generally understood to take place on Monday, thousands of persons from all parts of this and adjoining counties thronged the town on that day. The postponement of the execution, it seems, was in consequence of the County Sessions commencing the early part of the week. It is computed not less than 15,000 persons were present on Thursday.

**THE TRIAL OF THE REMAINING "LOUGHBOROUGH JOB" LUDDITES, AT
LEICESTER ASSIZES 1st APRIL 1817**

Trial of Thomas Savidge, Joshua Mitchell, Wm. Withers, William Towle, John Amos, John Crowder, and James Watson, the firing a gun at John Asher.

James Watson, 21
William Towle, 22
John Clarke, 28
Samuel Caldwell, 29
Joshua Mitchell, 29
John Amos, 30
William Withers, 33
Thomas Savage, 39
John Crowther, 40

On Tuesday morning, about eight o'clock, the above prisoners were put to the bar, along with Samuel Caldwell, otherwise Big Sam, the Jury were called and sworn, without any difficulty, consisting of the following gentleman:—

Humphrey Cartwright,
William Perceval,
John Eames,
William Flint,
Thomas Simms,
Saville Charles Hardy,
William Southernwood,
William Cooper,
Alpheus King,
Henry Ogden,
Thomas Penford,
John Earpe.

The indictment was read over to the Jury, which charged the prisoners with having, on the 28th day of June last, unlawfully and maliciously shot at John Asher, with intent to kill and murder. Another count of the indictment stated that John Blackburne shot Asher, and the prisoners were aiding, abetting, and assisting, and there were other variations.

Sergeant Vaughan addressed the Court at great length, and then called Mr. John Bowden, who gave evidence to the same purport as on the day before.

In the midst of his examination, the Court was told into some confusion, by Samuel Caldwell, one of the prisoners at the bar, falling down, in strong convulsions. He was carried out, and bled, and in about an hour, during which time the proceedings were staid, was again placed at the bar in a chair. About two minutes he appeared as though

he was asleep, with his head inclined against Crowder, who sat next him. Some cordials were administered to him, and the opinion of Mr. Palmer and Dr. Frere taken, as to whether he was able to take his trial, and make his defence. The latter gentleman was sworn, and stated that the prisoner, Caldwell, had been in a state of convulsion, arising from agitation of mind, which had extended to a state of insensibility. It was probable that at intervals he might be able to attend to what was going forward, but the convulsions were likely to return, and be followed by a state of syncope. It was possible that he might not be able to take his trial any better at a future day, for the same circumstances might produce the same effect.

Caldwell was ordered to be taken away from the bar and the trial of the other prisoners to be proceeded in.

The examination of Mr Boden was then concluded.

John Asher, the man who was shot at, and Mr. Palmer, the surgeon, gave in their evidence to the Court; this was necessarily the same as that detailed in the trial of Clarke on the previous day, and there is no necessity of a repetition of it.

John Blackborne, was examined by Mr. Sergeant Vaughan, as on the day before, and deposed much to the same purport.

William Burton deposed that in June last he worked at Arnold. On Sunday the 23d of that month, he went to see his parents at Old Basford, where he saw William Towle, who asked him if he had any notion of making one in a bit of a job. Witness asked him what sort of a job it was, he told him it was the same as that done at Radford. Witness asked where it was to be, but Towle would not tell him; he asked him when it was to take place, and Towle said on the Friday following, about thirteen or fourteen miles from Nottingham. Witness said he had not money enough to take him so far and back again, but Towle told there would be 5l. a man and all expenses paid. Witness said as he had never been in any thing of the sort, he did not care if he did go. Towle asked him where he might get another, he answered he might take some of them that were at Radford with him, Diggle, or Barker, or Henfrey. He said he did not like to take Diggle or Henfrey, because they drank the money for the Radford job in the middle of the week, and that led to suspicion; and as to the other, he was apprentice, and his master and him might fall out if he were away so long. Just then witness saw Watson coming up, and said, there's Watson yonder, he has been a soldier, and perhaps he'll stand. When Watson came up to them, Towle asked him if he had any objection to make one in a bit of a job. Watson said no, and asked what it was, at the same time offering to find another man if he wanted him. Towle said he did not want another; it was not going to be a poaching, nor nothing of that kind. Witness told him no, it was a very serious job, and not to be laughed at. Towle added that it was using a bit of a hammer. Watson agreed to go and they parted, but they were to meet again on the Thursday night following. Witness got to Basford about dark hour on Thursday evening, and saw William Towle, and they appointed to meet the next morning in Damme's meadow, between five and six o'clock. He went there accordingly, and saw Watson and Towle, when the latter informed them both that the job was to be done at Loughborough. The three went down the larkdale and met a man whom witness did not know, but he seemed to know Towle, and gave him four pistols. Witness does not know that he has ever seen the man since. They went to the Peach Tree public house, but it was not open. Hill, Mitchel, Amos, Crowder, and Slater joined them. They all went down Shaw's-lane together. Soon after the Peach Tree

was opened, and they all went in. Himself, Wm. Towle, Watson, Hill, Mitchel, Amos, Crowder, Slater, and C. Blackborne were present, and they had some ale and penny bread and bacon. The landlady, landlord, and servant waited. Witness, Towle, Watson, Mitchel, and C. Blackborne went out, intending to go by the coach to Loughborough. They went some place under the Long-row, he did not know what the place was called, the coach was just going, and none went by it. They then went to the White Lion, but that coach was just gone. They went back to the Peach Tree, and it was agreed that some of them should walk, and others go by the coach. Witness, W. Towle, C. Blackborne, and Watson were to walk. Witness and Watson went one way, and Blackborne and Towle another; they were to meet at the canal bridge. Those left at the Peach Tree, to come by the coach in the afternoon, were Slater, Hill, Amos, Crowder, and Mitchel. They joined together at the canal bridge, and after having passed the Trent, they went along the fields, when Towle produced two large pistols, which were loaded with black cartridges, and fired them off. C. Blackborne put on Towle's great coat, for he had a blue waistcoat and sleeves on, and he was afraid without that was covered he might be suspected. Blackborne put the pistols into the inside pockets of the great coat. Towle had a corduroy jacket and pantaloons on. Witness had a velveteen jacket and corduroy breeches. Blackborne said it would not do to be altogether; he therefore gave witness and Watson 5s. and they divided two and two. Blackborne and Towle went first, and they were to join again at Bunny. He and Watson got there first, and called for some ale and cheese, and while there the other two came. When they left that place, Towle said he Blackborne were old hands, and the others were young ones, and therefore they would divide differently, Towle and he went together, and Blackborne took Watson. They were to join again at Hoton. They went to the Bell, at Hoton, he and Towle got there first, and called for something to drink; in about ten minutes the other two came. They did not claim acquaintance just then, but appeared to be strangers. Watson had a smock frock on. A man of the name of Spencer, a gardener, was there, and there was a disturbance between him and his wife; he had been out all week drinking, and she wanted him to go home. They all sung, but had not joined parties then. Towle sung a song, the chorus of which was—

"Damn such laws, and so say I."

A skinner came in, and had a biggish rough dog with him, which was taken a good deal of notice of. Towle complained that he had had nothing to eat that day, and he wanted something. The skinner replied, the landlord was a butcher, and they might have something he dare say. Some mutton chops were therefore ordered and cooked. Towle said to Blackborne and Watson, you may as well join us, we are all on the tramp, and we'll go together. Upon this they all joined at the mutton chops. They staid four or five hours, and all went away together. This was about half past four o'clock, they went on the road to Loughborough. As they were going, a coach passed them, of which were Hill and Mitchell, coming from Nottingham. When the coach first appeared in sight, Blackborne and Towle went over a gate into a close, but when it was gone they came out again, and altogether went forwards to Loughborough. When they drew near, one person in a green coat met them, whom we did not know, but the man knew Towle and Blackborne, and turned back with them. Witness and Towle went to the Seven Stars, the man in a green coat went with them, drank once and then went away; several other persons were drinking in the room at the time. Blackborne and Watson came to the Seven Stars in about two hours; it was a hot day; they drank by themselves apart. C. Blackborne kept his top coat buttoned on purpose that persons might not see his pistols, for he said he was afraid the people of Hoton had seen them. They sung at this house,

Towle sung the same song as at Hoton. It was about six o'clock when they got there, and they staid till ten, when the landlord wished them to go, as he made a common rule to shut up his house at that hour. They accordingly left the house, and strolled about the town, and loaded the pistols with powder and ball; there were four pistols, Towle loaded one, Blackborne another, and Watson another; did not know who loaded the fourth, but all four were loaded. None of them went to any other public house. C. Blackborne said they were to have gone to the Pack Horse, to have lighted on some more chaps there, but they did not go.—They met with a man who knew Blackborne, and took them up two or three streets, and shewed them the road to the factory. They went into a lane near the factory, and found some of the party, and were soon joined by more to the number of seventeen. The witness then went through the circumstances of the case from that period till they separated after crossing Aram's ferry, nearly in the same words as on the day before.

And Woodward, Thomas Seymour, Ann Blatherwick, Mary Sanson, John Handford, appeared separately in the witness box. For their evidence, see Clarke's trial.

John Keighley keeps the Peach Tree public-house at Nottingham. On the morning before the destruction of the frames in Heathcoate's factory last summer, a number of persons came to his house in company, about five or six o'clock. Slater was one of the party he has no doubt; believes he has never seen the man since. They had some penny bread and bacon, or cheese, perhaps they had both. They drank all out of one tankard.

John Allsopp lives at Hoton, is a butcher now, but at the time of the breaking of the frames at Heathcoate's factory, he kept the sign of the Bell. About half past two o'clock in the afternoon of that day, two men came into his house, and called for a cup of ale, one of them had a pair of trowsers on, and a sleeve waistcoat or fustain, or what they call velveteen; the other had a corduroy jacket on. In about ten minutes, two more men came in, one had a blue smock frock and a furred hat, the other had a big coat on. They drank separately, and he did not think they knew each other at first. In a little time they joined company. They asked for a mutton chop, it was cooked for them and they ate it. Young, a fellmonger or skinner was in the house, as well as Spencer, a gardener, Spencer's wife came in, and jarred with her husband, because he had been drinking. Witness asked the men where they were going, and they said they were stocking-makers seeking work. In consequence of something said to him by Young, he went to one side of the house, and looked at the man with the big coat, and he had a pistol in his pocket: he went on the contrary side of the room, and saw another pistol in the other inside pocket; soon after he buttoned up his coat, so that witness could not see the pistols. The two men that came in first ordered the mutton chop; they all partook of it. The Sunday after Leicester assizes, which ended on a Saturday night, he saw two of those men coming along the road. It was Towle and Watson; he asked them how they did, and enquired of W. Towle whether he had been to Leicester, and how they have gone on at the assizes: he did not know Towle's name then Towle said he heard that a man of the name of Towle was to suffer, but he seemed to wish to avoid the conversation; they walked on sharpish, saying they wanted to get to Nottingham by six o'clock. These two men did not come into his house the night the frames were broken, together; they came in separately. Towle had a corduroy jacket and trowsers on.—Burton was shewn to witness, and he declared that he was one of the four men who came to his house that afternoon.

_____ Young, a fellmonger, remembers the frame-breaking at Loughborough, and was at the Blue Bell, at Hoton, the afternoon previous thereto. Four men were there, and a gardener, who had an altercation with his wife. This witness pointed out Towle and Watson from amongst the prisoners, as being two of the four men. They sat in different parts of the house, and appeared to be strangers to each other. Watson had a blue smock frock on, and one of them, whom he did not see amongst the prisoners, had a large great coat, which was unbuttoned and he observed a pistol in each inside pocket. One pistol was with the muzzle upwards, the other downwards. Witness pointed this circumstance out to the landlord, and after he had been into the room to view them, the man buttoned up his coat. This witness identified Burton as having been Towle's companion at that time. He had a large dog within which was much noticed. Towle sung a song, and some part of it was in these words "Damn such laws, and so say I."

Henry Staples kept the Seven Stars, at Loughborough, in June last. About half past five o'clock on the night when Heathcoat's factory was demolished, four strangers came into his house. One had a light coloured top coat on; another a velveteen jacket and corded small clothes, the third had a smock frock on, and the fourth a jacket and trowsers. The man with the great coat on, kept it buttoned all the time, though it was a hot day. They sung, and one of their songs had a chorus "Damn such laws, and so say I." They went away about half past nine, in consequence of his telling them that he made a point of closing his house at ten o'clock.

Jane Tyler, whose husband keeps the White Lion, in Loughborough, proved the same circumstances as on Clarke's trial.

Richard Woolley is a soldier in the 3d or King's Dragoons. He saw Hudson and Disney together in Loughborough, on Thursday. Hudson goes by the name of Aaron Daykin, but Hudson is his proper name. Witness spoke to him in the street, but as he did not answer, supposed he did not hear him. The same afternoon about three o'clock, he saw these two, and another man (Blackborne) at Tyler's. In the course of an hour, some man brought some beef-steaks on a scower, and desired they might be cooked, there was about six pounds of them, and Mrs. Tyler cooked a part. Witness assisted in cooking and taking in the things, and was invited to partake, he did so; there were four men present, Sheepshead Jack, Hudson, Blackborne, and another. Some of them went out without eating any of the meat, none of them slept there that night, but next morning, about six o'clock, Disney and Hudson came, and they along with witness, finished them.

George Wilson, was employed by Mr. Hadderley, who occupies a small quarry at Mountsorrel. On the night previous to the breaking of Messrs Heathcoat and Boden's frames, he lost some tools from the quarry; three hammers, one 30lb. one about ten, and the other smaller; an iron bar, four feet long, was also missing.

Thomas Phipps was a labourer employed on the road between Loughborough and Mountsorrel. On Friday he found the above tools in a ditch amongst some nettles and weeds; he lodged them at the turnpike house, where they were afterwards claimed by Mr. Hadderley.

George Hutchinson, the landlord of the Duke of York, in Loughborough, proved that Savidge, Mitchell, and Blackborne frequently came to his house during the few days previous to the breaking of his Heathcoat's frames.

Isaac Beeby, Charles Young, and John North, gave a testimony the same in substance as that on Clarke's trial.

Ann Mackay lived in Mill-street, in Loughborough, near the factory at the time the machines were broken; the house in which she lived joins the factory. Hearing a noise and the talking of men, she was induced to go out of her house to see what was the matter; her husband was employed at the factory. As she was proceeding to the factory, one man came up, and clapped a pistol to her head, and then another man with a pistol on the other side; they soon delivered her into the custody of somebody else, whom she swore to as being Savidge.—He had an handkerchief on his face but it fell off several times; she was in fear for her life every moment. Mitchell and Crowder were there; they came up to shake hands with her before she was set at liberty.

On cross-examination she said she did not see Mitchell and Crowder above a minute; she cannot tell whether it was a moon light night or not, but yet she can swear to them.

Benjamin Silvester, William Walton, and Thomas Foreman, gave the same evidence concerning the musket as on the former trial.

Joseph Shepherd was also placed in the witness box to repeat his testimony.

John Bowering was in the service of Wethering and Co. at Derby, and proved that Withers purchased a pair of pistols of him, for 30s. on the 25th of June last.

James Lawson, a constable of Nottingham, saw Crowder on the morning after the attack on the factory, asleep, and apparently very dirty and fatigued, at the Goat in the Meadow-platts.

Benjamin Barns met Cordwell on Lenton sands a little after seven o'clock on Saturday morning. Soon after he met Mitchell, and in a while after met James Towle.

This closed the case for the prosecution, and

Mr. Balguy renewed his legal objection, and stated it at considerable length, Mr. Denman followed on the same side.

Sergeant Vaughan was going to reply, but the Learned Judge over-ruled it. The prisoners were then called upon for their defence.

Thomas Savidge addressed the Court, but did not attempt to deny his participation in this transaction. He particularly urged on the attention of the jury the characters of Blackborne and Barker; and told them he had a wife and six children. If they decided according to their consciences, and in the sight of God, he should be satisfied.

William Towle said he was not capable of saying any thing.

John Crowder dwelt on the characters of the two men brought as evidences against them; he had a wife and five children.

John Amos—"I have nothing to say, my Lord."

William Withers, have you anything to say your defence? "No, my Lord."

James Watson—"I have nothing to say, my Lord."

A number of witnesses were called, who bore testimony to the general good character of the prisoners.

His Lordship employed full two hours in summing up the evidence and giving his charge to the Jury, who without hesitation, returned a verdict of *guilty* against all the prisoners.

John Clarke was brought up and placed beside them, and Sir Richard passed the awful sentence of death upon the eight prisoners, in very impressive terms.

John Slater was then put to the bar, and pleaded *guilty* to an indictment for frame breaking. There was an indictment for a capital offence, to which he pleaded *not guilty*, and the Counsel for the Crown declined offering any evidence, and of course he was acquitted of that charge. For the crime of frame breaking, his Lordship ordered him to be transported for life.

Samuel Caldwell was once more brought to the bar, but Dr. Frere pronounced that he was absolutely insensible, and the Jury were discharged without giving any verdict in his case. He is remanded to prison till the next assizes.

Before Sir Richard Richards left the town, he was pleased to reprieve two of the unhappy men, Clarke and Watson; the other six, Savidge, Withers, Mitchell, Towle, Amos, and Crowder, are left execution, on the 14th instant.

THE "PUTTING OUT" TRADE

The following is transcribed from a thesis by Ian D J Hunt written in 2004 for which he owns the copyright. A complete bibliography is included in his original thesis

The "putting-out trade" for manufacturing employed specialist workers performing quickly learnt, but limited processes. Putting-out also involved extensive travel and transportation of materials and finished products. This was both to co-ordinate the various processes and locations of production, and for the distribution of the end product. Because worsted production involved more workers and processes per pack of raw material than that of woollen or linen goods, the putting-out undertaker became associated with long-wool processing at an early stage in the evolution of its manufacture. But had the undertakers not been able to find large numbers of the rural population willing to accept the low wages they offered for work, putting-out could not have become established in rural areas like Coleorton Moor and the three parishes of which it was part. In the first half of the eighteenth century low rural wages were mitigated by low rural food costs.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries 'putting-out' was easily extended from spinning and hand knitting to other textile-manufacturing processes. It was particularly applicable to the development of such manufacturing trades as weaving and framework knitting. The same undertaker could combine distribution for spinning operations quite easily with putting-out-for-knitting on the same route. From temporarily utilizing the skills and labour of by-occupational tradesmen, putting-out soon came to create and exploit a domestic, rural, semi-skilled workforce, beholden to a putting-out employer rather than to a clientele.

The putting out trade for domestic manufacture in rural areas entailed expensive transportation of materials. The horse and cart was the favoured means of distributing combed tops for spinning worsted yam. This combination provided greater flexibility and ease of handling than either packhorse or wagon. Normally transport by horse and cart was expensive at around 11d per ton-mile for full loads, and considerably more so if carts were to travel half empty. However, the putting-out undertaker would normally have carried trade goods in both directions, thereby reducing transport costs overall. Again, the flexible nature of part-time or by-occupational rural labour made using the horse and cart worthwhile at a time of irregular commercial demand. 'Putting out' served many of the practical purposes for which 'flexible', part-time labour is used today and probably embraced similar vices. It provided the same incentive to maximize and under-employ personnel in normal conditions.

Output could be stunted to lower levels of demand. Equally output could be boosted rapidly on a rise in demand without greatly increasing costs. As James reported rural workers continued to be given some work during recessions when urban workers would have been totally laid off. The putting-out trade was therefore able to avoid much of the labour supply inflexibility implicit in the urban-guild system.

In 1700 there was no certainty that either manufacturing or framework knitting would become a major occupation of north-west Leicestershire. This was more especially so in the three parishes around Coleorton Moor where a variety of operations were providing

employment in addition to farming, and the more usual village trades. These operations included flax processing, weaving and iron smelting as well as mining, quarrying and forestry. There seem to have been as many 'little wheels' in inventories for flax spinning, as there were 'long wheels' for woollen yam.

In the latter part of the seventeenth century framework-knitters had become established around Hinckley and in Leicester. They had spread to Sheepshed, north of Charnwood forest, by the 1720s. These were still fairly limited locations. A framework knitter appears to be first mentioned in a Whitwick settlement certificate in 1711. By the middle of the eighteenth century numbers of framework knitters could be found in the marriage registers of both Breedon and Whitwick parishes, as well as in the registers of many other parishes of Leicestershire. By the beginning of the nineteenth century John Nichols, the Leicestershire historian reported that there were framework knitters in Whitwick. From Coleorton he reported that there were three hosiers, who combed their wool, and converted it into stockings. Nichols report of three woolcomber-hosiers in Coleorton as late as the beginning of the nineteenth century suggests that an older, less intensive manufacturing system was associated with the moor than was the case elsewhere in the county. It also recalls the situation of up to a century earlier when woolcombers across north-west Leicestershire often participated in the putting-out of framework knitting - a time before the industry became heavily proletarianized. By the early eighteenth century, the master woolcomber had long been a putter-out of wool for spinning. There is evidence that such craftsmen were operating in Leicestershire during the latter part of the seventeenth century. Presumably they were combing the large quantities of long wool sheared from the pasture sheep of the Old Leicester breed. At that time, the West Riding of Yorkshire did not yet provide a market for Leicestershire spun worsted yam. It was still sending much of its own to Norwich.

Extending his enterprise from putting-out combed wool for spinning to putting-out worsted yam for framework knitting was a logical activity for the better-off woolcomber. Inventory evidence suggests that many early eighteenth century hosiers were originally woolcombers by trade, putting-out for both spinning and knitting. A number of them owned more advanced spinning wheels, and 'twist mills' for the secondary processing of yam were also listed in their inventories. They also owned knitting frames standing in the homes of outworkers. Initially, woolcomber diversification into hosiery activities may have been no more than a normal by-occupational tendency of those times.

In Griffydham in the paish of Breedon, Robert Artless who died in 1831 was recorded as a Woolcomber and a Jersey Woolcomber on Elder lane.

The putting-out of wool for spinning had probably started as an attractive alternative to the seasonal migration for work elsewhere, which might otherwise be necessary for year round employment. Woolcombing activity in Leicestershire tended to be slow between Christmas and late spring. (As late as 1849-51 large numbers of Leicestershire woolcombers still took part in the annual 'tramp' to work the winter months in Bradford in the West Riding of Yorkshire).

Through participating in the 'putting-out' trade, a number of these woolcombers ended up as successful hosiers, or frame-masters, or both. This extension of woolcomber activities was almost certainly a major factor in the concentration of worsted-yam supplies into hosier hands, which later accelerated proletarianization of the trade. Woolcombers, who belonged to a very close knit association, were an essential element

in the synthesis of the raw material into yam. Their strategic position in this stage of worsted production made long wool increasingly less available to independent knitters except in a greater bulk than the latter could afford to buy. Consequently woolcombers controlled the supply of wool to the knitting frames which enabled some of their members to become hosiers rather than framework knitters becoming so themselves.

Long wool for worsted yam had to be combed before it was spun. The strategic position of the woolcomber in the production chain was re-enforced by a steadily growing concentration of clipped long-wool supplies, both from flock-masters and fell-mongers. The changes in the comparative availability of short wool and long wool as pasture sheep became more numerous, worked dramatically to the advantage of merchants, woolcombers, and putting-out undertakers. The necessity to comb long wool lengthened the production chain for its conversion compared to that short wool. This factor, together with the steady growth of long-wool supplies, increasingly sold in bulk, favoured the middleman and the putting-out trade. Independent craftsmen had to obtain either dwindling supplies of mostly short wool from small producers, or supplies of long wool from independent woolcombers, to obtain a competitive price. The larger flock-masters increasingly dealt in larger lots, and some directly with Yorkshire manufacturers. Fragmentation of these lots into small parcels by further middlemen would have made such raw material increasingly uneconomic for small craftsmen. As woolcombers extended their activities into putting-out for spinning, and then knitting, worsted yam became steadily less available for direct purchase by independent weaver and framework knitting craftsmen who otherwise might have bought their own supplies.

In March 1688, the inventory of Francis Smith of Leicester contained 'wooll', woosted hose and Jearsey Yame' and described him as a 'Woollcomber and hosier'. A year later the will of Christopher Martin, also of Leicester, described him as a hosier while his probate inventory described him as a 'Jersey-comber'. The latter document listed a tod of wool, yam, 6 dozen 'pattees', and 40 dozen of another [unreadable] item in addition to his 'combe pott' and other tools. In 1693, Edward Waddington, a 'jersi-comber', left gifts of gloves to various beneficiaries of his will. Most interesting, however, was the detailed will and probate inventory of John Davie, a very prosperous woolcomber and hosier of Leicester, leaving £1,260 2s 0d in moveable goods and book-debt owing to him, and also his house with its appurtenances. In addition to his extensive quantities of yam in stock, his combs and comb-pots in his comb-shop, and '9 bobin wheels' and mills in the chambers above, he was also shown to be a 'putting-out' undertaker. He had 614 pounds of wool at 'Spining' and '246 Skeans of yame at knitting'.

Many woolcombers were content to stay with their main trade or merely to diversify to a by-occupation such as weaving or small-scale farming. Others became involved in framework knitting as small-scale frame-masters such as Edmund Guy, a woolcomber of Leicester. In 1745 he left the profits of one knitting-frame, in the possession of Robert Barber, to his wife during her lifetime, and then to his son, in addition to his house and lands. James Kirby of Ashby-de-la-Zouch employed eight stocking frames, in addition to combing his own wool until 1745. On 23 August 1759 the will of Thomas Domtrophe the Elder, of Loughborough, a woolcomber, showed he employed two stocking frames with framework knitters in Long Whatton. The three woolcomber-hosiers of Coleorton who combed their wool and wove it into stockings were therefore a continuation of an earlier tradition.

At the end of the eighteenth century, the woolcomber-hosiers of Coleorton, and their framework knitters on the moor, may have been producing for a different and more local market than many of the framework knitters in Whitwick and Thringstone who were employed from Loughborough and Sheepshed. (It was noted in 1845 that Whitwick had been too remote from the major trade routes taken by the hosiery trade for major merchant hosiers to have become established there). Nichols also reported three master hatters in Coleorton at the end of the eighteenth century. Ashby-de-la-Zouch, the nearest market town to Coleorton was also a centre for hat manufacture at that time. The woolcomber hosiers of the moor may well have been marketing their wares in the area around that town, as well as in the area around Coleorton Moor. There may have been a close-knit community of interest on the moor and in the parishes surrounding it. An example of this identity was expressed by the Coleorton-Moor community at the time of the rabbit-warren riots in Charnwood Forest in the middle of the eighteenth century.

Nevertheless, it would seem that manufacturing in the three parishes for more distant markets tended to be influenced by the specialization tendencies of the closest prominent centre to them. Lace workers who tended to be prominent on the northern sections of the moor were employed from Castle Donington, which was the closest centre of the lace trade. In the preceding paragraph it was reported that many of the framework knitters in Thringstone and Whitwick worked for hosiers in Sheepshed or Loughborough. Coleorton-based manufacturing appears to have been more orientated towards Ashby-de-la Zouch. In addition, it would seem that a few framework knitters worked for independent bag hosiers in Whitwick, who used family members to act as travelling salesmen and sell to retailers, or directly to individuals, within the wider county.

THE PROCESS OF WOOLCOMBING / CARDING

WOOL SORTERS

Prior to the woolcombing process, experienced persons would sort the wool into various qualities after shearing and washing.

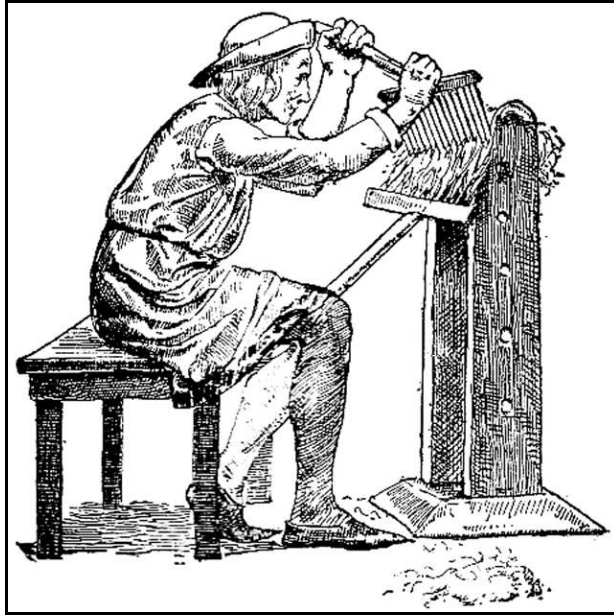


WOOLCOMBING OR CARDING

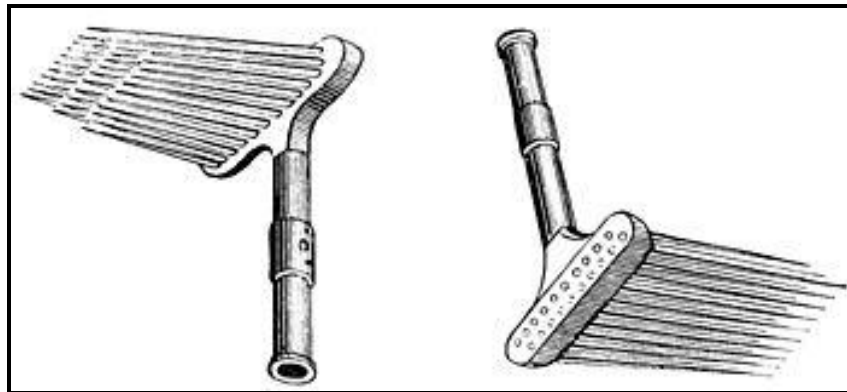
A Woolcomber was one whose occupation was to comb wool in order to disentangle and straighten out the fibres in order to prepare them for spinning into what were known as worsted or woollen yarns dependant on what type of wool fleece the wool came from. Worsted yarns were of a fine texture suitable for making into clothing, stockings, gloves etc which was preferred by the Framework Knitters. Yarns which were rougher in texture and thickness were used by the woven woollen cloth weavers.

The first machine to be really successful at combing fine wool (botany wool), was invented in 1843 by a Mr. Lister, and after that, machines began to be quickly introduced, bringing about the demise of the hand comber.

The process of woolcombing or carding as shown in the photograph below, involved pulling the wool through fine toothed steel combs. However, there were many arguments surrounding the quality of the end product, price, waste etc dependent on whether the wool was combed by hand or on machines which came later.



A Woolcomber at work



Typical Hand Combs

This method of combing the wool was a Flemish invention. The hand-comber employed two combs, one known as a “pad” comb, which was subsequently fixed to a post as shown in the above photograph. The raw material, after being properly prepared, washed, oiled, and separated into convenient handfuls, was secured into the comb prior to fixing to the post. However, it was necessary to heat the wool to a correct temperature to ensure successful combing. After the pad comb was charged with wool, the comb was placed in a comb-pot on a specially adapted stove until it reached the correct temperature. Once properly heated, and with one comb attached to the post, the other held in the hand, the process of combing began. Each comb became a working comb alternately, the teeth of one passing through the tuft of wool upon the other, until the fibers became perfectly smooth, straight, and free of short wool, or “noil,” which was left imbedded in the comb-heads. The wool was scrapped off in rolls (cardings) about 12 inches long and just under an inch thick.

The residue was called the “top”. In the late 1700s, the “wool combers” would have earned 12s. to 14s. per week which compared very favorably with the spinners of wool, who earned in the order of 1s. 6d to 3s. per week. However, most of the wool spinning was carried out by women as a cottage industry as explained in the following feature. To put this into perspective, beef at that time was 3½ d. to 5d per pound, and milk 1½ d per quart.

THE PROCESS OF YARN SPINNING

SPINNING BY SPINSTERS

BY DISTAFF AND HAND ROTATED GRASP SPINDLE

In medieval times, poor families had such a need for yarn to make their own cloth and clothes that practically all girls and unmarried women would keep busy spinning, and "spinster" became synonymous with an unmarried woman.

The old method of spinning with a distaff and drop-spindle continued through much of the eighteenth century. For a long time their continued employment was alongside the newer hand-driven equipment being developed. The distaff and drop-spindle were very basic and cheap. But in the hands of a competent spinster this equipment was very flexible as to the kinds of yam spun, producing both wefts and warps. Ideally a heavier drop-spindle was used for plying, but this was not absolutely necessary.

As an example, cardings about 12 inches long and just under an inch thick were produced by the woolcomber. These cardings were then turned into a continuous thread by the lady at the spinning wheel. In one old method of spinning the thread, what was known as a distaff was used. This was basically a stick about 3 ft long onto which the carding rolls were placed. This was held under the arm, and the fibres of wool drawn from it were twisted spirally by the forefinger and thumb. As the thread was spun, it was wound onto the spinning wheel spindle.

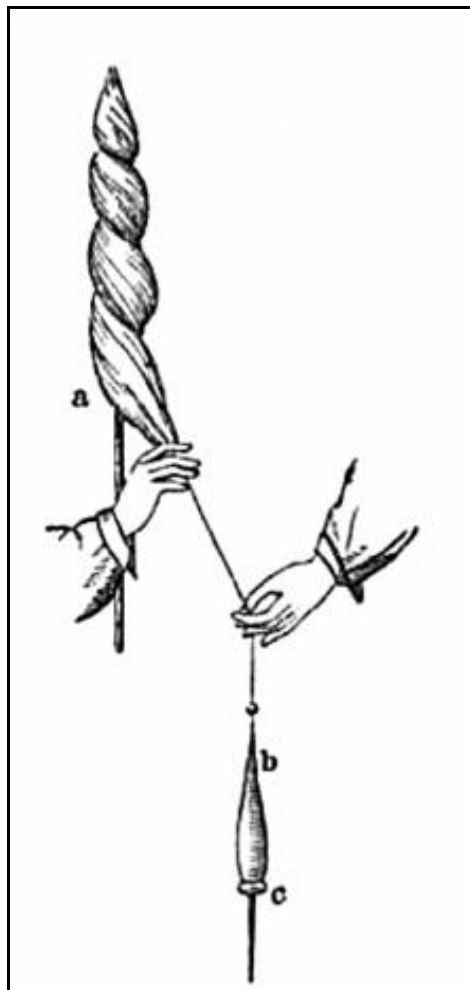


BY DROP SPINDLE

Drop Spindles are so named because they are suspended to swing from the yarn after rotation has been started. The spindle is allowed to drop down while the thread is formed, allowing for a greater length of yarn to be spun before winding on. Drop spindles also permit the spinner to move around while spinning, going about their day. However, there are practical limits to their size and weight.

In order to impart a twist to the yarn, it is passed through a hook on the top of the spindle and attached to the spindle shaft. The spindle is then rotated to provide a twist to the yarn. There is much more to achieving a well spun yarn than that of course.

Putting-out wool to drop-spindle spinsters was therefore very common even after more advanced techniques became available. Such putting-out was practised by craft-weavers, and even private individuals prior to employing a craft-weaver.



**a - represents the carding, b - was known as the cop and c - the spindle.
The shape of the cop was controlled by the skill of the spinster**

BY SPINNING WHEEL



Turning the wool-comber's material into yarn on a spinning wheel was a cottage industry

The spinning wheel was reputedly invented in the Islamic world by 1030. It later spread to China by 1090, and then spread from the Islamic world to Europe and India by the 13th century. As the design developed over many years the rotation of the wheel and spindle was operated by a treadle system.

subsequent improvements with spinning wheels and then mechanical methods made hand-spinning increasingly uneconomic, but as late as the twentieth century hand-spinning remained widespread in poor countries.

As explained under the previous section (cardings) about 12 inches long and just under an inch thick were produced by the woolcomber. These cardings were then turned into a continuous thread by the lady at the spinning wheel



AN EXAMPLE OF WOOL CARDINGS

HER MAJESTY'S COMMISSION OF 1844

In 1843, a *Petition*, signed by upwards of 25,000 *framework knitters* of Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, and Derbyshire, was presented to the House of Commons, praying for an enquiry into their distressed condition, arising from the low rate of wages resulting from the enormous charges for frame rent etc; the prevalence of the "*truck system*", and the manufacture of spurious articles, called "cut ups" etc. In February 1844, her Majesty issued a *Commission*, appointing R. M. Muggeridge, Esq., to enquire into their grievances. In the course of this commissions' laborious enquiry, he examined a great number of workmen and masters, and elicited a considerable body of information, which was published in a copious report.

It was apparent that that the average clear weekly earning of the framework knitters, in 27 parishes, varied from 4s. to 8s. Hinckley being only 5s. 3d.; Bosworth, 4s. 6d.; Ibstock, 4s.; and Sheepshead, 5s. 6d.

In Leicester, those employed on what were termed season fabrics, were much better remunerated, one class of workers earning from 9s. to 12s., and others from 12s. to upwards of 20s. per week, but, during a great part of the year, they were generally only fifty percent employed.

The heaviest grievance complained of in the enquiry was the *frame rents*, which varied from 1s. to 3s. per week for narrow frames that were purchased second hand at from £4 to £12, and a full week's rent was charged even when only fifty percent in use. Many of the frame smiths, and also people not otherwise connected with the trade, let frames to hosiers and middle men, or master frame – work knitters, who rented or owned several frames, and employed journeymen to work up the materials which they received from the manufacturers.

To prevent the frauds to which the journeymen were often subjected to, the masters were now compelled following the enquiry, by an Act of Parliament, passed in 1845, to supply them with *tickets*, stating the warehouse price of the different kinds of work. It was also stated that some of the middle masters and bag-hosiers (small manufacturers) either directly or indirectly compel the journeyman to take most of their wages in *stuff*, notwithstanding the Acts of Parliament, passed in 1832 and previous years, to enforce the payment of wages in money. This *truck system* was confined chiefly to the manufacturing villages, and, having been much checked in subsequent years, it is hoped that it would become soon extinct, being highly injurious to the money paying masters and the shopkeepers, as well as the workmen at large.

FRAMEWORK KNITTING MACHINES IN OPERATION LOCALLY IN 1845 - TAKEN FROM THE COMMISSIONER'S REPORT TO THE HOUSE OF LORDS

BELTON –	82
OSGATHORPE -	24
THRINGSTONE -	155
WHITWICK -	339

THE TRUCK SYSTEM

The Truck System of paying wages relates to the practice of paying workers in script, or tokens, rather than legal money, for their labour. During the 18th and 19th centuries, it was a wide-spread practice amongst framework knitters and coal miners. It was made illegal for miners (and other specified occupations) in the U.K. in 1831. (1831 Act 1 and 2 Will. 4 c. 37) with further restrictions legally imposed in the 1870's.

The script or tokens could only be used in designated places, such as stores or pubs/bars owned and operated by their employers or associates. Many of these places charged exorbitant prices for goods which could be purchased for much less elsewhere. In some extreme cases, lawful money was never used; "store credit" would be given for purchases that would normally require change, with records kept by the storekeeper. No receipts for transactions were ever given. The "company store", with its high prices, became infamous in many places.

Another variation would be that such script could only be changed into legal tender by designated agents, who charged a fee for the service.

This system was closely associated with small, isolated and/or rural communities, where uneducated workers did not have a wide choice of employment, and would quickly become indebted to their employers so they were unable to legally leave the system

**TWO EXTRACTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS REPORT ON
FRAME WORK KNITTERS IN WHITWICK & BELTON, CARRIED
OUT BY ORDER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS IN 1845**

**FURTHER REPORTS ARE INCLUDED AT THE END OF THIS
PUBLICATION**

Thomas Heafield, of Whitwick, Frame-work Knitter, Wrought-hose Branch, examined.

6241. You are the secretary of the Whitwick Branch of the Frame-work Knitters' Union ?
—I am.

6242. How long have you been in the trade?—About 18 years, and I have been the last six years working at Whitwick. I have lived at four different places as journeyman. The charges are 3s. per week.

6243. How many are there in Whitwick who are in-door journeymen?—About 40. The last place but one I worked at—I want to mention this—there were nine months out of the twelve that I had scarcely any work at all, and one month I had none at all, and they charged me full charges all that time. The man that I worked with as journeyman, he charged me the 3d. for taking the hose in when there was none made; and the hosier charged me 1s. a-week for the rent when I hadn't any work for the frame. At every other place they have dealt with me fairly. My average earnings are about 8s. 6d. per week, and then out of that I have to pay 3s. for the charges, and 3d. for washing a shirt, 1d. for a pair of stockings, $\frac{1}{2}$ d. for a handkerchief; and then I have to find needles to work the frame with, that is $2\frac{1}{2}$ d.; and then the seaming 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a-dozen. I average about a dozen a-week. And then if I have pudding on the Sunday, they charge me 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. for that; a small bit of pudding. I think I do as much as most in the town.

6244. You, yourself, are working as an in-door journeyman then?—Yes.

6245. Do you think your condition is an average of the condition of that class?—I think I average more than most of them. I could not appear before you as I do, only I have a brother who is pretty well off, and he helps me at times.

6246. Is it the practice of the masters here to pay all their hands in ready money?—There are two that do not, the rest do; but they all keep shops; and those who keep shops, we cannot expect that we shall have any work at all if we do not trade with them; at least we have that opinion, and we trade with them accordingly. 3d. a-dozen are paid for all the goods we make; and I wish to say this, that some of the master-men in Whitwick make the journeyman pay that 3d., as well as the 3d. taking-in for themselves. We consider that an imposition upon the journeymen, making in effect 6d. a-week for taking-in. I paid it myself the last place but one, 6d. to the hosier, and 6d. to the master-man I worked to; that made a 1s. to me then for taking-in alone.

is the destruction of our business at the present time.

5921. Have you any free-school at Belton?—Yes.

5922. What is the plan of that school?—If you send one child it is 2*d.*, two children 3*d.*, and three children 4*d.*

5923. Do many of the frame-work knitters' children avail themselves of that?—Several, I believe do; I send one.

5924. What age do they generally send them?—They send them at four years of age; it has not been long erected there.

5925. When are they obliged to take them out?—Eight years of age, or as soon as they are able to work. I have six small children, and I can confidently say, they never hardly see or taste a bit of butter or cheese from month's-end to month's-end; we cannot get it.

5926. They are not able to do much for you?—No, they are not; if I did not work night and day, I could not get half bread for them, much more anything else. As to sending them to school on the Sunday, we cannot keep them decent to send them to Sunday-school; not half of them.

5927. And does the same apply to sending them to a place of worship?—Of course it does.

[*The Witnesses withdrew.*]

WILLIAM SHERWIN OF COLEORTON - HOSIER

The author has written a publication entitled "The Sherwin Family 1739-1887" which is free to download and read on his website

It should be noted that the word "Hosier" is a general description for a manufacturer involved in the hosiery industry.

The wealth accrued by some of the **Sherwins** from the hosiery industry in the area, was confirmed by their ownership of large acreages' of land, warehouses and buildings, not only in Coleorton but further afield. They would have grazed sheep on their land to provide the wool for *Woolcombing / carding and subsequent spinning and coning into yarn by local Spinsters as a domestic industry ready for the "Framework Knitters" who would in the main have rented their frames from the hosiers also* (see the earlier feature on the "Putting Out" trade and the features on Woolcombing and Spinning). See also the earlier features on the "Trucking System" (page 30) and "Her Majesties Commission of 1844 (page 29).

It must be said that although William Sherwin senior (1768-1864) was a wealthy man, he was much loved by the people of Coleorton as he was a great benefactor to the poor, and there is ample evidence of this included in the book reference above.

The Sherwins' were not the only hosiers in Coleorton of course:-

"In an 1801 return to Parliament for Coleorton, it was recorded that there were 3 hosiers who combed their wool and converted it into stockings".

In the London Morning Chronicle Newspaper Set 21st 1819, Middlesex, London, the following article appeared:-

The Leicester Frame-work Knitters.....A frame-work knitter of this place, who keeps a shop of frames, and who was suspected of working under the statement prices, was placed upon an Ass, with his face to the tail, and carried through some of the principle streets, on Tuesday last, accompanied by a crowd of men and boys. The Mayor and Magistrates, with a view to putting a stop to such illegal proceedings, have issued hand-bills, offering a reward of 20 guineas for the apprehension of the ringleaders concerned in such outrage. The County Magistrates have also issued placards, expressing their strong disapprobation of the conduct of the frame-work knitters in some part of the County, and their determination to enforce the penalties of the law against all such as shall be found guilty of acts similar to those which have been made the subject of complaint before them. On Friday, Jack Wires were taken from a number of frames at **Heather**, belonging to **Mr Sherwin, of Coleorton**, on the ground that the frames were working under the hosiers' statement. It seems the wires were drawn from the frames by a body of men who had gone from **Ibstock** for the purpose, and at the **round-house** of which place they afterwards deposited them. On Saturday, **Mr. Sherwin**, having obtained warrants for five of the parties, repaired to the latter place to execute them, accompanied by ten persons on horseback. They were not, however, then to be found, and we have not heard since

whether they have been apprehended. We understand the inhabitants were not very ceremonious in their conduct towards **Mr. Sherwin** and his assistants.

In the Leicester Chronicle dated March 27th 1824, there is a report of a lengthy court case referring to about 20 bundles of stocking frame parchment papers being stolen from William Sherwin's warehouse, in Coleorton. The author is of the view that these would have probably been the knitting pattern templates.

The following extract from William White's Trade Directory of 1842, comments on **50 stocking frames** in the village of **Heather**. This almost certainly relates to **William Sherwin**.

From The History, Gazetteer and Directory of Leicestershire, and the small County of Rutland – July 25th 1846 William White

HEATHER, a village and parish, 4[^] miles S.S.E. of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and 5\ miles N. by W. of Market Bosworth, has 368 souls, and about 1012 acres of land, under which coal has been worked more than two centuries, but the mine has been closed some years. The soil is chiefly a light sandy loam, with a small portion of deep rich loam. The parish is traversed on the east by a rivulet, and bounded on the north and south by a detached part of Derbyshire. Two-fifths of it are arable, and the rest pasturage and meadow. Here was anciently a Coramandery of Knights Hospitallers, of St. John of Jerusalem, to which Ralph Gresley, in the reign of Henry II., gave the church and parish. The only vestige at present remaining of this building is some wainscoting in the Manor House, which stands upon its site. Its revenues were estimated at £49. Is. 5d. per annum, at the dissolution, when it was granted to Oliver St. John and Robert Thornton. A great part of the parish belongs to Robert Goode and Thos. Clare, Esqrs., who have commodious residences here ; but the Rev. G. P. Belcher, B.D., who resides at the Manor House, a neat Elizabethan mansion, is lord of the manor, and patron and incumbent of the discharged rectory, valued in K.B. at £]. 17s. 8d. and in 1831 at jG377« The glebe is 42a., and there is upon it an ancient residence. The tithes have recently been commuted for £320 per annum The Church (St. John) is an ancient fabric, with a tower, short spire, and three bells. It is about to be repaired, and the chancel rebuilt, In the latter is a mural monument, in memory of Stephen Everard Esq., who died in 1615, and is represented with his family, in the attitude of prayer. The Wesleyans have a chapel here, and in the village are about **50 stocking frames**, and a neat National School, built in 1845. The Queen Dowager gave £20, and Earl Howe £30, towards the erection of the latter, which has room for 80 children.



**A typical Framework Knitting factory.
Photograph - copyright of the originator**

**1826 SALE OF "STOCKINGER FRAMES" -
MR GEORGE WAYTE, COLEORTON - HOSIER**

The following is a copy of an advertisement from the Leicester Chronicle dated July 15th 1826 regarding the sale of the late Mr. George Wayte's property at Coleorton.

It includes 11 stocking frames for sale, 7 of which appear to be hired out on contract, to various people in the district. They are of various gauges and quality as can be seen in the 2nd and 3rd columns.

COLEORTON, in the county of Leicester.

**TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,
By Benjamin Chestle,**

On Monday and Tuesday, July 24th and 25th, 1826,
**ALL the HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, Shop
Goods and Fixtures, Chases, Boxes, Cows, Hay,
Sacking Frames, and other effects of the late
Mr. GEORGE WAYTE.**

The first day's sale comprises the Household Furniture,
Shop Goods, &c.

The second day's sale comprises two united de-olved
Cows, and grazing, stock, viz. stock of Flury, (to be taken off
the premises) and the following Sacking Frames:

NO.	GAUGE	QUALITY	WHERE AT
1	24	Plain	On the premises
2	24	Do.	Ditto
3	24	Do.	Ditto
4	25	Do.	Ditto
5	30	Do.	John Biggs's, Hugglescote
6	28	Do.	Hugh Laidler's, Markfield
7	21	Do.	Ditto
8	21	Do.	Thomas Warren's, ditto
9	24	Rib	Hickingbottom's, Hatfield
10	30	Plain	Anderson's, Sheep-head
11	25	Do.	James Ridger's, Coleorton

The first day's sale to commence in the morning at ten o'clock; the second at four o'clock in the afternoon.

N.B. All persons who have claims upon the effects of the late Mr. George Wayte, are requested to send in their accounts, that the same may be discharged. And all persons who stood indebted to the deceased, are desired to pay the same immediately to the executors, Mr. NEWBOLD, of Litcham; Mr. BURTON, of Belton; or Mr. JOHNSON, of Coleorton.

This advertisement will not be repeated.
(One column.)

WILLIAM WALE OF GRIFFYDAM – EXAMPLE OF A LOCAL FRAMEWORK KNITTER

In the 1841 and 1851 censuses for the hamlet of Griffydam, seven and ten Framework Knitters respectively are listed. The following is included to give the reader some insight into this important industry in small rural communities.

In the 1841 census for Peggs Green, William Wale (spelt Whale), aged 25, is living with a Framework Knitter (name not legible) and his profession along with another person appears to be Joining?. The author has taken that as meaning seaming together the pieces of hose coming off the Framework Knitting Machine. There is another Framework Knitter shown to be living there in what appears to be a cottage industry. Presumably this was to be the catalyst for William to start his own hosiery cottage industry in Griffydam as described below.

In the "Post Office Directory of Leics & Rutland 1855", William Wale was listed as a Framework Knitter in Griffydam, which confirms the entry in the 1851 local census, listing William, aged 35 and born in Whitwick, as "*Stocking makers, cotton and thread*" with his wife Martha, who was born in Thringstone, as a "*seamer of stockings*". According to the 1861 census, four other framework knitters were employed in the house and William is given as a "Family Hosier".

This is an excellent example of a rural cottage industry. The Wale family are buried in Griffydam Wesleyan Methodist Chapel cemetery. [See the publication entitled "William Wale of Griffydam" which is free to download and read on the author's website for further information on the Wale family.](#)

The cottage, still in existence as a private residence, also retains the name "Wale's Cottage". It is just around the corner from the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel on Elder Lane.

REPORTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS ON FRAME WORK KNITTERS IN LEICESTERSHIRE, CARRIED OUT BY ORDER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS IN 1845

The following selected reports covered numerous towns and villagers in Leicestershire including those from Belton, Whitwick, Osgathorpe and Thringstone. These are the only places covered in the immediate local area. The reports are in sequence, and provide a fascinating insight into the lives of framework knitters.

REPORTS FROM BELTON

Henry Pare and John Hutchinson, of Belton, Frame-work Knitters, Wrought-hose Branch, examined. *Henry Pare and John Hutchinson.*

5903. Were you deputed to come here and give evidence on behalf of the frame-work knitters of Belton?—(*Pare.*) Yes, we were.

5904. What is the number of frames at Belton?—Eighty-two in work.

5905. Are they all narrow frames?—Yes.

5906. What gauges do they run from?—They run from 24's to 44's.

5907. What do you consider the general condition of the people there; what do they average a frame?—(*Hutchinson.*) I do not think it can be above 5s. or 5s. 6d. per week clear, when every thing is deducted off.

5908. Have you been in full work there, or have you been subject to stint?—On full work. (*Pare.*) I have been very much troubled myself to get cotton.

5909. What are the points you came to speak to principally?—(*Hutchinson.*) The greatest of my grievances, in regard to the work, is the hosiers robbing us in the sizes; they make us make a bigger size, and they call them another name. I have got a statement in my hand made in 1814. The hose I am now making are called four's, and they are the same length as a slender woman's were in the statement, that is robbing us of 5s. a-dozen in the sizes. Those that were 2s. 5½d. a pair then are at this time 11½d. Another thing is, they have raised our number of the cotton, and made us work finer cotton; 38 cotton now would have made 40 then, and they would have been 3d. a pair more than the 40's would.

5910. Are the hands at Belton paid generally in ready money?—Yes, all paid in ready money, and always were, except in the case of one truck master, who used to pay in goods; but he knocked it up a good bit when the trucking was so much opposed, and dropped it when the hand-bills came from Leicester signed by Mr. Bell the secretary; and since that time the hands have been paid their wages in ready money only, but they have stopped poundage, 1s. in the pound.

5911. Who makes that deduction?—The master that they work to; he has an under master, what is called the bag-hosier, he gives it out to the hands, and the hands take it in to him, and he takes it to the head master, and stops the shilling poundage for his trouble.

5912. That is what he calls taking-in money, I suppose?—Yes.

5913. Have the people at Belton any land, or anything to help them besides?—Some part of them have a little bit of ground; about 500 they call it, and they pay 1s. 6d. a hundred for it; and they will not let them grow anything upon it but potatoes and peas and beans, and they think they will be giving it up when it has run out with potatoes. Squire Dawson let them have it out of a bit of generosity, to accommodate them.

5914. Have you any?—No, I have not; they refused letting me have any. (*Pare.*) I have a little land. (*Hutchinson.*) I bought an old house and borrowed the money to pay all of it; I must have bought or had been turned out, and they thought, as I was a freeholder, I had no occasion for any.

5915. Do you find the land of any assistance to you?—(*Pare.*) Yes, a little; but it would be more if they would let me manage it to my own liking.

Sheepshead.
—
Evidence of
Henry Pare and
John Hutchinson.

5916. What is the condition attached to your having it?—We couldn't get a bit of ground to set potatoes for the winter-time, and they set us this out to set potatoes on for the winter-time; and if they would let us have a little more, to grow a little barley and wheat to give us a change, it would have done us more good, but they refused that; they wouldn't let us grow barley or wheat; and so we have put it to potatoes, till it will hardly grow potatoes: you must not grow anything but vegetables.

5917. Have you anything further to state as a grievance that you consider you are labouring under?—There was an imposition this very last week in our business. Mr. Gibson, I took him in a few hose last Saturday, and he calls them slacks, and he gave me a deal finer cotton to make it, and there is a great deal more work on them than the others; they took 1s. a-dozen off. We had been very much troubled for stuff lately through those wide frames. The wide frames smash us all to pieces. Those hose are not worth 1s. a dozen, and the best hose they knock about as if they were fit for nothing; the best hand is looked upon as nothing at all, and those making the worst work are looked upon as the best, and get the best wages. Some of the hosiers will hardly look at a good wrought hose. I believe it is not the case at our warehouse. But the wide work is the ruination of us, I believe, take it all together.

5918. Does your employer keep wide frames as well as narrow ones?—Yes; there are wide frames up at the factory, and they bring in a lot of hose; and until they are got up, I am confident nobody would look at them. And yet a man who goes to buy them, thinks them as good stockings as the others, till they have been worn and washed, then they find it out.

5919. Is what the Belton hands look upon as their greatest grievances, what you have said as to the extra length and fashion and the wide work?—Yes, those are our chief complaints.

5920. Is there anything you wish to say upon any other point?—We always pay full frame-rent, if we do not make it. I came to Sheepshead seven times one fortnight for stuff, and had two parts at last, and paid 2s. for frame-rent for 11s. first-hand; and I came three times one week for stuff; and I consider that it is those wide frames that must have it, and I believe that is the destruction of our business at the present time.

5921. Have you any free-school at Belton?—Yes.

5922. What is the plan of that school?—If you send one child it is 2d., two children 3d., and three children 4d.

5923. Do many of the frame-work knitters' children avail themselves of that?—Several, I believe do; I send one.

5924. What age do they generally send them?—They send them at four years of age; it has not been long erected there.

5925. When are they obliged to take them out?—Eight years of age, or as soon as they are able to work. I have six small children, and I can confidently say, they never hardly see or taste a bit of butter or cheese from month's-end to month's-end; we cannot get it.

5926. They are not able to do much for you?—No, they are not; if I did not work night and day, I could not get half bread for them, much more anything else. As to sending them to school on the Sunday, we cannot keep them decent to send them to Sunday-school; not half of them.

5927. And does the same apply to sending them to a place of worship?—Of course it does.

[*The Witnesses withdrew.*]

Mr. Ben. Holloway.

Mr. Benjamin Holloway examined.

5928. You are a grocer at Belton, I believe?—I am.

5929. Do you know the condition of the frame-work knitters there?—Yes, very well; many of them trade with me; and they are in a very poor state at the present time, I must say.

5930. How do you know or judge of that?—From the money they lay out, and the way they fetch their goods; by the small quantities they fetch; and also, towards the latter end of the week, many of them being without bread and the common necessaries of life. For instance, they come for half a quartern of bacon and a pennyworth of sugar. When I first came to Belton, eight years ago, the stocking-makers were better off than they are now, and families that have traded with me then and do so at present, and have got a little into my books I believe are honest people, but destitute of the means to pay. I should feel sorry to hurt those who use every effort they can to live in the world. I am very well persuaded by the manner in which they do live, that they have not the common necessaries of life. For instance, a person used to be able to get three-quarters of a pound of sugar in a week, and I know they cannot get any now, and when they do, not more than a pennyworth. It is not from drunkenness or dissipated habits of father or mother, nor any part of the children, but I really believe it is from the state of their own work, and the low rate of their wages.

5931. Do they offer clothes or anything of that sort to pawn with you?—I have had several who have offered those things, but I have sooner given them a little than take them, knowing, from the state they were in, that if I had taken them they could never have redeemed them; because, in two or three instances, they had got into debt and showed an honest principle; if they could have spared anything they would have given it me. It is no use taking goods from such people, because they could not pay the debt they were using such an effort to pay.

5932. Do you sell bread?—Yes, bread, flour, bacon, cheese, and all kinds of provisions.

5933. Do you consider that your trade has been interfered with by the truck masters in

different places?—That has been the case; I believe they have laid it by at present a little. There was one man who owed me a little money, came to me and said, he was obliged to go and work at Whitwick to a truck master there, and he was obliged to bring from Whitwick things—coal and such things—to get a loaf for 1s. 1d. and sell for 1s. There is a loss again: and those things are carried out in many instances. Some will get a pound of rice and go and offer it for other things; they will sometimes not bring 1s. to Belton in a month. I know very well that some of the stocking-makers in Belton never taste a drop of ale from club-night to club-night; that is, only a certain allowance made them by the club. They are a lot of as industrious honest stocking-makers at Belton as any place: providing they had the means better to pay with they would do it; and they are obliged to be pined, because they have not the means to live as they ought to live.

Sheepshead
—
Evidence of
Mr. Ben. Holloway.

[The Witness withdrew.]

The Rev. R. Blunt, examined.

Rev. R. Blunt.

5934. You are the incumbent at Belton?—I am.

5935. It is stated that there are between 80 and 90 frames at Belton; do you know whether that is so?—I think that is about the number.

5936. Are the frame-work knitters there in a destitute state at present?—Not of employment.

5937. There is plenty of work?—Yes, they are in work but their wages are low. I speak only comparatively of their not being in distress, when I look back to the last two years.

5938. Have they any allotments of land in your parish?—Yes.

5939. Do you know the conditions on which those are granted to them?—I think they pay 1s. 6d. a hundred for 500 or for 250; they have not all allotments. There are some few that would like more, and some few that have none at all.

5940. Are you of opinion that it has been beneficial as a means of relief?—Yes, I should think there is no doubt of it; but it has not been so much so as it might have been under better management; I should like to see the thing on a better footing.

5941. In what respect?—I think that they are at an expense respecting it that they need not be, and that from ignorance.

5942. Is that expense in the mode of cultivation?—Yes, expense in the mode of cultivation; in carrying out their manure, in hiring a horse and cart sometimes, and paying for digging.

5943. Are they restrained from the growth of corn or anything of that sort?—I think they are; I do not speak confidently, but I have not seen any corn in the allotments.

5944. Do you observe, that, with reference to attendance on places of worship, the frame-work knitters are as constant as other classes of people?—No, not the men.

5945. To what cause do you attribute that?—Partly from want of clothes; and a great deal in this neighbourhood is to be attributed to the toil that they have on the Saturday night in going to Loughborough with their work, and coming home again late on the Saturday night; and they are frequently up half the Friday night and sometimes the Thursday night working hard to get their work done by the Saturday, and they lie in bed the early part of Sunday.

5946. Are their children attendants at the Sabbath-school?—Yes, they prize education.

5947. Have you a day-school there?—A day-school we have, and they pay 2d. a-week for one child and 3d. for two.

5948. Are there many that avail themselves of it among the frame-work knitters?—Yes, there is a fair proportion.

5949. You would, in the exercise of your ministerial duty, frequently visit the houses of those people?—Yes, I do.

5950. In what state do you find them?—Not particularly bad; they are better than Sheepshead. But we have some cases of very serious distress indeed; but I believe that their privations are felt more bodily, than in the outward appearance of their houses.

5951. Are cottage gardens attached to them usually?—No.

5952. Is the Sabbath reputedly observed?—Yes; I do not think that we can complain of that in my parish.

[The Witness withdrew.]

REPORTS FROM WHITWICK

Whitwick.

Henry Lydell, of Whitwick, Frame-work Knitter, Wrought-hose Branch, examined.

Henry Lydell.

6013. How long have you been a frame-work knitter?—I have been in the business 50 years the 1st of last March, from the time I first went apprentice.

6014. What branch are you engaged in?—I work in a 32-guage frame, wrought-hose.

6015. Who do you work to?—To Mr. John Watson of Loughborough.

6016. What are you paid a dozen now for the work on which you are employed?—10s. a dozen for what we call fives.

6017. That is first hand?—Yes.

6018. And what is a fair week's work on the average?—I can make myself about eight pair a-week in a regular way, one week with another. Sometimes I make eight pair of the hose, sometimes seven pair of hose; it is not exactly every week alike; about eight pair a-week is about my regular average.

6019. What would a person working long hours every day make in a week, a younger man?—He would make—I should say when I was young I could make—about as many as four pair more of them by working close, and a great many hours. I do work a great many hours now.

6020. What hours do you generally work in a day?—I generally work about 14 hours a-day.

6021. And what expenses are you at?—There is the frame at 1s. a-week, and needles.

6022. Do you pay for taking in?—No, I do not give anything for taking in, because a man who goes to Loughborough lives at my house, so that it does not cost me anything; he gives me that in, or else an odd frame is 3d. taking in a-week to the people who bring the work.

6023. Have you always had full work for the last two years?—Yes. I have had pretty good luck for that generally. I have had pretty good work for myself, and what frames I have kept going, in a general way.

6024. You have other frames in your house besides what you work yourself?—Yes. I have a 30 frame on 28 work, and a 37 frame that is on 38 work.

6025. Who works in those frames?—A daughter and a journeyman.

6026. And what do they pay you a-week?—My daughter makes me 10 pair a-week at 6s. 3d. a-dozen, and the journeyman takes what he makes himself, and pays me for the standing and taking in; he boards himself, and pays all expenses that come against him.

6027. Do you always receive your wages in ready money?—Yes, always in ready money.

6028. Have you had full work for the other two frames as well as for your own?—Not always we have not, not for the 38; that has been stinted at different times, perhaps a couple of months in the 12 months, sometimes rather longer.

6029. And in the periods of stint do you pay the full rent?—Yes.

6030. Are the frames hosiers' frames, or independents?—They are all hosiers' frames, all Mr. Watson's frames.

6031. Have you more fashion to introduce in the work you are employed upon, than you had formerly?—Yes, a great deal more. I should like to show you the impositions upon us since the time I was apprenticed till now. They are in the length and the sizes. First when I went apprentice, I was put then upon full women's hose; now these (*producing a stocking*) are what they call the fifth size fine hose; the length at that time would have been 21 inches, now they are 26 inches long; and if it was a women's hose, they required them when I was out of my time, to be 25 inches long. We made them 25 for full women's, but they have got this advantage of us by getting an extra length out of us; they now pay us for 5's, and if I was paid for full women's of this size it would be 3s. 6d. net money in my pocket every dozen, only there would be 3½d. go out for seaming, at 1d. in the shilling. This I consider an imposition on the

wrought work by the cut-up work, the wide work, and the scissors work. Whether those be impositions that have caused our masters to put us on this size to take advantage along with them, or whether the imposition be one of their own, I am not able to judge. That is a 5th size. This (*producing another stocking*) is a 4½, I think they call it. This should be what we call a 4th size. This is the size we used to make them when I was apprenticed (*producing another stocking*). The old length is 19 inches for a 4th size, and now it is 23½ inches.

6032. Are there any extra narrowings in them?—Yes; we put in extra narrowings more than we used to do formerly, and I cannot tell you exactly what we put in the heel ends. In former days I think we used to put seven or eight. Some hosiers required more than others did.

6033. Do you get the seaming done yourself?—I get it done myself. They have one advantage in the foot-bottom; we used to shift three stitches and clear a lead, and now we shift four stitches and clear a lead; that is the beginning of a foot-bottom.

6034. Is there anything else as to the fashion you wish to speak about?—I do not know there is anything else to speak to.

6035. Is the yarn of which you make the stockings now as good as it used to be?—No; I do not consider it near as good as it used to be. We work it finer, and it ought to be better for that; but the yarn is not so good in quality as it used to be.

6036. Do you think that arises from its being spun by machinery, and not by hand, as it used to be?—It must be the machinery, because if the hands made it now as they used to do what is the reason it is not so good?

6037. Having been so many years in the trade, have you noticed much deterioration in the condition of the people employed in it since you have known it?—Yes, a great deal. I used to employ a great many frames at one time of day, some 23 or 24 years ago, for Mr. Ratcliffe of Loughborough; he used to send to me to get his orders made.

6038. And what do you find the state of the people from the alteration?—They cannot earn now the money they used to do, there is so much difference in the prices; and then whatever they take off, if they take 6d. a-day off, that was all net money out of pocket, there was no expense to come to us back again out of that, and that has all gone clear out of the pocket.

6039. Have you any allowance made you now for waste?—None. We have not any allowance made for waste.

6040. Do they not take it in?—They wish us to bring in what waste we can that we cannot work up; they will take it in, keeping it clean, as it ought to be.

6041. And they allow you its weight?—Yes, they allow you that weight when you take it in. When I first began business for myself, after I was out of my time, they used to allow a quarter of an ounce in the pound, but in the course of time that was done away, and they do not allow us anything.

6042. Have you many abatements made for faulty work?—I have heard talk of it, but it has not affected me much. I can speak for myself so far as this, some odd times we get bated an odd 6d., but I never have been bated anything of the sort these last three or four months, I understand the nature of the work so well. I always know what will suit my master before I take it in, and what will not.

6043. Now, is there any particular grievance under which you consider you, as frame-work knitters, labour?—I do not know there is anything in our working to our masters a particular grievance.

6044. What you complain of most then is the low rate of wages, and the additional work, so far as the additional length, and so on, that is required to be put in, as compared with what you used to have?—Yes.

6045. Do you take in your work yourself to Mr. Watson?—No, I send it, but I do not pay anything; but all such as bring it to my house to take by this man, they pay for it.

6046. Have you ever worked for any of the masters here?—I have worked to Mr. Hatton. I used to make him a goodish bit of work at one time of day; that was generally when we was short of work of our masters, when they couldn't employ my frames; and if we could get work elsewhere, they used to give me liberty to do so.

6047. Paying them the frame-rent?—Yes.

6048. And when you worked direct to Mr. Hatton in that manner, did he charge you the taking in?—No, he did not.

6049. Is there anything you wish to add to your evidence?—I do not know anything else I can speak of, any further than what I have done.

6050. Have the frame-work knitters any allotments of land here?—Yes, they have what we call gardens, a great many of them.

[The Witness withdrew.]

William Sharpe, of Whitwick, Frame-work Knitter, Wrought-hose Branch, examined.

Wm. Sharpe.

6051. You are working to Mr. Watson of Loughborough, are you not?—I am.

6052. What are you working on?—On a 38-gauge frame.

6053. What is your work paid a-dozen?—12s. 3d. first hand

6054. What quantity do you do in a week?—Nine pairs.

6055. Is that a full week's work?—Yes, about as much as I can do.

6056. What do you pay for frame-rent, and other charges?—1s. frame-rent, 3d. taking in; the seaming I pay about 11d. for.

Whitwick.
Evidence of
Wm. Sharpe.

6057. Do you do the winding at home?—Yes.
6058. Do you work in one of Mr. Watson's frames, or an independent frame?—Yes, in one of his own frames.
6059. How long have you worked to him?—About half a year.
6060. Have you been in full work all that time?—Yes.
6061. Do you work in a shop, or at home?—I work in my own shop.
6062. How many frames have you in that shop?—One more in the shop, and one in the house.
6063. Are they worked by your own family?—Yes.
6064. And what are the gauges of those frames?—One is 32 and the other 26. I have only had the 26-frame this week.
6065. Is there anything particular you come to speak to?—Only to give you answers to what questions you might ask me.
6066. Was there anything you wish to tell me yourself?—No.
6067. How long have you been in the trade?—19 years.
6068. Who works in the other frames?—My wife in one, and my child in the other.
6069. What do you pay rent for your house?—1s. 2d. a-week.
6070. Have you a bit of land?—I have about 100 $\frac{1}{2}$.
6071. Do you pay anything extra for that?—No; it is included in the rent.
6072. Is there anything you wish to add to what I have asked you?—I consider that the cut-up work is an injury to us and the trade.
6073. Do you consider that the main injury which has reduced your wages?—I believe it is.

[*The Witness withdrew.*]

John Hucknall.

John Hucknall, of Whitwick, Frame-work Knitter, Wrought-hose Branch, examined.

6074. Who do you work to?—To Mr. Churchill, of Sheephead.
6075. What gauge frame do you work in?—34-gauge frame.
6076. Do you receive your wages in ready money?—Yes.
6077. What do you come to speak to?—To state how we are intruded upon by oppression.
6078. State your case?—I make now 4's, as they call them, at 8s. 6d. I used to have a guinea for them 40 years ago.
6079. Were your charges the same then?—The same then as they are now.
6080. How many frames have you?—Eight.
6081. How many are worked by your own family?—They are all worked by my own family.
6082. What gauges do they range from?—Two 36, two 34, two 30, and one 28.
6083. Are they all in your house?—Yes.
6084. And what is the frame-rent of each?—The 28 is 9d., the others are 1s.
6085. How many pair a-week can you make of the sort you work yourself?—I generally make about nine pair a-week of them.
6086. Are all your people receiving wages in ready-money?—Yes. We have no trucking, it's all ready-money. Sometimes some abatements take place, 6d. and 1s. per dozen.
6087. Are those abatements frequently made?—Very often.
6088. On what grounds?—They say that they are too slack, or too short, or something of that sort.
6089. Do you consider that they are often unjustly made?—Yes; very frequently so, I consider.
6090. Are they ever referred to arbitrators, under the Arbitration Act?—No.
6091. You invariably submit to any reduction made?—Yes.
6092. Are you aware that there is an Act of Parliament authorizing you in such cases to take advantage of arbitration?—I have heard as much, but I know no more of it.
6093. It is unused by the operatives?—I never knew it used in my time.
6094. What do you consider to be the reasons why it is not used?—I do not know. I never knew it to be used; and I cannot give any reason why it is not used.
6095. Is there any particular circumstance that induces you to submit to those abatements?—Yes; if I did not submit to them, I must resist them, and then I should lose all my frames and my work.
6096. Is there anything else you wish to add?—No, there is nothing else I wish to add; what I have stated is the truth, as near as I know.
6097. Then, what you consider the great hardships are, the difference in the rate of wages that you used to receive compared with what you now receive, and those abatements?—I consider the scissors and the wide frames are the instruments of it.
6098. Then you consider the wide frames have been instrumental in the reduction of the wages, and in producing the abatements?—The scissors I consider rather more than the wide frames.
6099. You formerly held an allotment of land, did you not?—I did. I held 1000 of Mr. Merrywether.
6100. What did you pay 100 for it?—1s. I paid 10s. a-year for it.
6101. Did you give it up, or was it taken from you?—It was taken from me.
6102. Did any others lose their lands the same time?—No; there was some more committed the same crime, and some less, but Mr. Merrywether was not so good as his word with any one but me.
6103. What was the crime you committed?—Voting against the church-rate; because I could not afford to pay to the church out of my earnings.

6104. And for that you say the holding was taken away from you?—Yes, it was.

6105. What notice did you receive?—Six months' notice.

6106. How long had you held the land before you were compelled to give it up?—I think about 10 years; I will not be confident whether 10 or 11 years. I cleared it for myself; it was rough forest land.

6107. And what state was it in when you left it?—In very good condition; in a good cultivated state.

6108. Did you receive the value of the crop?—There was no value of a crop upon it. Having received the notice to give it up at Lady-day on Michaelmas-day, I did not crop it again.

6109. How many persons have allotments under the same proprietor?—There are 19 gardens, but one or two of them are two allotments; 500 is what is called an allotment.

6110. Are those Mr. Merrywether's?—Yes, Mr. Merrywether's; and I should think there are about 16 people who hold them.

6111. Did you find the allotment of value to you?—It was an accommodation for us, the cultivation of it at vacant times, when not shut up in the shop. We did it on the Saturday and the Monday, and so on, that was all the benefit I found it. It is an accommodation a little when you can manage it at your leisure, and it is a bit of fresh exercise with us that are in our stocking-frames so much. I used to keep a pig off it, and grow a little bit of barley, and a few potatoes. I had a little bit more of my own, about 400.

6112. Have you kept a pig since you have lost that land?—Yes.

[The Witness withdrew.]

Joseph Sheffield, of Whitwick, Frame-work Knitter, Wrought-hose Branch, examined.

Joseph Sheffield.

6113. Who do you work to?—To Mr. Churchill, who is dead, but his trustees are carrying on the business.

6114. What guage frame do you work in?—40-guage frame.

6115. What is your work paid a-dozen?—13s. 6d.

6116. How many pair can you make in a-week?—Nine.

6117. What is the amount of your charges?—About 2s. 3d.

6118. Have you a shop of frames of your own?—Yes.

6119. How many are there?—Seven.

6120. Who works in them?—Two daughters, and a boy I am grandfather to.

6121. All your own family?—Yes.

6122. Do you get your wages in ready-money?—In six I do.

6123. And how is it with the seventh?—I work one to William Stinson.

6124. And how does he pay you?—He pays me in money, but then I have to lay it out before I come out of the house.

6125. Does he keep a shop?—Yes, a grocer and tallow-chandler's shop.

6126. Does he make it a condition with you to take your goods from him?—No, I have never been in myself; my mistress always goes in; he may, perhaps, compel those that carry their work in to him; I never went. I took the frame because a frame went from me to Nottingham, or else I should not work to him. I do not like the truck masters, they do a great deal of injury.

6127. How long have you worked to him?—I should think upwards of 12 months.

6128. What proportion of your earnings on that frame, do you think, you have taken in money weekly?—The woman who works it has 7s. a-dozen. She brings it all in goods, except about 1s. or 1s. 6d.

6129. And does she work journey-work to you?—Yes, but she does not live in the house with me.

6130. Is she a married woman?—No, she is a single woman.

6131. Are there many frames in Whitwick worked by women?—Yes. I do not know what proportion.

6132. Are there many of them working journey-work?—No, they principally live at home.

6133. Do you own any land?—Yes, I have about 200 of my own.

6134. Have you any allotment?—No.

6135. Did you ever have any?—No.

6136. Did you come to speak to any particular points?—Only what I think of as to the spurious work. I think that the spurious work does us a great deal of hurt. When I was working the same sort of work I am working now to the old Mr. Churchill (I began to work to him 31 years ago,) he sent me an order for a dozen, the same as these, (producing a pair of stockings,) only they were shapes. These are what are called dumps, and I had 31s. or 32s. a-dozen for making them; those are now what I get 13s. 6d. for. Those were then called slender women's, and now we call them half-past fours.

6137. Is there any other point which strikes you, that you wish to give evidence upon?—No, not that I know of particularly.

[The Witness withdrew.]

Whitwick.
Evidence of
Joseph Feukes.

Joseph Feukes, of Whitwick, Frame-work Knitter, Wrought-hose Branch, examined.

6138. Who do you work to?—To Mr. Churchill, of Sheephead.
6139. How long have you worked for him?—Four or five months.
6140. Who did you work to before that?—To T—— H——, of Whitwick.
6141. Do you receive your wages in ready-money now?—Yes.
6142. Did you when employed by Mr. H——?—No.
6143. How did you then receive your wages?—I received them in goods.
6144. What shop does he keep?—Grocer's shop.
6145. Do you know whether the other hands in his employ were paid in goods also?—Yes.
6146. You know that of your own knowledge?—Yes.
6147. Did you receive all your wages, or only a portion, in goods?—All.
6148. What description of goods did you receive?—Bread, bacon and cheese, and tea and coffee, and such sort of things as those.
6149. Did you think you received them on as fair terms as you could have bought them elsewhere?—Except candles; he charged 7*d.* per pound, when the other shops charged 6*d.*; then when I wanted a trifle of money for anything else, he would not give it me.
6150. How did you pay your house-rent, and other things?—I lived in a house, and I used to pay in victuals, the same as I had for my work.
6151. What was your rent?—It was 1*s.* a-week.
6152. Did you pay weekly?—Yes.
6153. Did they allow you the same for the victuals as you gave for it?—Yes; the landlord took it for the same as I gave for it.
6154. What did you do when you wanted clothing?—I never had any while I worked there to signify.
6155. How long did you work for him?—Better than 12 months.
6156. And during the whole of that time, did you never receive any money?—The last month I threatened I would not stand it any longer. I would either have my money or lay the penalty on him; and then the last fortnight they gave me my money, and took my frame from me. They would not let me have my frames any longer, because I would have my money.
6157. You were discharged because you refused to continue receiving goods instead of money?—Yes.
6158. Did he always give you full work?—Yes.
6159. Do you remember what your average earnings were under him, one week with another?—About 8*s.* a-week; and I had to pay 1*s.* a-week frame-rent, and 3*d.* for taking in my own work; they do that now to others that work to him. He has his goods made, and goes hawking them himself, him and his son.
6160. So that he charges them with taking in, 3*d.* a dozen, though they take in their own hose?—Yes.
6161. You never laid any information against him?—No.
6162. Why did you not do so?—I threatened to do it, because they would not pay me my money; and when I would have my money, they gave me a fortnight's notice and took my frames.

[The Witness withdrew.]

John Percival.

John Percival, of Whitwick, Frame-work Knitter, Wrought-hose Branch, examined.

6163. Who have you worked to?—To Mr. H——.
6164. What frame have you?—34-guage frame.
6165. What are you paid a dozen for making?—8*s.*
6166. How many can you make in a week?—About 10 pair I can average myself.
6167. And what outgoings have you to pay out of that?—1*s.* frame-rent, needles 2½*d.*; then there are candles, and the seaming is about 8*d.*
6168. Do you pay taking-in besides?—On that tack we do not pay altogether 3*d.* for taking-in, but we receive 3*d.* less, to be equal to Mr. Burgess, who got this 3*d.* The wages we had was 8*s.* 3*d.*, but there was the 3*d.* taken off, which made it 8*s.*
6169. Finding that Mr. Burgess charged 3*d.* a-dozen for taking-in, H—— took off 3*d.* a-dozen from the price, instead of doing so?—Yes.
6170. So that the amount of reduction was equivalent to taking-in?—Yes.
6171. Do you receive your wages in ready money?—We have the last month, through the report of the Commissioner to us, or else I worked these three years under him, and for the first two years and three months I think I received only 2*s.* and some odd halfpence in money from him.
6172. Do you live in a house of his?—Yes.
6173. What rent do you pay a-week?—1*s.* 6*d.*
6174. Is that also deducted from your earnings?—It is taken when I take my work in every week.
6175. Until the last month, have you only received 2*s.* in money from him?—Yes, and some few odd halfpence. I cannot justly say to a penny how much.
6176. What did he furnish you with?—All sorts of grocery goods, nothing further.
6177. Did he supply you with animal food?—No; he supplied me with bacon; but with no fresh meat, unless I took anything I had to barter in exchange for it.
6178. When you wanted to barter, what did you do?—We had a neighbour that had money,

and if we wanted anything we could take it and sell it for something less than we gave for it. If we had half a stone loaf to spare, if we wanted to sell it, we could sell it with the reduction of a penny; and if it was not quite so heavy as it should have been, we made it up sometimes. The bread was not always proper in weight; but it might average sometimes as much as others were, sometimes less.

Whitwick.
—
Evidence of
John Percival.

6179. But you always paid the full price for it?—Yes; nothing deducted in that way.

6180. Does he still keep a shop?—Yes.

6181. His son is in business with him, is he not?—Yes; his son is in business, as far as going out selling for him; because he has more goods than he could get shut of himself, and his son has taken up the business as well as he. We make work for him now on his orders.

6182. Is there anything else you may wish to say?—I do not know anything else I have to disclose.

6183. You think that all the hands are served the same?—Yes, no doubt of it; and I think they have been all served the same until this last month.

[The Witness withdrew.]

Joseph Stone, of Whitwick, Frame-work Knitter, Wrought-hose Branch, examined.

Joseph Stone.

6184. Who do you work for?—To Mr. Watson, of Loughborough.

6185. How long have you worked for him?—Nine years.

6186. What have you come to speak to?—As to the work I do, the price, and so on of it.

6187. What guage frame do you work in?—A 46-guage frame. There are 204 jacks, and I get 19s. a-dozen for making these stockings [*producing a pair of stockings*]. These are what are called fourth size. Now they are making a size the same kind of hose in Derbyshire as these hose, the same guage, and they call them 6's, only one side of a lead better than I am, and they have 24s. a-dozen for them; thus there is 5s. a-dozen difference between them, with only one lead a-side difference in them.

6188. What part of Derbyshire do you allude to?—To Belper.

6189. Have you full work upon that?—Yes; now we have always full work, when on thread; when not on thread, on this guage, he stints us to a certain quantity. I have been stinted for as much as 15 and 16 weeks together, two years ago, so as to earn but 7s. a-week, with all expenses to pay out of it at the same time, just the same as I have now; except that I only had half rent to pay, and the seaming was not so much.

6190. How many of those stockings can you do in a week now?—I should think, on an average, I make from seven to eight pair a-week; and when on full work at this work, as at present, there is about 3s. 3d. going out for expenses. That is sooner under than over. I should say myself, if I was to take it on an average, 3s. 6d.; but I take 3s. 3d. I reckon nothing for my light in summer-time, but then in winter time I do, and that ought to be divided; but that I do not reckon now.

6191. Is there any other point you wish to speak to?—Nothing else as relates to my own business.

[The Witness withdrew.]

John Walker, of Whitwick, Frame-work Knitter, Wrought-hose Branch, examined.

John Walker.

6192. Who do you work to?—To Messrs. Cotton and Hammond, of Sheepshead.

6193. What frame do you work in?—A 26-guage frame.

6194. How many pair can you do in a-week?—A dozen is a fair week's work for me to do of them.

6195. You are not so expert as some hands, are you?—No; I am not so ready as some.

6196. How much a-dozen have you for working those hose?—Only 5s. a-dozen, and I pay about 1s. 11d. for frame-charges out of it.

6197. What house-rent do you pay?—1s. 5d. for house-rent, and the levies come to about 3d. a-week.

6198. Have you a family?—Only one child.

6199. Have you any allotment land?—No allotment land; nor my father, who lives with me, either.

6200. What is the work you are making?—Worsted, with cotton tops.

6201. What do you wish to speak to particularly?—The straight-downs and cut-ups, I believe, have been the ruin of our branch of the trade.

6202. Do you receive any assistance from the parish, or in any other way?—No; not a halfpenny.

6203. How do you get your work to Sheepshead?—I have to take it myself.

6204. What hours of the day do you generally work?—I generally work from 12 to 14 hours a-day, one day with another. It takes me almost one day to take in my work.

6205. Do you find much abatement for faulty work, or anything of that sort?—I never had any abatement; I always make my work good.

6206. Is there anything you wish to add to your evidence?—No; nothing more, except that my father cannot get so much by 1s. a-week as I can.

[The Witness withdrew.]

Whitwick.

Evidence of
John Gilbert.

John Gilbert, of Whitwick, Frame-work Knitter, Wrought-hose Branch, examined.

6207. Who do you work to?—We have four frames, and work three to Mr. Watson, of Loughborough, and one to Mr. Hanson, of Whitwick.

6208. Do you receive your wages in ready money always?—To Mr. Watson, I do. I cannot say we receive it in money at Hanson's. We have very little to receive; my wife works the frame, and she does not get above 9d. or 10d., besides frame-rent, in the week.

6209. And does she get that in ready money, or does she get goods for it?—We mostly have goods for it.

6210. Do you know whether all his hands are paid in goods?—I cannot say, I'm sure. I have heard of one man who says he receives part goods and part money.

6211. But your wife never receives any money, does she?—We have to receive some trifle when we have been put to a strait, but it is not often that we do. It is seldom, as I said, that we have any to receive. She has not been able to earn anything this last two or three weeks.

6212. Have you seen Mr. Hanson to-day?—He has been at our house to-day.

6213. Had you any conversation with him, in reference to the evidence you were to give on this inquiry to-day?—No; nothing of that sort passed. I know I should speak the truth. His mother carries on the business at home.

6214. And he hucksters his goods over the country?—Yes. He has a carriage, and goes hawking all about the country.

[The Witness withdrew.]

Thomas Woodroffe.

Thomas Woodroffe, of Whitwick, Frame-work Knitter, Wrought-hose Branch, examined.

6215. Who are you working to?—I work two frames to Mr. Watson, of Loughborough, and four or five to Mr. Burgess, in this town.

6216. Are they all worked by your own family, or any of them by journeymen?—Most of them by my own family. I have one journeyman and two neighbours' children work with me.

6217. In the work that you have from Mr. Burgess, does he charge you anything for taking-in?—I am sure I do not know how that case is; he gives me such a price, and some people say he takes 3d. a-dozen for it; it is about the same I receive from other places. There are various prices given, and various forms of work about different houses. Whether he thinks to take 3d., or not, I am sure I do not know.

6218. Do you receive your wages from him in ready money, or do you take it out in goods?—I receive it in ready money, but then he sells goods.

6219. How long have you had ready money?—Ever since I worked for him.

6220. How long is that?—Perhaps one year and a half; but I suppose he expects people to lay their money out with him. He never said anything of that sort to me. I buy my articles about as cheap of him as the other people, I suppose.

6221. You do take goods of him, I suppose?—Yes.

6222. But you do not feel compelled to do it?—No, not at all; he has never intimated anything of the kind to me.

6223. Do you know whether he employs any frames, or gives employment to any one that does not take goods from him?—I do not know, I am sure; but I should hardly think he does.

6224. What is that pair of stockings you have in your hand?—It is the size I work; they are called 4's; but they are as large as they used to make maids' some time ago.

6225. What guage frame is that?—A 34-guage frame. All the frames I work to Mr. Burgess are independent frames; but, I believe, he counts that I make better work than other people; that is generally understood in the town. That is one thing why he always employs me, I think; and I always buy my goods of him as well; that is another thing.

6226. What are those stockings paid a-dozen?—8s. 9d. I received for them; and I think Mr. Churchill's and Mr. Watson's are the same; but I do not know whether Mr. Watson's are. I do not work anything of that sort to him; but they are made like the old-fashioned article that we used to make; only in the size, there is a great deal of difference in that. They are called 4's; and they would be a great deal less, if they were properly made sized 4's. We have been dropped, in an indirect way, many times, through changing the size, and calling them by different names; by making them greater lengths, and getting a number of leads in. Perhaps, at the first onset, he would tell you to take a lead or two out, and make them a little bit shorter, and take 6d. a-dozen off; and then, when you have gone in next time, perhaps he would say, "Thomas, these are rather too small; these are rather too small." Or if not, the next time but one; and so they would go on, time after time, and get them the old length, but at the reduced price. They say they must be made a little bit longer, but I do not think we shall ever have a better price myself; there are so many of those cut-ups, it will prevent our being better remunerated, for such work as mine, I mean; it is not such work as mine that is generally made now. We have had several stockings about us, bought even by stocking-makers, who have been deceived. They have been in the right form, and when they have come to wash them they couldn't get them on again; and many stocking-makers are deceived in like manner; and if they are so deceived, mere strangers are sure to be. I consider it an injury to the stocking-maker, and an imposition upon the public as well. I have seen cut-up stockings; and when I have put my hand down to hold them I have discovered

what they have been, and not before. I once worked them at Melbourne, and the seam would give way at once, right away; that is, when they have been sewed rather too near the selvage. We had but 3*d.* a-dozen for the gusset, and they commonly make them without, and they are not worth so much by 3*d.* a-pair. It allows for stretching over the instep.

6227. Is there anything you wish to add to your evidence?—No, I think not; only that we used to have a great deal different prices, more than as much again as we get now.

[*The Witness withdrew.*]

Whitwick.
—
Evidence of
Thomas Woodroffe.

William Spencer, of Whitwick, Frame-work Knitter, Wrought-hose Branch, examined.

Wm. Spencer.

6228. You worked to Mr. Stinson, I believe?—Yes, I do. I work, in a 36-guage frame, 34 work; what are called half-past 4's.

6229. What can you net a-week, after you have paid your expenses?—I do not work that frame myself.

6230. You are an in-door journeyman?—Yes.

6231. What frame do you work in?—38, to Mr. Watson; the other frame is worked by my wife.

6232. Does Mr. Stinson pay your wages in money?—Yes.

6233. How long has he done so?—Ever since we began to work to him, five months; but when we took in the first hose, he said, "You know my rules," and so we did; if we did not go and lay out the best part of our money, we shouldn't have any work the next Saturday.

6234. Did he use those words, "You know my rules"?—Yes.

6235. You understood those words, "You know my rules," to mean that you must take goods from him?—Yes; and so I have done ever since.

6236. And, so far as your knowledge extends, does he make that a general practice?—Yes.

6237. What articles does he sell particularly?—Grocery.

6238. Is that of as good quality, and as cheap, as you could buy at other shops?—The bread is as good, but 2*d.* a-stone dearer.

6239. And has it always been 2*d.* a-stone dearer?—Yes; ever since I began to work for him. We have it from two shops, so that we know.

6240. Have you anything else to add to your evidence?—No.

[*The Witness withdrew.*]

Thomas Heafield, of Whitwick, Frame-work Knitter, Wrought-hose Branch, examined.

Thomas Heafield.

6241. You are the secretary of the Whitwick Branch of the Frame-work Knitters' Union?—I am.

6242. How long have you been in the trade?—About 18 years, and I have been the last six years working at Whitwick. I have lived at four different places as journeyman. The charges are 3*s.* per week.

6243. How many are there in Whitwick who are in-door journeymen?—About 40. The last place but one I worked at—I want to mention this—there were nine months out of the twelve that I had scarcely any work at all, and one month I had none at all, and they charged me full charges all that time. The man that I worked with as journeyman, he charged me the 3*d.* for taking the hose in when there was none made; and the hosier charged me 1*s.* a-week for the rent when I hadn't any work for the frame. At every other place they have dealt with me fairly. My average earnings are about 8*s.* 6*d.* per week, and then out of that I have to pay 3*s.* for the charges, and 3*d.* for washing a shirt, 1*d.* for a pair of stockings, $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* for a handkerchief; and then I have to find needles to work the frame with, that is 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.*; and then the seaming 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* a-dozen. I average about a dozen a-week. And then if I have pudding on the Sunday, they charge me 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* for that; a small bit of pudding. I think I do as much as most in the town.

6244. You, yourself, are working as an in-door journeyman then?—Yes.

6245. Do you think your condition is an average of the condition of that class?—I think I average more than most of them. I could not appear before you as I do, only I have a brother who is pretty well off, and he helps me at times.

6246. Is it the practice of the masters here to pay all their hands in ready money?—There are two that do not, the rest do; but they all keep shops; and those who keep shops, we cannot expect that we shall have any work at all if we do not trade with them; at least we have that opinion, and we trade with them accordingly. 3*d.* a-dozen are paid for all the goods we make; and I wish to say this, that some of the master-men in Whitwick make the journeyman pay that 3*d.*, as well as the 3*d.* taking-in for themselves. We consider that an imposition upon the journeymen, making in effect 6*d.* a-week for taking-in. I paid it myself the last place but one, 6*d.* to the hosier, and 6*d.* to the master-man I worked to; that made a 1*s.* to me then for taking-in alone.

6247. Do you know who began the practice of charging the 3*d.* taking-in his own hosiery? I believe it was William Stinson; he began it in this way. He was a kind of bagman to Mr. Churchill, of Sheepshead. He had began to get up hose for himself, and then he began to take the 3*d.* for taking-in his own hose as well as the other; and in time it became general, the others taking pattern by him. Mr. Burgess, he used to work for Messrs. Cotton and Ham-

2 X 2

mond; he used to charge the 3*d.* a-dozen for taking-in their hose, and now that he makes for himself, he charges the 3*d.* just the same, and that has caused us a drop lately. The hosiers, at Sheepshead, that pay in ready money, they made us put gussets in the hose and splittings, that we had 6*d.* a-dozen for, and make them for the very same price as what they are making their hose for, to come equal to this 3*d.* a-dozen; so that we consider that is a drop.

6248. That is to say, that they are all putting in extra fashion on account of the 3*d.*, so as to make the one tantamount with the other; so that the one man charges the 3*d.* for taking-in, and the other man has three pennyworth of extra fashion to make it up?—That is just so.

6249. What are the usual hours of working in Whitwick?—On the average it will be 14 hours a day.

6250. And you think that is usual?—Yes, but some work more than that.

6251. Do most of the frame-work knitters work direct to the warehouse?—Yes.

6252. Do you always know the prices you will be paid for your work?—No, we do not know what the prices will be till we come out; we know what the price should be, but if it does not just suit the hosier, he takes and stops out whatever he thinks proper, and we are forced to submit to it.

6253. That is, he makes abatements?—Yes. I should think scarcely a week passes but half-a-dozen abatements take place. A man has to suffer, in that way, a 1*s.*, and sometimes 1*s.* 6*d.*

6254. And do you believe those abatements are often unjustly made?—Yes, I do. One man, I believe, went in this morning, who works for Mr. Watson, of Loughborough. I saw a printed form how he was to make those hose, what number of narrowings he is to put into the leg, and in the heel and toe. This man had made the hose exactly as the ticket was; and when he sent the hose to see whether they would do, a pair of scissors were taken and the heel was cut right through, and yet they charge that man for the hose. They told him he was to come over on Monday himself. The hose were sent by the carrier; he was told to come over to answer to it. He went and took the ticket with him that they sent him to make the hose by, and the hosier saw that it was his mistake, but he would not make him any recompense for the hose. Latterly, since this Commission has been issued, he has sent word by the carrier, that if he would ask him to let him have the money he would send it, but the man has never sent I believe, and the hosier has not I believe paid him.

6255. Are the men aware of the existence of the Arbitration Act for the settlement of disputes between master and workmen?—I do not think they are about here.

6256. Are you aware that such an Act exists?—I am not.

6257. And therefore, of course, the Act is never resorted to?—No. A hosier, of Loughborough, about 10 years ago had a man that took his work in to him, and he cut his hose through the middle for something that was the matter with them. The man got over the counter to the hosier, and they had a stout scuffle together, and they ordered the man to be taken to the gaol; he was taken before a magistrate, and the case was investigated by the magistrate, and they fined the man 1*s.* for striking the hosier; and they fined the hosier 5*l.* for cutting the stockings.

6258. Are you sure you are right in that?—Yes. I could bring you forward a man that was there at the time. When we have done our work, and take it to the warehouse, it is as bad as going to gaol; we stand at the door, and tremble for fear of something, we do not know what we shall have to face before we come out. I have, myself, sometimes felt that I would as soon go to gaol as go before a hosier; they have acted in that way, and they use that language, that we have shrunk before them. About two years ago I went to take work in, and when I got before the hosier, the work did not please him, and he turned round and said, "He would be damned if he would not play the very devil with us" that day, and he sent several back, and would not take in their hose at all, and they had no money, and nowhere to fly to. He is one of the biggest tyrants there is on this side. He took me off my proper work in a 24-guage two years last week since, and put me on what they call straight-downs and cut-heels. My proper price, for the proper hose I made him, was 8*s.* 6*d.* a-dozen, and those hose were the same length, only a little narrower, the heels and feet cut, and he gave me but 3*s.* 9*d.* a-dozen for them, and I could not do but a dozen and a half on an average in a week. I was on them at the very time, and he told me if I would make them an inch and a half longer, and put extra stripes in them, he would give me 3*d.* a-dozen more for them. I was not well, and I got a man to help me to finish the order. I took them in myself, and when the master paid me, he paid me the old price of 3*s.* 9*d.* the dozen. I told him what he told me, but he would not give me more: he said, that if he did tell me so he could not give me it, nor would he give me it, and I did not have it.

6259. What were the obstacles to you getting work elsewhere?—Because I could not maintain myself. The last Whitwick wake, two years ago, I had but one quartern loaf, and a quartern of bacon, to subsist on during the week, and I came to this conclusion, because I did not wish to get into debt, that I would try and go into the field and try if I could eat grass, and I actually did go and try if I could, but when I had got it into my mouth I could not get it down. I did not know what to do. I got a cup of tea at one place, and a cup of tea at another; that was the way while I was on that sort of work. When trade began to get rather better, that I could get situated elsewhere, I left, and I have been at this place ever since, and I have been doing better.

6260. Do you receive your wages in ready money now?—Yes, I do.

6261. Do you deal at your master's shop?—Yes.

6262. To whom do you pay the amount every week for the goods you have had?—The master that I work with is a journeyman, and he takes in the work, and he asks me before he

goes, what things I want, and he brings me them, and then we come to a reckoning of what there is, and if there is anything over he gives it me. I have never had any fresh meat since Christmas; I have never tasted a bit, because I could not afford it. Sometimes I have had half a pound of bacon in a week. Once in three weeks, or perhaps every other week, a pound; and I believe that is the chief way that journeymen live, if not, I am persuaded they must go in debt for it.

6263. What number of frames are there in Whitwick?—339 frames.

6264. Are they all narrow frames?—They are.

[*The Witness withdrew.*]

Samuel Wilson, of Whitwick, Frame-work Knitter, Wrought-hose branch, examined.

Whitwick
—
Evidence of
Thomas Heafeld.

Samuel Wilson.

6265. You are joint secretary of the frame-work knitters of Whitwick?—I am.

6266. How many frames have you?—I have five in my own shop.

6267. Who are they worked by?—They are worked by two journeymen, and a reputed son—it is a child that I have brought up from his cradle; I took him as an orphan when his mother died; and myself and wife work the other frames; my wife works a little; she is past work, only the frame stood, so that we had to pay the rent, and I cannot turn it up, therefore she is obliged to do a little to pay the rent, and keep me from that expense.

6268. What are your weekly charges to your journeymen?—3s. I charge.

6269. And for that you give them their washing extra?—I give them washing extra, and my wife generally makes, what is called in poor people's houses, a pudding on Sunday, and gives them a part of it.

6270. And that is an unusual thing to do, is it?—I believe not at this time, but it used to be.

6271. What is the pudding generally?—What is termed a Yorkshire pudding, or pudding put under some meat in the oven; on holiday times we put some plums in.

6272. You think that is more common now than it used to be?—Rather more common, but I do not think every one does it. I consider for my own part the distress of the people was rather too hard to charge them too much; the charge is the same, only I give them washing, and the carriage of the stockings into Narborough comes within the charges.

6273. Those charges include frame-rent of course?—Oh yes, everything comes within the charges; they have nothing more to pay.

6274. Who do you work to?—I work three to Mr. Watson, and two to Mr. Churchill's trustees.

6275. What are the ranges of the gauges of your frames?—I have two 40's, one 36, one 32, and one 30.

6276. How long have you been in the trade?—44 years; and when I first went into the trade the small women's stockings were 24 inches long, and we measured them at that time. We did not go by the number of leads then, but by the measure, and they measured 5 inches over the calf. Now we are making them according to the different gauges; small women's are 27 inches long; and now we go by the number of leads, but I should think they would measure 5½ inches.

6277. So that there is much additional work in them, and a much less amount of wages paid for them?—A deal less; a small woman's stocking when I came out of the army (I was seven years in the army), or slender woman's stocking, was about 17s. 6d. a-dozen making, and now it is 8s. 9d., with the difference in the lengths and widths I have stated. Then there is a great difference with regard to the fine stockings; the 40-gauge used to be about 30s., and now they are 13s. 6d. in one sort, and 13s. in another, that I work. The first thing I know ever did us any damage was in 1806 when they began to work the scissors; that began at Hathern, a village about six or seven miles from here. They began to work the spurious work, to use the scissors to cut up, in 1807. I went into the army in that year and came out in 1814; and in 1815 we had a most terrible concern with trade. We went down every week we went in; we were dropped 2s. or 3s. a-dozen till we came down: so that 36 stockings which were 15s. a-dozen in the early part of 1815 and 1816 were 11s. 6d.; they were dropped 4s. 6d. in six months, but they were lower than that afterwards; they were but 9s. 6d., now they are making them at 9s. 9d. at this time. In 1819 we got a statement, and got our wages a great deal better; but in 1824 we called a meeting at Nottingham to try to better ourselves; and we did for a time, but they took it off directly almost, so that we did not continue long in that state, and we have never made any other efforts to try again; we consider it of very little use. We have been labouring under severe practices ever since. It is not the making of the work altogether, but at different times they will perhaps take 2s. a-dozen off our work at the present price. They will find fault where there is none, if men make them as good as they can make them; they will find faults, and take it off, and a man is obliged to submit, because he has not the wherewith to maintain himself. I am talking of the generality of the trade rather than of myself, because I am not so bad as some. I know they have not a mouthful to eat from Friday morning till Saturday night, when the man comes home with his money; I have seen many cases of that.

6278. Are the workmen aware of the existence of the Arbitration Act; that is, the Act for the settlement of disputes between master and workmen, for the purpose of preventing arbitrary abatements?—I think not. I do not know that I am any way acquainted with it. I always considered there was something of that sort, but never knew what it was particularly.

Whitwick.
Evidence of
Samuel Wilson.

6279. And therefore the Act has never been resorted to in this neighbourhood?—I believe not.

6280. Do the workmen complain much of arbitrary abatements being made by their employers?—Very much. If a person is sick and lies ill, or has no stuff to work, he has the full rent to pay. Now there is no stuff for me the last three weeks, but I shall have to pay the rent every week that I have nothing to do. I was once, with my young man that I spoke of before, this reputed son, when we worked two 40's ourselves. We had but five pounds of stuff to work up in 22 weeks, and we paid all the rent; and that five pounds would make about two dozen and a half, and that might have been done in a fortnight, but it would be a good fortnight's work for the two frames. We used to have a *1s.* a-dozen for narrowing the two plain, but now we get nothing.

6281. Have you any allowance for waste?—None at all; we are often obliged to go and buy stuff to work up, because if we go to our masters, and say, that we are bad in our accounts, they will charge us very heavily for the stuff, much more than we can buy it at.

6282. Have you anything else to add to your evidence?—Nothing that I know of.

[*The Witness withdrew.*]

Mr. Wm. Harrison.

Mr. William Harrison examined.

6283. You are a shopkeeper in Whitwick?—I am.

6284. In what way?—I keep a grocer's and general shop.

6285. How long have you been in business here?—Four years next September.

6286. Is it the acknowledged practice of the employers here to pay their workmen by truck?—It is too much the case.

6287. Do you find that it interferes injuriously with your trade?—Yes, a great deal.

6288. In what way?—In the first place, I had some pretty good customers when first I came from the town that would pay me *30s.* a week, but they were obliged to go to those places on the truck system, and then they left me, and left me in debt, and they have never paid me since; and since then they have had to pay dearer for their articles than they had with me.

6289. How do you know that they have had to pay dearer?—By proof, and by their own acknowledgment.

6290. Have they stated to you that they were compelled to deal with their masters?—Yes, and they would have paid me, but they could not on that account, because they were obliged to lay the money out with them.

6291. And in many cases do they remain indebted to you still?—Yes; but I am willing to bear till things turn, for I have never distressed upon one man.

6292. Do you find them complain much of the system?—Yes, a good deal; they wish they could help themselves, but they cannot at the present time.

6293. Do all the employers of frame-work knitters, resident in Whitwick, keep shops?—Yes, I believe they do.

6294. Is there anything you wish to add to your evidence?—Nothing more that I know of. The bacon is a penny a pound cheaper sold by us, and other articles in proportion are lower than the truck masters, and the hands would willingly come to my shop if they could; that is the case, I can assure you.

6295. How long has that system been in operation here?—I should think it has been about three years in this town.

[*The Witness withdrew.*]

Mr. T. Brightland.

Mr. Thomas Brightland examined.

6296. You are churchwarden of the parish of Whitwick?—I am.

6297. And you are a grocer and shopkeeper here?—I am a grocer and baker, and such like.

6298. Do any of the employers of the frame-work knitters take their bread of you?—No, none of them.

6299. Have you heard it alleged that the frame-work knitters here are compelled to deal with their employers for goods?—They are compelled: but Burgess says he pays them in money, and he can please himself whether he gives them work, if they do not lay it out at his shop.

6300. And do you know that they do deal with him?—Yes, people have left my shop that owed me *2*l.** or *3*l.** each when he began; and there it stands now, they are not able to pay it.

6301. Has trucking proved an injury to you in your business?—A very serious one.

6302. How long has that system been in operation?—I should think about two or three years.

6303. Prior to that time were those persons in business for themselves—or were they bag-hosiers, as they are called?—They worked to Sheepshead, to Cotton and Hammond, and Cotton and Hammond turned over all their frames to Burgess.

6304. Have the hands ever made any complaint to you of being obliged to take goods in that way?—Oh yes; and they have complained in other respects: they are obliged to pay

more for some of the articles; even bread, I sell 2d. a stone cheaper than that the bag-hosiers sell.

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6305. Is there anything you wish to add to the evidence you have given?—No, I do not know I have anything further to state.

Evidence of
Mr. T. Brightland.

[The Witness withdrew.]

Mr. John Burgess examined.

Mr. John Burgess.

6306. You are a manufacturer here, are you not?—I am.

6307. In what branch are you?—In the wrought-hose branch.

6308. You manufacture on your own account, do you not?—I employ the frames on my own account, but I get up but very few goods; I sell them to the hosiers generally, to be got up by them.

6309. How many frames have you in your employ?—More than 100; I should think 120 within a few frames, my own, and those that are independents, and altogether.

6310. You also keep a shop here it is stated?—Yes.

6311. What is that?—A grocer's shop.

6312. Do you pay your wages in ready money to your hands, or in goods?—In money.

6313. Have you always done so?—Yes, and no person has been paid a farthing in goods; they all have their wages in money, and they can have it; and they will say that, I haven't the least doubt.

6314. Have you used no compulsion to force them to take goods from you?—No, I have told them to go where they like; many do not take goods, others think well to have goods.

6315. It has been stated here that the majority of them do take goods from you?—I dare say the larger portion of them do, no doubt they do; the articles are as good and as cheap, I believe, as other persons sell.

6316. Do you know the prices charged by the other shopkeepers in the town for their goods, bacon, or bread, or anything of that sort?—I think they vary. I believe some sell at more, and some sell at less; our bacon and cheese, I think, I have been selling as low and as good as any of them, none have been selling lower.

6317. It has been stated that your price for bread is 2d. a stone higher than that of other dealers in the town; are you aware whether that is so or not?—I do not believe that is true; it may be, for sometimes I sell bread for a person, and what I get is 2d. a stone for selling it, little or much.

6318. That is commission?—Yes.

6319. How long have you kept a shop here?—A twelvemonth last October; two years the beginning of the coming October.

6320. Do not you make it a rule to make your men understand that you expect them to take goods of you?—No, never. I never told a person that I expected him to take goods of me; they can please themselves whether they do or not.

6321. Did you never say to a man, "You know my rule?"—No, I do not know that I did; at least, I do not know why I should say "You know my rule," for it is not my rule to force a person.

6322. Then you tell me you do not make a point of desiring them to take their goods of you?—No, I have not; and any one here, if they would speak truly, would say that I have not forced them to take goods; of course I could please myself whether I gave them work. I never told them "You know my rule," or told them I expected them to take goods. I have told them to please themselves; and generally they get into my debt, and it is not much I gain.

6323. Do you charge your hands 3d. a week extra taking in?—I believe some of them have 3d. less than the hosier gives, but that is what I get by them. I am taking them now to Sheepshead, and that 3d. a dozen is what is deducted, so as to make it come to the same price that they all get made for. I give 3d. less on that account.

6324. But it has been stated you do that not only on the goods you make for other people, but that you do it on goods that you make for yourself?—I make all those goods for myself; I employ the frames on my own hand; I find the cotton, and then sell the goods to those persons for 3d. a dozen worse.

6325. So that the practice is not for taking in their goods—they are your own goods?—Yes, they are my own goods.

6326. Have you never charged both charges—taking 3d. a dozen on the goods as your own work, and then the 3d. a dozen as being the work of the hosiers?—Never.

6327. All the other employers keep shops, I suppose, in Whitwick as well as you?—Yes, they do. Whitwick is not a fit place for a manufacturer to get up goods for sale himself; it lies so far out of the regular line of business, a person would not come here once in 12 months to buy goods.

[The Witness withdrew.]

Mr. Thomas Hatton examined.

Mr. Thos. Hatton.

6328. How many frames do you employ?—10. I have a list showing our men's earnings, and their outgoings.

6329. What are the earnings of the hands?—The highest is 9s. a week, and the lowest is

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Evidence of
Mr. Thos. Hatton.

5s. first hand, and 1s. 9d. is what is going out of each frame; one is 2s., and the other 1s. 6d., so that it makes the average 1s. 9d.

6330. Is that for frame-rent only?—That is everything connected with the frame—the rent, candles, needles, and seaming.

6331. And the taking in?—We charge nothing for taking in; we make to ourselves.

6332. You keep a shop, I believe, also?—We keep a grocer's shop, but we pay our hands with money, and it is optional whether they choose to lay anything out with us. They are never told of it, if they do not lay out 6d.

6333. You would give them credit, I suppose, up to the Saturday night?—If it was a person we could have confidence in we might; some we do, and some we do not, it depends upon what people are; some would not pay you if they owed you pounds for provisions.

6334. Are the shop accounts deducted?—No, the money is paid down, and if the persons are honest they will pay us; if they are dishonest they will not. Where the persons are honest, some we have had who have worked four or five years, we can trust them; some we cannot trust with anything; there is a distinction, in that respect, between the honest and dishonest.

6335. And those that you do not trust, how do they do?—The money is paid down, and then they pay for what they buy. The honest persons are trusted.

6336. Did you ever tell your hands that they understood your rule, to lead them to deal with you?—A person that makes good work, we should never think anything of it if they did not lay out 6d. Of course we have other people as well who deal with us; we do not keep a shop open just for our own hands; if they think well to deal with us they do; if they work well and like to do so, it suits us better than if they laid out all their money, and made bad work. I am a person that disposes of the principal part of the work I make.

6337. You dispose of your goods chiefly in the country, do you not?—Yes, I do.

[The Witness withdrew.]

Mr. James Henson examined.

6338. How many frames are you employing?—Seven.

6339. Do you keep a shop also?—No.

6340. Who does keep it then?—My mother has a little shop, and sells bread, and so on.

6341. Your business and hers are carried on under the same roof, are they not?—Yes, they are, because we have but one house. I travel myself.

6342. Do you pay your wages in ready money or goods?—In ready money.

6343. Always?—Yes, always; and they can please themselves about laying it out afterwards.

6344. Do you charge 3d. a-dozen for taking in?—Yes.

6345. And do the other masters, as far as you know, do the same?—Yes, always. I was neither the first or second that did it; and I wish they would take it off to-morrow. I do not know nor care how good they make the hose, nor what price I pay for them, so long as they are but made right. When I have good stockings made, I can go to gentlemen's houses and sell those goods; it is not any use taking them moderate ones. By the way, good wrought stockings are beaten by the wide frames, and any person that goes up and down the country can see the stockings made on those frames marked in the windows at 7d., 8d., and 9d. a pair frequently.

6346. Are yours high-guage frames?—Yes. I have a 38, a 34, and three 30's, a 24, and a 26.

6347. Are they your own frames, or independents?—My own.

6348. Do you know what your hands average a-week for their earnings?—On the average, as near as I can state, about 6s. to 10s. a-week, and the outgoings are about 2s. a-week. I have got a young man in a 38 frame now who can make, if he has a mind to stick to his work, 14s. a-week; but they will not work all the time; if they would work they might make a deal more than they do; they sometimes take two or three holidays in a week. A labouring man works more hours in one fortnight, than they do in three weeks on an average.

[The Witness withdrew.]

The Rev. Thomas Edward Bunbury examined.

Rev. T. E. Bunbury.

6349. You are the curate of Whitwick?—I am.

6350. What schools have you in connection with the Established Church?—In the township of Whitwick there is a national week-day and Sunday-school, an infant week-day and Sunday-school, and a Sunday-school distinct, and in the township of Thringstone there is also an infant-school and a school for girls, which is also open on the Sunday. I should say that is in the district connected with the parish church, for there is another school, too, in the district attached to St. George's chapel, which is a perfectly distinct district.

6351. Have you a considerable number of frame-work knitters in the parish?—Yes, there are a great number.

6352. Can you give me an account of the total number of the children at each of the schools you have named, and the proportion that the frame-work knitters bears to the whole?—In the national week-day and Sunday-school, on the books there are 48 boys and 36 girls; and I believe 15 boys are the children of frame-work knitters, and 12 girls. In the infant-school there

are 40 boys on the books, and 35 girls. Of those, six boys are the children of frame-work knitters, and seven girls. In the Sunday-school there are 12 boys on the books, and 12 girls. Of those, eight boys are the children of frame-work knitters, and seven girls. In South Thringstone infant and girl school there are 35 boys and 40 girls, and of those, 15 boys and 14 girls are the children of frame-work knitters.

6353. What are the amounts of payments made at either of the schools you have named?—In the national and infant school at Whitwick a single child pays 2*d.* a-week, two in a family pay 3*d.*, and three or four in a family pay 4*d.* for the whole. At South Thringstone school each pays 1*d.*

6354. Do you find the attendance of the children regular at those schools?—I should say tolerably regular; more regular in the winter, at the national school, than in the summer. There is considerable irregularity in the national school, because the elder children go to that school, and as soon as ever they can be of any use to their parents they are withdrawn, and even when a little temporary labour may be obtained for them for a week or a month, the child is very frequently withdrawn for that time. The children are tolerably well clothed; but I am sorry to mention that many other children in the place are prevented from attending school from the want of clothes.

6355. Do you think the same circumstances prevent the attendance of many of the parents at places of worship?—Yes, decidedly; there are a large proportion of the adult population prevented from attending worship from that cause, or at all events it is the alleged cause.

6356. Have the poor of the parish any allotments of land?—Yes; the vicar of Whitwick has let some ground in the forest, at the present time, to about 12 or 14 persons who have gardens. I think the average amount of the garden is about the eighth of an acre; and Sir George Beaumont also lets a portion of land to about as many poor persons. Of course that is a very confined proportion for so large a population. There is a disposition, and an anxiety in fact, on the part of the working classes to obtain more gardens, and there is a willingness on the part of the vicar to promote it as far as he can; but of course, as far as he is concerned, it must lie within a very narrow compass. It would be very desirable that the other proprietors of the parish should encourage it. I think it would promote the health and the moral habits of the people, particularly of the frame-work knitters, which I consider very essential, while it would not in any degree diminish their labour at the frame. In the forest a portion of the land has been let at a nominal rent for the purpose of clearing the ground, and bringing it into a state of cultivation. When the time is expired, of course another arrangement will be made.

6357. Do you know whether the period was for 10 years?—I cannot say.

6358. Was any relief afforded to Whitwick from the Manufacturers' Relief Committee?—Yes; about a year and a half ago there was very keen distress: the frame-work knitters were mostly out of employment, and that time 50*l.* was sent from the Relief Committee, which was also met by local subscriptions.

6359. As regards the moral habits of the frame-work knitters, do you find them differ in any material point from those of the other working classes in the parish?—I should say that the moral habits of the frame-work knitters are very superior to those of the Colliers, of whom we have a large number in this place, in consequence of having two large collieries; but I do not think the moral habits of the frame-work knitters, compared with those of the other inhabitants, save the colliers, are equally good. A very small number of them attend the church, and there has been a low political feeling among them which operates, I believe, more upon them than any other consideration. A large number of them have been Chartists.

6360. Are there schools in connection with the dissenting places of worship?—Yes, there are three dissenting congregations, the Wesleyans, the Primitive Methodists, and the Baptists; they have each a Sunday-school, but I am not able to speak particularly as to the number attending them.

6361. They have no day-school?—They have no day-school.

6362. You are in the habit, in the exercise of your ministerial duties, of visiting the houses of the frame-work knitters?—Yes.

6363. In what condition do you find them as regards articles of clothing and furniture?—They are very badly clothed, and in general have very few articles of furniture.

6364. Have you had any opportunities of observing their bedding?—Frequently, in visiting the sick, the want of sufficient bed-clothing; I have had occasionally opportunities of seeing persons who are sick and dying who have scarcely any clothing on the bed.

6365. Have you reason to think there is much intermixture of the sexes from defective sleeping accommodation?—I think there is a great deal of evil results from the want of a sufficient number of bed-rooms;—there are frequently a number of beds in a room which are occupied by males and females promiscuously; not the males and females sleeping in the same bed, but in the same room.

6366. What is the general accommodation of the cottages here?—There are generally two bed-rooms and a sitting-room, and a working-room, where the frames are.

6367. Is that the full extent of the accommodation of the families in general?—Yes, it is.

6368. Have most of the cottages gardens attached to them?—No. I should say the majority, decidedly, have not; some have a very small garden.

6369. Are the regulations as to drainage, and other conveniences, good?—No, extremely bad. I question if there is any parish, almost, in the county, that is so badly off in that point of view; and I have frequently endeavoured to direct the attention of the surveyor of the roads to it, and to urge the surgeon of the parish to use his influence to promote a better state of things in this respect—and it has been improved; but I believe there still has been a great deal of fever originated by stagnant water, and so on.

Whitwick.
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Evidence of
Rev. T.E. Bunbury.

6370. As compared with other places of the same sort, and similarly circumstanced, with a population comprised partly of colliers and partly of frame-work knitters, and of course partly of other labourers, do you consider it a healthy or unhealthy place?—I consider, from the local position of the place, it is extremely healthful and airy. The Charnwood Forest is considered particularly healthy and bracing; but from the causes I have mentioned—the want of drainage, and the uncleanly habits of the people—there is frequently disease prevailing amongst the inhabitants in the town.

6371. Are there any sick-clubs in the place?—There is a sick-club for females, and there is an Odd Fellows' club, which is also a sick-club. There is also a sick-club in connection with the Roman Catholics, patronised by Mr. Phillips of Gracedieu.

6372. Are most of the working classes here members of one or other of those clubs?—No, I should say not.

6373. Have they been able to maintain themselves, or have there been any failures among the clubs?—There has been no failure; they are chiefly self-supported, with some small contributions, but no contributions of any considerable amount. Mr. Phillips subscribes 5*l.* a-year to the one in connection with his own denomination.

[*The Witness withdrew.*]

REPORT FROM OSGATHORPE

G. Hickenbottom. *George Hickenbottom, of Osgathorpe, Frame-work Knitter, Wrought-hose Branch, examined.*

6374. Who do you work to?—To Mr. Watson of Loughborough.

6375. What are you working now?—I am on 34-guage cotton hose; I am making what they call 4's, at 8s. 6d. per dozen.

6376. How many can you do in a week?—I generally average about a dozen.

6377. Were you deputed to give evidence on this inquiry on behalf of the people of Osgathorpe?—Yes, I was.

6378. Are the hands generally employed there in the same branch as you are?—A few are in worsted, and some are in cotton.

6379. Are there any on the wide frames?—Not any. They are all narrow wrought frames.

6380. Do you know how many frames there are there?—24 in the parish.

6381. Do you receive your wages in ready money?—Yes.

6382. Do the hands there in general receive their wages in ready money?—All who are working to that warehouse.

6383. Who do the hands principally work to?—In the parish I do not think they all receive their wages in ready money. Five frames work to Mr. Watson in Osgathorpe.

6384. Who do the others work to?—Several to Mr. Burgess of Whitwick, and one to Messrs. Warner and Co., of Loughborough.

6385. Do you consider that there are any particular grievances under which you labour in your trade?—They are about the same as other people working under the same masters. We are imposed upon as regards the sizes of the stockings the same as other parishes are. We have to put in extra lengths without getting a farthing extra for it. I am making stockings now most of about 24½ inches long, that should be properly 19 inches.

6386. Are the frame-rents the same as other places?—Yes; 1s. the fine frames, and 9d. the coarse ones.

6387. Has there been much stinting there?—Not of late. Some time back, before Mr. Jacques of Sheepshead failed, last winter, he used to stint a deal. But he has not a vast many hands working to him now. There are some that he stints now, or at least he has not worsted to go on with properly, and sometimes they have two or three journeys in a week; but he charges all the same full frame-rent as if they had full work. He never allows them anything, let them have as little as they will. He never gives any frame-rent back, he always stops that: but he has rent to pay too. I was considered to work one frame to him myself, but I have not done so since he failed. Some odd weeks we have had no material at all, and the week after, when we have had work, we have been obliged to pay up the frame-rent.

6388. Is there any free-school in Osgathorpe?—Yes, a free-school and a National school.

6389. Do the frame-work knitters avail themselves of those schools to send their children?—Some do, but they do not go past six or seven years of age, because they are then put to work. When I was a boy I lived at Belton, and I used to go to the free-school at Osgathorpe. There were 60 scholars at that time; now there are not above ten or a dozen.

6390. Do you think that diminution in the number has arisen from the parents putting the children to work at an earlier age than formerly?—I should think that is the chief cause.

6391. Are there any allotments of land in Osgathorpe?—There are several.

6392. Have you a piece?—I have a few hundreds. A gentleman, Mr. Bland, lets a field out to the poor.

6393. And what do you pay a hundred?—1s. 2d. a hundred.

6394. Do you find it of any assistance to you?—Yes, it assists me a little.

6395. Is there anything that you wish to add to your evidence?—No, I do not know that there is. The straight-downs and the scissors are partly the causes of the reduction of our wages, and the deterioration of our condition.

[*The Witness withdrew.*]

REPORTS FROM THRINGSTONE

6396. (To Beeson.) Were you and Moses Burton deputed to come here to give evidence on behalf of the frame-work knitters of Thringstone?—We were.

6397. How many frames are there at Thringstone?—155.

6398. Are they all in the wrought work or are there any wide frames?—I do not think there are any wide frames in the parish; so that they are all on the wrought hose.

6399. What gauge frame do you work in?—A 34-gauge frame, cotton hose.

6400. And how much a-dozen do you get?—8s. 6d.

6401. Who do you work to?—To Mr. Watson, of Loughborough.

6402. Do you get the work yourself from the warehouse?—Yes.

6403. Do the hands there all receive their wages in ready money?—Yes.

6404. That is the case generally through the place, is it?—Yes, to that warehouse, but not through the place; we are not on the truck system at all; our master pays in ready money.

6405. Do you know, of your own knowledge, that others are trucked?—(Burton.) Several have goods; but they are so reluctant to give evidence that they would not come forward. We can see people taking a great quantity of goods at the time they have been taking their work in. (Beeson.) The hands that work principally to the truck masters, work to some of the Whitwick masters.

6406. Are there any particular grievances under which you consider the frame-work knitters in Thringstone to be labouring?—(Burton.) As relates to our master's work, I believe the hose are made longer than any other master's work round us. The committee that had been formed considered the same. The hose have been sampled together in Nottinghamshire. You will find that our work is worse paid here than in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. We make our hose larger for the same size, such as 5's; perhaps our size are about 25 inches long, and down there they are 23½. I have been there myself and seen them. And there is another thing respecting the thread which is worked to our master. He is giving nothing extra a dozen in working three thread to cotton; he is giving the same price for both. The brown thread in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire is 2s. a-dozen more upon fine gauges, and the white thread is 4s. a-dozen more. We are working upon the same price as cotton, upon the thread here.

6407. Do you suffer anything from stint or anything of that kind?—(Beeson.) The stint has been practised. (Burton.) I have been under stint sometimes; but as respects the rent, there has been no difference made in the rent. I know that where there have been two frames in the same house, and one frame has had full work, and the other has been standing still, the full rent has been taken for both frames; that has been practised very much.

6408. In the ordinary way at Loughborough, does not the fair master allow in periods of stint half rent?—Yes; when I have been stinted there I have paid half rent; but there have been many who have been otherwise. As respects those Whitwick hosiers, they are receiving, some of them, I believe most of them, 3d. a-dozen for taking-in; now if it be continued, we must expect our masters to do the same at Loughborough, or else to reduce us 3d. in the wages, and take the 3d. a-dozen for just looking at those hose and taking them in. That is an encroachment on that side of the county not made as regards our masters.

6409. Have the hands at Thringstone any allotments of land?—Some few perhaps have. Squire Phillips, some time ago, gave them some spare forest land in hundreds;—that he let the people about us have, some 100's, some 200's, some 300's, and perhaps some 400's: he let them have it at low rents that they might cultivate the ground; and it was in a most miserable condition, properly called "The Rocks." Some took it, and some refused it because it was so expensive to clear it. I heard a man say myself, that he paid 6s. for one stone being taken off his piece. I do not see that the poor man receives any advantage from that, and I have not any myself. What I stand in need of is assistance. Through the roughness of the ground, I would not take it, because I thought I should be a loser by it. (Beeson.) I have some; we were to clean it, and then to pay the same as the farmers when it was fit; but we were first to clean it, and get the stones and rocks off; they were set for ten years, and five are past. Some are not cultivating it now; they cannot get it right. It has been an injury to us, only we think it will do good when the ten years are expired. It lies with his option to let us have it or not at the end of the ten years. (Burton.) It is to Squire Phillips's advantage; it will be good ground when it is done with. It is not the sort of allotment that does a man good. It is a long way off, and it is difficult to get manure to the place. It pays a man no better than this, it is some occupation for him, but it is not worth doing; many of them that have cleared it have given it up.

6410. Are there any schools at Thringstone that are open to the children of the frame-work knitters?—There is a Catholic school; they have the school open, I believe, free of expense to those who learn to read and spell; to those that write it is 1d. a-week. The Established Church have recently established a school, and they pay 1d. each those that go; mine go there; they pay that, whether they read or write, or whatever they do.

6411. And are the frame-work knitters able to avail themselves of it, or do they take them away early to put them to work?—I believe the frame-work knitters, even where the children are doing nicely at school, are obliged to put them to work. I had one myself, but I was obliged to take him and put him into the frame before he had strength to work it. It is too much the case; we could tell of several who have been made almost cripples; they are not themselves; they are put to work so early, in order that they might get something to help the family.

Whitwick.
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Evidence of
John Beeson and
Moses Burton.

6412. Is there anything else that strikes either of you to add to the testimony you have given?—I do not know that there is. (*Beeson.*) Nor do I, except that we think the wide frames and the cut-ups are a great injury to us. They make so many with the scissors, and they are sent off abroad, and people do not know whether they are cut-ups or wrought work. We consider that they are injuring us very much. If there could be some means to put a duty upon them, or something of that kind, it would be a very great means to liberate us a little. (*Burton.*) It is generally considered one of the means of bringing us to ruin. There is another thing, when I go in with my work on Saturday, if my master says, "Put three or four more leads in wider, and make them longer," I am compelled to do it; if I do not, I lose my work. We have no protection for our labour. If something could be done to protect our labour, I think it would be a great thing.

[*The Witnesses withdrew.*]

John Wayte.

John Wayte, of Thringstone, Frame-work Knitter, Wrought-hose Branch, examined.

6413. Who do you work to?—To Mr. James Hanson, of Whitwick.

6414. What are you making?—I am making 26's.

6415. What are they paid a dozen?—According to the size; what I am now making is paid 6s. a-dozen.

6416. Do you receive your wages in ready money?—I have things frequently, and on Saturday the balance is given me—what there is coming—in money.

6417. How long has it been the case that he has given you the balance in money, or have you always received it?—Ever since I worked for him I have received the balance.

6418. How much is that generally in a week?—At this time it is 18s. or 19s. a-week, or 1l.; that is, for the three frames which I have.

6419. Are those three frames worked by members of your own family?—Yes.

6420. And how much of that 1l. goes for shop goods?—4s., 5s., or 6s.

6421. Were you ever told that he expected you to take goods out of the shop?—No, they never told me they should expect me to do so.

6422. How long have you worked for Hanson?—I think the first frame I had was two years and four months ago, and a little while after I had another; and within these last four or five months I have had another of him, making three altogether.

6423. What shop does he keep?—He sells bread, sugar, candles, and such things as that.

6424. Do you get supplied with the goods from his shop as good and as cheap as you could from others?—Yes, as in the town and villages round.

6425. Is there anything you wish to add further?—No, not that I know of.

[*The Witness withdrew.*]