

of very young children, but it would seem that the low rates of wages compelled the parents in many instances practically to drive their children into the mines to earn by their toil some 3s. or 5s. a week. In Scotland also the mothers who were mainly employed in the roads dragging the tubs on hands and knees along low roads took their children with them to help them in their drudgery by pushing the tubs from behind.

The conditions under which these poor folk worked in those days were bad. It is hoped that what follows is not a gross exaggeration for it is based on a careful perusal of the Report of the Commissioners above referred to. It must be remembered, however, that the Commissioners had in mind a great evil and their report is consequently coloured: the following description is not, however, based solely upon that report but upon other sources, particularly the evidence given before the Committee which enquired in 1835 into the causes of accidents at mines and upon the Midland Mining Commission Report.

Men were employed mainly at the coal-face in hewing and putting, i.e. cutting the coal from the seam and loading it into the tubs. Women were mainly employed in Scotland, Lancashire and Yorkshire in pulling the tubs from the coal-face to the shaft and in winding coal by hand winches and in stages up to the surface. Children were mainly employed in opening and closing the air gates in order to allow the tubs to pass