

Report of an Enquiry, conducted from House to House, into the State of 176 Families in Miles Platting, within the borough of Manchester, in 1837. By JAMES HEYWOOD, Esq. Read before the Statistical Society of London, on the 16th April, 1838.

THE following Report has been prepared from the results of an enquiry undertaken at the request of the author, in a district of Manchester, with which the visitor who conducted the enquiry was previously well acquainted. Miles Platting is inhabited, for the most part, by the families of operatives, who are dependent upon manual labour for their subsistence; and a large proportion of the heads of the families included within this enquiry are hand-loom weavers. Their occupations are extremely laborious, their earnings very moderate, and their time of labour, when in full work, often amount to 14 hours per day. During the year 1837 many of the hand-loom weavers in this district did not find half employment; others were unable to earn more than 6s. or 7s. per week, and the most experienced and industrious of the class, by working 14 hours per day, frequently obtained for the full amount of their earnings only 12s. per week.

Where the hand-loom weavers are employed in weaving plain thin cotton goods, similar to those manufactured by power-looms, their earnings seldom amount to 9s. per week, and the majority of this class of workmen can only get 6s. or 7s. per week. In weaving narrow shawls, a new kind of work, put out in the winter of 1837, the weekly earnings of a good weaver were 9s. per week, from which 2d. in every shilling, or 1s. 6d. on the gross earnings, must frequently be deducted for the expense of winding, leaving only 7s. 6d. as the net weekly earnings.

A first-rate workman, weaving quiltings, may earn 12s. per week; but, in this case, the winding and other expenses often amount to 3d. in 1s., or 3s. on the gross earnings, and thus their net earnings are diminished to 9s. per week. In like manner a silk-weaver, working at plain sarsnets, may earn 12s. per week; but the expenses of winding and the use of the loom usually amount to 3d. in every shilling, or to 3s. on the whole weekly earnings, and thus the net earnings of the silk-weaver are diminished to 9s. per week. Whenever the hand-loom weaver works at his own loom, and is assisted in winding by his wife or family, he may consider the whole of his earnings as profit; but in the case of journeymen weavers, who hire the looms on which they work, and who pay, in addition, for the expense of winding, the total amount of the earnings will be necessarily lessened by the deduction of these concurrent expenses. The various occupations of the heads of families included within this enquiry are enumerated in the following table:—

102 Hand-loom weavers.	148 Brought forward.
5 Silk weavers, winders, and warpers.	5 Labourers.
3 Small-ware weavers.	1 Carter.
2 Power-loom weavers.	2 Smiths.
8 Warpings and workers in factories.	9 Tradesmen (hatters, joiners, &c.).
1 Jacquard-loom manufacturer.	1 Schoolmaster.
6 Dyers.	1 Designer.
2 Fustian-shearers.	1 Drawer-in of threads for the loom.
5 Warehousemen.	6 Washerwomen.
3 Bricklayers.	1 No occupation.
11 Colliers.	

Among the heads of families visited the number of married men is remarkable; and the total population of the families included within the enquiry comprehends the following individuals :—

Heads of Families,	147	Married men,
,,	,,	9 Widowers.
,,	,,	20 Widows.
	—	176
		147 Wives of the heads of families.
		232 Children under 10 years of age.
		239 Children above 10 years of age.
		113 Male lodgers, often journeymen.
		49 Female lodgers.
		34 Children with the lodgers.
	—	990
Total Population	—	990

Of the 176 heads of families, 137 are English, 37 Irish, 1 Scotch, and 1 Welch.

It appears that the majority of the children receiving education are instructed in Sunday-schools; and it is worthy of notice that many of the children attend the Sunday-school at a very early age in Miles Platting, owing to the unwillingness of their parents to allow the elder children to attend the Sunday-school unless they take the younger children with them. Of course the maintenance of silence and order in the Sunday-school is rendered more difficult by the presence of a large number of infant scholars in the same room with the older children; and the attention of the more advanced scholars must be diverted by the process of elementary instruction which is required for the infant children.

The total number of children in the families visited is 505, viz.—

232 Children under 10 years of age,
239 Children above 10 years of age,
34 Children with the lodgers.

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505
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Of this number—

63 attend both day and Sunday-schools,
208 attend Sunday-schools only,
8 attend day-schools only,
9 attend infant-schools,

—
Making a total of 288 children at school.
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There are very few of the heads of the families, included within this enquiry, who have formed the habit of reading, or are capable of understanding or enjoying a book. Many are either too illiterate, or too deeply sunk in indifference, or in animal gratification, to be easily convinced of the importance of mental culture or religion. There are, however, others who may be regarded as sincerely religious characters.

In the following table, where the heads of families are really in connection with the Church of England, or with any other religious denomination, they are classified accordingly; but wherever they profess no particular attachment to any one Protestant sect, they are considered uncertain. Of 176 heads of families, it appears that—

31 belong to the Church of England.
 23 are Roman Catholics.
 13 Methodists.
 4 Unitarians.
 3 Baptists.
 1 Scotch Presbyterian.
 1 Independent.
 3 Deistical.
 97 Uncertain.

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Of the 176 heads of families visited—

35 attend public worship regularly.
 45 occasionally.
 36 seldom.
 60 do not attend public worship.

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130 profess to be able to read.
 15 read imperfectly.
 23 cannot read.
 8 are not particularized as to their power of reading.

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78 possess a Bible and a Testament.
 2 possess a Bible.
 35 possess a Testament.
 97 possess a Prayer-book, or Hymn-book, or both, in addition
 sometimes to the Bible or Testament.
 36 possess other works, chiefly religious.
 37 possess no books.

Of the 176 habitations which were visited, 165 are houses including many cellars, and 11 are separate cellars. They contain 692 rooms, of which 294 are sleeping-rooms; and it is important to observe that the houses in the district visited are generally kept in good repair, and are more convenient than is often the case with many of the cottages of the poor. The internal condition of the habitations visited is detailed in the following table:—

Of the 176 habitations visited there are—

68 houses or cellars described as neat and comfortable.
 20 are neat.
 34 just comfortable.
 37 uncomfortable, of which 2 are damp as well as uncomfortable.
 9 are wretched.
 8 not specified.

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Exact information is communicated, in the foregoing Report, on various subjects, which possess, perhaps, rather local than general interest; but the minute analysis of the internal structure of society appears to the author to constitute the leading object of statistical science; and the investigation of the physical, moral, intellectual, and religious condition of the human race is the chosen occupation of the statistical enquirer.