

from which it will be seen that in England there were half as many children as adults employed in the mines, while in Scotland there were almost as many women and children employed as adult males, the proportion being  $\cdot 854$  and 1 respectively. It is therefore fair to lay some stress on the conditions under which these poor children and women toiled.

The responsibility for child labour must not be assigned entirely to the colliery proprietors of those days. There is much evidence to show that in a great number of districts the Durham and Northumberland practice, whereby the owner bound his employees for a year, was replaced by the 'butty' system. Under this system<sup>1</sup> the owner of the colliery agreed with a contractor to pay so much a ton for coal delivered at the shaft bottom and left the contractor or 'butty' to arrange how he would for the hewing and transporting of the coal at and from the coal-face to the shaft. The 'butty' employed the hewers and trammers, etc., and paid them sometimes in kind, often at a public-house owned by the 'butty.'

There is some evidence to show that in many cases the owners were opposed to women labour (which only existed in England so far as underground labour was concerned in Yorkshire and Lancashire) and did not favour the employment

<sup>1</sup> The system still exists in a modified form, but, of course, all the abuses touched upon in the following pages have long disappeared.