

any leader, and in a few years, long before a young housekeeper's new stock of penates will be worn out, the downright positive ugliness of some of the present-day revivals will be apparent to her, and, alas! to every one else.

Stencilling is an easy art. You can buy the patterns almost anywhere, and can thereby improve painted mantel-pieces, door-panels, and dados. Algerian and Japanese art at little expense will help in colour, and good shapes, and look well throughout the house. Be sure you do not give yourself into the hands of an upholsterer. A room should be furnished by those who make it a part of their own individuality. One

who understood the subject well gave this golden rule, "Every article of furniture should at the first glance proclaim its real purpose." On this score abjure veneering and other shams, use wrought iron rather than cast, lay down mats only where they are wanted, don't overcrowd with knickknacks, let each room be habitable. Take advantage of all modern improvements which tend to the saving of work and trouble; the Americans teach us much on that score.

If women understood more of the science of living, happy homes would be common, where nothing is wasted, nothing wanted, and everything employed and enjoyed.

ARDERN HOLT.

1882

## UNDER THE CRUST: THE LANCASHIRE OPERATIVE.

BY A NORTH-COUNTRYMAN.



SINCE the days of the cotton famine the Lancashire operative has been somewhat overlooked. At that time he was "interviewed" by a hundred "own correspondents" and "special commissioners," who told us all about his

manner of life, his usual occupation, and the kind of place which he called his home. These "pictures with pen and pencil" were wonderfully graphic, and in the main correct. They gave the outside world glimpses of the home-life of a large section of the English working classes, and made the people of the sunny South much better acquainted than they would otherwise have become with the dwellers in Factory-land.

But Lancashire with its mills all silent, and its people being fed and clothed by "relief" committees, is a different place from Lancashire when cotton is plentiful and "hands" are fully employed. Those who saw the Lancashire operative twenty years ago would hardly recognise him now. Not that his general habits are much changed, or his style of living, or his speech. This last was always a peculiarity, and to strangers a difficulty; and such it seems likely to remain. But men and women who are living in enforced idleness, and are "welly clamm'd" (half-starved), have, of course, a very different look from that of people who have as much work as they care to do, and find many of the comforts of life quite within their reach. The working people of Lancashire have

long since recovered their wonted cheeriness of spirit. They never quite lost it, even when the "hard times" of which they used to sing were hardest and most trying to their patience. They looked very sober in the midst of all their privations and troubles, but they never looked sullen, or lost heart, for they well understood that when the war which had produced the cotton famine came to its "bitter end," brighter days would speedily dawn upon them. Many of them delight to recall the scenes which were witnessed in every part of the district when the first loads of American cotton were drawn from the railway stations to the mills; how the people went out in crowds to meet the waggons, and followed them singing—

"Hard times, come again no more,"

while some of the poor women positively rushed forward and kissed the cotton-bales as they lay in the trucks. The people were very eager to be at work; they knew how to enjoy a holiday as well as any body of operatives in the world, but three years of "play" had been enough to make them all long to get back to their looms again.

The homes of many of the operatives had been all but stripped during those dismal years. Many a household treasure had been sacrificed to avoid an appeal to the relief committee, or even the acceptance of help when it was offered and pressed upon them. With the return of good times the "house-place" quickly recovered its old look of comfort, and it was not very long before the "parlour" was once more bright with polished chairs and tables, and even its piano or harmonium.

All Lancashire people, we may here remark, are house-proud, and it is not the mill-owners and great "cotton lords" alone who vie with one another as to who shall have the most superbly-furnished dwelling. This rivalry is shown all through the community, and men and women who stand side by side at the loom all day are as ready to boast of some new article of furniture which they have just "get'n into th' house," as are their masters when they ride together



to Cottonopolis, or stand chatting on the steps of 'Change. It must be confessed that there is as little variety visible inside the houses as there is outside. When a new factory or weaving-shed is built, cottages for the "hands" that are to work in it are put up at the same time, and are built generally of similar materials. They are plain but fairly substantial erections, in which convenience is never sacrificed to mere appearance. A house with a "bit o' garden to't" is, of course, an object of ambition; but it is only the overlookers, and those families whose earnings are high, who can afford to gratify the feeling. By means of the building societies that have been established in every part of the cotton districts, not a few of the operatives have become their own landlords.

One of the peculiar features of the cotton industry is that it gives occupation to almost all the members of a household. Husband and wife go out to the mill together, and even the cares of a family are not always sufficient to keep the mother at home. The children who are too young to attend school are left in charge of some aged dame, who, by undertaking that duty for several mothers, earns a moderate weekly income; some are sent to school, and others go to the factory either as "half-timers" or "full-timers." How the family meals are prepared, and how the "cleaning" is done, will doubtless seem mysterious to our readers; but there is not much mystery about either matter. Breakfast is, of course, a very simple affair; and dinner, except on Sundays, does not generally consist of more than one "course," and that such as involves very slight knowledge of culinary art. The third meal of the day (called "th' begging") is not taken until the day's work is done, and the various members of the household have returned home. As regards the cleaning or "fettling-up" of the house, that is done after work-hours, and on Saturday afternoons especially, both young men and maidens, as well as their elders, may be seen thus engaged in some department of household work.

The daily life of a Lancashire operative may appear very monotonous, but it can hardly be considered irksome or even laborious. Work in a cotton-mill is not, as compared with other kinds of labour, hard work; it does not make any excessive demand upon either brain or muscle. The machinery employed in all the processes of cotton manufacture is so perfect now that the operatives have very little to do, except to "mind" or "tent" (tend) the "jenny" which spins the yarn, or the loom which weaves the calico; and hence the employés in these two departments are called "minders" and "tenters." The work is likewise "clean" work, so that the hands of many a "Lancashire lass" who has worked for several years at the factory will be as soft and stainless as those of any lady in the land. The men too have, generally speaking, very delicate-looking hands, as they are hardly ever soiled, except in the case of those who are employed in "tuning" (putting into order) some part of the machinery. There are more pale faces in a cotton-mill than one cares to see, but, except for the fine dust or "fluff" which flies about, the atmosphere cannot be considered unhealthy; there is plenty of ventilation in summer-time, and in winter the entire factory is



heated by means of steam or hot-water pipes. Every one knows that all through the cotton districts the Factory Acts are very strictly enforced. These Acts limit the hours during which the operatives may be employed in one week, and a board, containing all the principal regulations, is placed in the time-keeper's office at every mill. Within the limits thus fixed by the law of the land the employer may use his own discretion as to the hours of commencing and closing the day's work, and also as to the time allowed for meals. But "time" is very sternly kept, and unpunctuality is never allowed to escape punishment. At most factories if an operative fails to pass the gate before the morning bell ceases, he or she is simply shut out altogether until breakfast-time. To insure their being at the mill precisely



at the starting-hour, many of the people avail themselves of the services of a man who is commonly known as a "knocker-up." Long before the stillness is broken by—

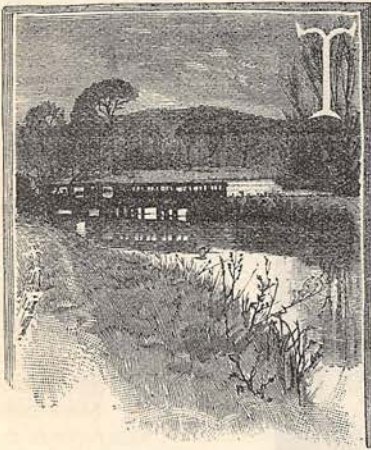
"The clanging and the clamour of the bells."

—"th' factory bells"—this man begins his morning round. He carries a long rod having a piece of wire fastened at the end, and, as he passes the houses of his clients, he dashes the wire against their bed-room windows so as to rouse the people from their slumbers. Most of the workers, however, start up the moment

the mill-bell begins to toll, and in a few minutes afterwards they are in the street hurrying away to the warm factory, if it be winter, or moving leisurely and cheerily on if under the glowing summer sunrise. The sharp ringing "clink" of their clogs, as they step along the stone footpath, is not ungrateful to the ear, and there are not many pleasanter sights in this work-a-day world than that of troops of operatives streaming through the street or alley that leads to the mill. It is not "slavish" toil that engages a Lancashire operative day after day, nor is he discontented with "the trivial round, the common task" of life in a factory.

J. T. G.

### A PILGRIMAGE TO HAREFIELD.



COLNESIDE.

THE other day, having a few hours to spare, and finding myself at the quaint old country-town of Uxbridge, I heard that I was within reach of a pretty village—not Chalfont, nor Horton—yet one with which the muse of Milton once had dealings; so I resolved

to devote an autumn afternoon to a pilgrimage to it.

Harefield is a long and scattered village, bounding the parish of Uxbridge on the north, and stretching in that direction as far as the borders of Hertfordshire. It consists chiefly of pleasant uplands, from which a wide view of the long broad meadows on either side of the Colne is obtained. Of the early history of the place, Lysons tells us that in the time of Edward the Confessor it belonged to the Countess Goda, and that at the Domesday survey it was held by Richard, the son of Gilbert, Earl of Briou. It afterwards passed into the hands of the Bacheworths, and from them by marriage to the Swanlands, and from them in the same manner to the Newdegates; but was alienated by them to the Egertons. Having belonged to sundry other families intermediately, the estate was re-purchased in 1675 by Sir Richard Newdegate, and so came back to a squire whose ancestors have held it, with only a temporary interval, for nearly 600 years—a fact without parallel in Middlesex.

But it is not on this account, but for its historical and literary associations, that Harefield is worthy of a pilgrimage. When Milton was living at Horton, only three miles south of Uxbridge, the old Manor House of Harefield was the residence of the Lord Keeper Egerton, and of his wife the Countess of

Derby, whom Queen Elizabeth once at least honoured by a visit of three days, in the course of one of her royal progresses. The courtly knight and his lady survived the costly visitation. The avenue of elms through which her Majesty rode from Dew's Farm to the house is gone, though several were still standing in the time when Lysons wrote, and one or two even as late as 1814-15, if we may believe "Sylvanus Urban;" but, alas! they are now no more, though vigorous successors have taken their place. The house too is gone, but its site can still be plainly seen in the rear of the church, where the old garden walls still attest its former grandeur. A view of it as it was in the last century may be seen in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for January, 1815.

The old manor house must have been well off for the accessories of shady trees in Milton's time, if he wrote of it, as there is little doubt that he did, without exaggeration—

"O'er the smooth enamell'd green,  
Where no print of step hath been,  
Follow me, as I sing  
And touch the warbled string,  
Under the shady roof  
Of branching elm star-proof.  
Follow me;  
I will bring you where she sits,  
Clad in splendour, as befits  
Her deity.  
Such a rural queen  
All Arcadia hath not seen."

And the whole demesne must have had beauties and charms, which have disappeared with the old mansion, if he could write with truth—

"Nymphs and shepherds, dance no more  
By sandy Ladon's lilled banks;  
On old Lycæus, or Cyllene hoar,  
Trip no more in twilight ranks;  
Though Erymanth your loss deplore,  
A better soil shall give ye thanks.  
From the stony Mænalus  
Bring your flocks and live with us;  
Here ye shall have greater grace,  
To serve the lady of this place."

The "Arcades" was performed here, as we learn from Milton's *Life*, in 1635, and the worthy "lady of the place" did not long survive. Her fine marble monument in the chancel of the church, with her recumbent figure under a canopy, supported by figures of