

WILLIAM BILLINGTON: COTTON OPERATIVE,
TEACHER AND POET

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For most of the nineteenth century, Blackburn was a major centre of working-class literary activity and self-improvement. Blackburn was the largest town in north-east Lancashire and attracted working people who wanted to educate themselves and find others with similar interests. It is, moreover, surrounded by rich and varied countryside and the stark contrast between this and urban life appears to have stimulated many working men to write poetry.¹ Blackburn also possessed an ancient literary tradition. The poet Joseph Baron claimed in 1902 that his list of local writers in prose and verse during the previous three centuries ran well into the 'second hundred' and it is clear from the work of George Hull that many, perhaps most, of these could be considered working class.² The vitality of Blackburn's proletarian literary culture was mainly due to the work of a few individuals, however, and the most important of these was undoubtedly William Billington.

William Billington was born in Samesbury, near Preston, on 3 April 1825. His parents were illiterate hand-loom weavers and had several children. The family lived and worked in a building which was later described as 'a low built, straw-covered hut . . . which possessed neither parlour nor pantry, oven nor boiler, closet nor kitchen, not yet a single flag upon the clay floor except the hearthstone.'³ When William Billington was between the ages of six and nine, his father died and three brothers and a sister were 'carried off' by consumption. His mother, Ann Billington, had to support the remnant of her family by her labour on the hand-loom and 'fought one of the most terrible and protracted life-battles that man can well conceive.'

These domestic tragedies, and the poverty and squalour

in which his family lived, undoubtedly had a profound effect on Billington's intellectual and emotional development. Despite these hardships, however, his childhood does not appear to have been particularly unhappy or barren. He derived great pleasure from the countryside and learnt songs and folk-lore from his mother. He later claimed that his mother's memory had been as 'full-of unlettered poesy as heaven is full of happiness.' Although Ann Billington 'knew not the value of education,' she sent her son to Catholic Sunday Schools in Samlesbury and Osbaldeston where he learned to read and write.

An important influence on the young William Billington was Robert Bolton, his mother's brother. Robert Bolton was literate, 'much and deeply read,' and had a local reputation as a poet. He wrote hundreds of poems and songs about farming, weaving, local characters, Chartism, church rates and other subjects and some of these may have been printed. William Billington admired his uncle and may have begun writing poetry in imitation of him.³

In 1837 the handloom weaving trade was very depressed⁴ and William Billington reluctantly went to work in the throstle room of a cotton factory at Mellor Brook. An elder sister and younger brother were also employed there and their combined incomes amounted to 14s. per week. After a few 'months of servitude,' the firm failed and the family again experienced great hardship. William Billington was forced to collect rushes which he sold in Blackburn. Billington later claimed in his autobiography that, whilst employed as a rush-gatherer, he decided to become a poet and to move to Blackburn in order to find work and an education.

William Billington went to live in Blackburn, obtained work there, and attended a night school for about six weeks. His early experiences of urban life were far from happy, however, and he soon returned home 'disgusted with the apparent aimlessness of life in Blackburn, especially the life of a working man in a factory.' Mellor Brook Mill re-opened and he worked in its scutching room for some time.

After a few months his family moved to Blackburn and he again found employment in a textile factory. He worked in carding and scutching rooms for several years but the impure air he had to breathe affected his health. When he was about eighteen he tried to leave the cotton industry. He was unable to obtain 'a trade', however, and eventually became a weaver.

Ann Billington, like many other widows, took in lodgers to increase her family's very limited income. One of these intended to become a preacher and allowed William Billington to borrow books about grammar and other subjects. William Billington also joined the Mechanics' Institution when it opened in 1844. He attended many lectures and made frequent use of its library.⁵ He also met other self-educated working men there. Joseph Hodgson, a former hand-loom weaver, was librarian of the institute and a well-known local poet. Billington appears to have been familiar with his extensive personal library as early as 1840 and wrote an article about him in 1883.⁶ Richard Dugdale, a Blackburn printer and engraver, appears to have been another important influence on William Billington. He met Billington in the early eighteen-forties and a friendship was formed which lasted until his death in 1875. Dugdale was born about 1790 and was largely self-educated; he was a talented local poet and was widely known as 'the Bard of Ribblesdale.'⁷

William Billington appears to have spent much of his limited spare time reading the works of the best-known British poets and by the age of twenty-six,

had not only read and re-read Shelley, Bryon, Keats, and Burns through, until he could recite hundreds of lines of each of them, but was well-versed in the older poets, Chaucer, Spencer, Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden and Pope; and in the later works of Scott, Coleridge and Wordsworth.⁸

His approach to literature clearly reveals the 'exuberent catholicism' characteristic of so many self-educated working men.⁹

William Billington was also able to acquire a 'complete knowledge of the grammar of his mother tongue'¹⁰ and seems to have taught a grammar class at the Mechanics' Institute before he was twenty.¹¹ He later came to an agreement with a local schoolmaster and taught a grammar class in his school in return for lessons in arithmetic and mathematics. He was a popular teacher and the class grew too large for the room in which they met. They decided to form a mutual improvement society and rented a room which had been used as a hay-loft by a local inn. Billington claimed in his autobiography that the society organised classes on logic, rhetoric, oratory, history, geography, chemistry, medical botany, phrenology, reading, writing and arithmetic, as well as grammar.¹² When Billington was

about twenty-four he was also an active member of a 'Lecture and Debating Society' which was based in Accrington.¹³ Most of the members of these societies were probably young men in their late teens or early twenties. Men in this age group usually had adequate incomes and limited family responsibilities and were able to devote a substantial portion of their time and money to the pursuit of knowledge.¹⁴

William Billington was also interested in radical politics and secularism. The origins of Billington's radicalism are somewhat obscure but his early reading was almost certainly an important factor and it may be significant that Shelly and Burns were two of his favourite poets.¹⁵ There was also considerable political excitement in east Lancashire throughout his youth¹⁶ and his uncle, Robert Bolton, wrote poems about Chartism.¹⁷ The power-loom weavers seem to have been particularly militant in the late eighteenth forties and there were numerous strikes in 1846 and 1848.¹⁸ Billington later recalled that 'wage disputes were of daily occurrence, and their sequel, strikes of larger or lesser dimensions, became the recognised order of the day.'¹⁹ Industrial disputes undoubtedly 'encouraged a critical attitude towards the pretensions and powers of employers,'²⁰ and it is not unlikely that Billington was influenced by Edward Whittle. The two men became acquainted when both were employed as weavers in the same factory in Jubilee Street. 'Ned' Whittle was an educated man and a committed trade unionist.²¹ He won 'European fame' for his part in the great Preston strike of 1853-4²² and was the first secretary of the Blackburn and District Power-Loom Weavers' Association. About 1858 he became a schoolmaster and taught in the Swedenborgian school-room, Brookhouse Fields.²³

William Billington was involved in trade union activity for much of his life and was often very critical of the mill-owners. He advocated moderation, however, and admired cautious trade union leaders such as John Whalley.²⁴ According to William Whitaker, Billington's 'judicious counsel and advice to his fellow operatives in cases of dispute with employers . . . averted many a strike and consequent disasters.'²⁵ He was contemptuous of those who tried to involve their unions in party politics and towards the end of his life referred to 'that unanimity of sentiment and goodwill which ever ought to subsist between employer and employed.'²⁶

Although his parents and uncle were Roman Catholics, William Billington became interested in secularism soon after moving to Blackburn.²⁷ There was clearly considerable religious indifference in Blackburn at this time. In 1851 only 10–15 per cent of Blackburn's manual workers regularly attended religious services; 'the great majority of the working class went nowhere, and were not directly influenced by church or chapel.'²⁸ Self-improvement and personal experience of great hardship and injustice caused many working men to lose their faiths,²⁹ and close ties had existed between radicalism and rationalism since the eighteenth century.³⁰ The churches were also often associated with political repression. The Church of England was 'hated as the spiritual arm of an oppressive state,' and 'throughout the nineteenth century, English radicals looked out over a European continent where political reaction ruled supreme in alliance with the clergy of the Catholic Church.'³¹ It is hardly surprising that the young admirer of Shelley and Burns was attracted to the strong secularist movement which existed in Blackburn.³²

In the late eighteen-forties and early eighteen-fifties Billington acquired a certain notoriety in Blackburn as an 'infidel.'³³

At one time, if you went to hear a lecturer in defence of Christianity who had come to answer a previous lecture by Mr. Holyoake, Mr. Robert Cooper, or Mr. Southwell, you expected to see, the moment the lecturer had finished, 'Will' Billington or 'Tom' Stephenson [sic], most likely both, one after the other, mount their seats to challenge the Christian champion.³⁴

Thomas Stevenson was the secretary of the Blackburn Secular Society. In 1852 it had fifty members and met regularly in the Mutual Instruction Society Rooms in Ainsworth Street.³⁵

In June 1846 William Billington married Elizabeth Whalmsley, a young weaver from Church. His wife was unable to sign her name but literacy was uncommon amongst female factory operatives in the eighteen-forties. There was eighty-four per cent female illiteracy in Oldham in 1846.³⁶ She died in 1857, aged twenty-nine, leaving her husband with two young children. Little is known about their relationship although they appear to have been happy together.³⁷

Most nineteenth century working-class poets began writing poetry as part of a wider process of self-education.³⁸

William Billington seems to have first taken a serious interest in writing poetry in the late eighteen-forties and many of his poems appeared in local newspapers in the eighteen-fifties. In 1861 a collection of these was published in book-form.

Most of the poems in *Sheen and shade* are conventional in form and content and many are clearly modelled on the works of the romantic poets. Despite their frequent sentimentality, however, several of the poems vividly describe the pains, sorrows and frustrations experienced by Billington and other members of his class. Some were written to give working people hope and encouragement. In 'The Golden God' Billington expressed the profound contempt he felt for what seemed to be the dominant values of his age:

Oh! this is a steam-born and iron-bound age
 of factories and foundries, of gold and of gain,
 of Prisons and workhouses-Want's heritage!
 Of Railways and rivalry, paupers and pain,
 Of printing and preaching, and men who mortgage
 Their souls to serve Mammon, the god of the age!³⁹

Some of the most interesting poems in *Sheen and Shade* are autobiographical. In 'The Trinity of Life' Billington tries to describe his intellectual and spiritual development.⁴⁰

Sheen and Shade was reviewed by several local newspapers. The *Blackburn Standard* acknowledged that Billington's 'name and fame' were 'already more than local', and claimed that

a perusal of this volume will . . . shew what the history of self-educated men has already proved, that genius is an innate power, which is not dependent upon but ever rises superior to all external disadvantages, and asserts its heavenly origin.⁴¹

The publication of *Sheen and Shade* coincided with the outbreak of the American Civil War and the Cotton Famine began in 1862. Although there was a rich tradition of oral dialect poetry in east Lancashire in the first half of the nineteenth century, little of this appeared in print.⁴² Increasing popular literacy and growing class-consciousness made dialect poets such as Edwin Waugh and Sam Laycock more confident, however, and in 1856 Waugh published 'Come Whoam to thi Childer and Me', the poem which 'put Lancashire dialect poetry on the map.'⁴³ By the early eighteenth-sixties dialect poetry was sufficiently 'respectable' to be acceptable to the editors of

local newspapers. It is impossible to know when Billington wrote his first dialect verses but the Cotton Famine certainly inspired him to write many of his most popular poems. One of Billington's best-loved dialect pieces describes the difficulties experienced by weavers who were forced to use poor quality Indian cotton. 'Th' Surat Weyver's Song' was first published in broadsheet form and fourteen thousand copies were sold.⁴⁴ It seems likely that the enforced idleness of tens of thousands of cotton operatives, together with efforts to teach adults to read, stimulated the market for printed dialect poetry.⁴⁵

The trade of Blackburn was greatly disrupted by the Cotton Famine and Billington was unemployed for long periods. He was an Oddfellow and lectured at lodges in the Midlands and elsewhere.⁴⁶ The needs of others were not forgotten. In March 1862 William Billington and John Baron, another Blackburn poet and a former handloom weaver, gave recitations from their writings at the Preston Spinners' and Minders' Institute. The money collected from the large audience was used to help unemployed operatives with large families.⁴⁷

The American Civil War divided the cotton communities of east Lancashire. Employers and operatives were both divided in their opinions and political sympathies cut across traditional party lines.⁴⁸ There is also considerable disagreement amongst historians. Stanley Broadbridge has argued that the cotton workers of Lancashire gave 'hearty support to Lincoln'⁴⁹ while the work of Mary Ellison suggests that most cotton operatives supported the Confederacy.⁵⁰ Billington's poems reveal that he was sympathetic to the North and was opposed to slavery. The clearest statement of his views is found in 'Aw Wod this War wur Ended':

Some factory maisters tokes for t'Seawth
 Wi' a smooth an' oily tongue,
 Bud iv they'd sense they'd shut their meawth,
 Or sing another song;
 Let liberty nod slavery
 Be fostered and extended -
 Four million slaves mun yet be free,
 An *then* t'war *will* be ended.⁵¹

In the mid-eighteen-sixties prosperity began to return to Lancashire but Billington was unenthusiastic about returning to his former occupation. It was common for textile operatives in their early forties to seek less demanding forms of work and many mill-owners were

reluctant to employ middle-aged men.⁵² Billington had also always loathed factory work.

I never knew a man, whom I could call a man in the full sense of the word, that ever did like working in the factory; the work is so tedious, so tiresomely monotonous, so incessant, so exacting and withal so exhausting, in an artificially heated and often foul and fetid atmosphere⁵³

Some public houses were important centres of proletarian literary activity⁵⁴ and Billington was attracted to the licensed trade.

In 1867 he married Maria Fairbottom, a twenty-two year old cotton operative. Like his first wife, she was completely illiterate. She was 'buxom' and a talented singer, however, and Billington felt that she would be a good landlady.⁵⁵ They had a son, John Bright Billington, in 1868, and about a year later William Billington became the proprietor of a public house in Northgate, Blackburn. Although the Blackburn Literary Club occasionally met there,⁵⁶ the 'Nag's Head Inn' left much to be desired. According to William Whitaker, one of Billington's friends, it was a 'musty-fusty, tumble-down, dark and insanitary semi-ruin; incommodious and dubiously situated, with an equally dubious reputation'⁵⁷

In the early eighteen-seventies, Billington's marriage broke down and his wife abandoned him and their infant son. Few self-educated working men appear to have expected their wives to be 'equal partners in the search for reason and truth'⁵⁸ but Maria Billington was openly contemptuous of her husband's literary activities.⁵⁹ Like other autodidacts, William Billington was often faced with the hostility of other members of his class and he turned to drink for consolation.⁶⁰

About 1875 the 'Nag's Head Inn' was largely rebuilt and its trade was disrupted. After losing a considerable sum, Billington became the proprietor of a beerhouse in Bradshaw Street.⁶¹ This was more manageable than the 'Nag's Head' and became known as 'Poet's Corner'. For almost ten years it was an important centre of working class literary and educational activity. William Billington was an 'inveterate polemic' and weekly debates were held at 'Poet's Corner' on Sunday evenings. These were advertised in the *Blackburn Times* and the subjects discussed included 'Protective Tariffs', 'Wordsworth v. Byron', 'Teetotalism', and 'Religion in Ireland.'⁶² Lectures and poetry readings

were organised and on Wednesday evenings Billington taught young men 'grammar, composition and elocution'. There was no charge for these lessons.⁶³

Soon after Billington moved to Bradshaw Street, one of his longest poems was published in pamphlet form. *Pendle Hill* has thirty-nine stanzas and describes an excursion made by the poet and several friends. It is not one of Billington's finest pieces but reveals a good deal about his interests. Several verses are devoted to local folk-lore and fossil collecting is also described. Billington learnt the folk-lore and traditions of the Ribble Valley when a boy and the stories continued to fascinate the middle-aged sceptic. He shared an interest in geology with many other autodidacts in Blackburn and elsewhere.⁶⁴

In 1883 William Billington wrote twenty-eight 'Local Tales and Sketches' for the *Blackburn Standard*. Some of these, like *Pendle Hill*, describe the countryside, folklore and history of north-east Lancashire. The most interesting are biographical sketches of local characters and some of these have already been referred to. These reveal Billington's intimacy with trade union leaders and other self-educated working men and are of considerable historical interest. His treatment of John Baron, his chief rival, is one of the few surviving examples of the perceptive, witty and often devastating literary criticism which earned Billington so much respect in his lifetime. It also reveals something of what he felt was the purpose of poetry.

... Baron's muse was a most prolific jade, one might almost say omnivorous slut. She sings on any, almost every subject, but seldom rises into the region of moral speculation or social ethics, nor does she ever aspire to be a didactic teacher. . . . Like many less worthy men, Baron looked to the present rather than the future and mistook the applause of the rabble for fame. . . . He seized every opportunity of writing on any 'startling occurrence' or 'dreadful catastrophe' that might happen. Poems on such subjects must be as ephemeral and local as the subjects themselves but this was neither seen nor felt by Baron.⁶⁵

The same year witnessed the publication of a second volume of Billington's poetry. The poems included in *Lancashire Songs, with other Poems and Sketches* are very different from those published twenty-two years earlier. They are less idealistic and contrived, and pieces such as 'Friends are Few when Fooak are Poor' and 'Fraud, the Evil of the Age' are clearly the work of a bitter, cynical and extremely unhappy man. Billington had experienced many physical and emotional hardships and clearly felt that his talents were

insufficiently recognised by others. The book contains an interesting 'Proem' which begins

The true poet is never duly appraised or understood by his neighbours or his contemporaries . . . the world refuses . . . to let him pass for his true worth till time shall have purged his thoughts of their mortality and thus purified and hallowed his memory.

Billington's bitterness did not prevent him from pleading the cause of the poor,⁶⁶ however, and many of the poems in *Lancashire Songs* are highly critical of materialistic values and the power and status of the aristocracy.

On heraldry, on pedigree,
they take their lofty stand,
From century to century
Monopolise the land;
Their larders teem with luxuries,
While workmen's shelves are bare;
They've leaned on our forbearance long,
But let the lords beware!⁶⁷

Towards the end of his life, Billington suffered from heart disease and bronchitis. He feared that he would not live to see *Lancashire Songs* in print and was greatly relieved when the book was published.⁶⁸ Despite his worsening health, the weekly discussions at 'Poet's Corner' continued until the last Sunday of 1883.⁶⁹ he died at 'Poet's Corner' on 3 January 1884, after a short but severe attack of inflammation of the lungs and bronchitis.⁷⁰

William Billington's life is an interesting example of Victorian self-help. Despite his extremely humble origins, he educated himself and achieved considerable local fame as a writer. In January 1884 local newspapers lamented the passing of 'the Blackburn Poet'.⁷² George Hull called him 'Blackburn's foremost son of song',⁷² and one local historian has described him as 'a poet of the highest order'.⁷³ He was also a talented and popular teacher and a prominent trade unionist. Billington's talents and not inconsiderable achievements brought few material rewards; like many other nineteenth century autodidacts, he never enjoyed economic security and often experienced real poverty.⁷⁴ This clearly contributed to his cynicism but there is little evidence that William Billington ever actively sought material success. His main interests were literary, religious and political and he seems to have paid little attention to engineering and commercial subjects. Like many other self-educated working men in Blackburn and elsewhere,

Billington undoubtedly felt that intellectual improvement and political awareness should be the most important aims of education.⁷⁵ He devoted his adult life to helping, encouraging and inspiring working people. His educational work continued until the last week of his life and he gave at least some of his pupils 'an abiding love of the sweet pastures of English literature.'⁷⁶

Billington's educational and political activities were closely related. His political views defy easy categorization but he was essentially a Liberal maverick,⁷⁷ not unlike his hero John Bright, after whom he named his younger son. He was a committed democrat and despised aristocratic government. His attitude towards political economy was more ambiguous and he appears to have desired a genuine partnership between capital and labour. There is little evidence that Billington was an early socialist. He was strongly opposed to Home Rule for Ireland and towards the end of his life was angered by Gladstone's conciliatory Irish policy. Unlike most of Blackburn's autodidacts, Billington was for much of his life an advocate of Malthusianism. One of his most controversial poems was the satirical 'Anti-Malthusian's Song':

Oh! wedlock is wonderful happy,
 Fro th' altar to th' edge of a grave,
 Wi' a wife as is nowt but a wet-noss,
 A husband is nobbud a slave.⁷⁸

The origins of Billington's Malthusian views are somewhat obscure but the hardships experienced by his mother may have been a factor.

Much of Billington's life was devoted to raising the political consciousness of the working people of Blackburn. This was the chief aim of much of his poetry. Many of his poems are 'poetic sermons'⁷⁹ and, unlike John Baron's verses, had a clear didactic purpose. They criticized ignorance, superstition⁸⁰ and greed,⁸¹ and advocated trade unionism,⁸² co-operation⁸³ and labour representation in Parliament.⁸⁴ 'The most common function of working class literature was reassurance'⁸⁵ and poems such as 'The Spinner's Home' describe working people who preserved their dignity despite great poverty.⁸⁶ It is clearly difficult to assess the social and political importance of Billington's work but he undoubtedly strengthened the local and class pride of the working people of north-east Lancashire. Although Billington campaigned for the Liberal party at

elections,⁸⁷ it is likely that his teaching and poetry helped to erode the rather mindless communal politics which were so characteristic of the towns of east Lancashire in the mid-nineteenth century.⁸⁸ William Billington was also largely responsible for the exciting proletarian literary culture which existed in Blackburn in the Victorian period, and made a major contribution to the development of an authentic form of working-class literature.

NOTES

- 1 G. Hull, *The Poets and Poetry of Blackburn* (Blackburn, 1902), p. x.
- 2 *Ibid.*, p.xiii. See also W.A. Abram, *Blackburn Characters of a Past Generation* (Blackburn, 1894), p. 327: 'It is unaccountable that Blackburn, including the neighbouring rural townships, should have produced in the course of one or two generations out of a peasant class accounted by the Outer World rude, illiterate, unintellectual, and self-characterised as matter-of-fact, so many men who have aspired to the name of poet'.
- 3 *Northern Daily Telegraph*, 4 April, 1925.
- 4 D. Bythell, *The Handloom Weavers* (Cambridge, 1969), p. 105.
- 5 *Northern Daily Telegraph*, 4 April, 1925.
- 6 *Blackburn Standard*, 19 May, 1883.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 28 April, 1883.
- 8 Abram, pp. 223-4.
- 9 D. Vincent, *Bread, Knowledge and Freedom* (1981), p.120; see also p. 156.
- 10 Abram, p 223.
- 11 *Blackburn Times*, 10 Sept., 1887.
- 12 *Northern Daily Telegraph*, 4 April, 1925.
- 13 *Blackburn Times*, 17 Sept., 1887.
- 14 Vincent, pp. 128-30. In 1850 the average age of the members of the Leeds Mutual Improvement Society was twenty-three; see M. Tylecote, *The Mechanics' Institutes of Lancashire and Yorkshire before 1851* (Manchester, 1957), p. 104.
- 15 Abram, p. 224.
- 16 D. Read, 'Chartism in Manchester', in *Chartist Studies*, A. Briggs, ed. (1959), pp. 29-64; J. Foster, *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution* (1974), pp. 114-117. For Billington's account of the Blackburn Plug Riots see *Blackburn Standard*, 15 Sept., 1883.
- 17 *Blackburn Standard*, 13 Oct., 1883.
- 18 H.A. Turner, *Trade Union Growth, Structure and Policy* (1962), p. 117.
- 19 *Blackburn Standard*, 6 Oct., 1883.
- 20 T.R. Tholfsen, *Working Class Radicalism in Mid-Victorian England* (1976), p. 278.
- 21 *Blackburn Standard*, 6 Oct., 1883.
- 22 Turner, p. 132.
- 23 *Blackburn Standard*, 6 Oct., 1883.
- 24 *Ibid.*, 18 Aug. 1883.
- 25 *Blackburn Times*, 19 Nov., 1887.
- 26 *Blackburn Standard*, 6 Oct., 1883.
- 27 *Northern Daily Telegraph*, 11 April, 1925.
- 28 P. Joyce, *Work Society and Politics* (1980), pp. 244-45.

- 29 Vincent, pp. 180–81.
 30 Edward Royle, *Radical Politics 1790–1900, Religion and Unbelief* (1971), pp. 17–22.
 31 *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7.
 32 *Northern Daily Telegraph*, 11 April, 1925.
 33 Abram, p. 220.
 34 *Ibid.*, p. 228.
 35 E. Royle, ed., *The Infidel Tradition* (1976), p. 71.
 36 Vincent, p. 8.
 37 *Blackburn Times*, 5 Jan., 1884.
 38 M. Vicinus, *The Industrial Muse* (1974), p. 158.
 39 W. Billington, *Sheen and Shade* (Blackburn, 1861), p. 103.
 40 *Ibid.*, pp. 1–7.
 41 *Blackburn Standard*, 1 Jan., 1862.
 42 B. Hollingworth, ed., *Songs of the People* (Manchester, 1977), pp. 2–3.
 43 *Ibid.*, pp. 4–5, 138.
 44 *Blackburn Times*, 31 March, 1900.
 45 Hollingworth, p. 4.
 46 *Blackburn Times*, 12 Jan., 1884; Hull, p. 122.
 47 *Preston Guardian*, 26 March, 1862.
 48 Mary Ellison, *Support for Secession: Lancashire and the American Civil War* (Chicago, 1972), p. 13.
 49 S. Broadbridge, 'The Lancashire Cotton Famine', in *The Luddites and Other Essays*, L.M. Munby, ed., (1971), pp. 143–44.
 50 Ellison, *passim*; see especially pp. ix, 26, 34, 96, 112, 190.
 51 W. Billington, *Lancashire Songs with other Poems and Sketches*, (Blackburn, 1883), pp. 27–28.
 52 Foster, pp. 91–92.
 53 *Blackburn Standard*, 6 Oct., 1883.
 54 Vicinus, p. 176; *Blackburn Times*, 22 Oct., 1887. Ben Preston, the Yorkshire radical poet, kept an alehouse near Bingley; see K.E. Smith, 'Ben Preston in his Time and Ours', *Transactions of the Yorkshire Dialect Society*, 15, part 80 (1980), pp. 37–38.
 55 *Blackburn Times*, 22 Oct., 1887.
 56 Abram, pp. 229–31.
 57 *Blackburn Times*, 22 Oct., 1887.
 58 Vincent, p. 44.
 59 *Blackburn Times*, 22 Oct., 1887.
 60 Hollingworth, p. 152; cf. Vincent, pp. 183–85.
 61 *Blackburn Times* 5 Jan., 1884.
 62 *Ibid.*, 2 July 1882, 27 Aug., 1882, 2 June, 1883 and 10 Feb., 1883.
 63 *Ibid.* 12 Nov., 1887.
 64 Vincent, pp. 172–74.
 65 *Blackburn Standard*, 9 June 1883.
 66 Hull, p. 124.
 67 Billington, *Lancashire Songs*, p. 128.
 68 Abram, p. 232.
 69 *Blackburn Times*, 19 Nov., 1887.
 70 *Ibid.*, 5 Jan., 1884.
 71 *Ibid.*, *Blackburn Standard*, 5 Jan., 1884.
 72 *Northern Daily Telegraph*, 4 April, 1925.
 73 G.C. Miller, *Blackburn Worthies of Yesterday* (Blackburn, 1959), p. 42.
 74 Vincent, pp. 68–9
 75 *Ibid.*, pp. 133–195; see especially p. 160.
 76 Hull, p. 245.

- 77 *Blackburn Times*, 19 Nov., 1887.
- 78 Billington, *Lancashire Songs*, pp. 23-25.
- 79 Hull, p. 124.
- 80 Billington, *Sheen and Shade*, p. 2.
- 81 Billington, *Lancashire Songs*, pp. 104-5.
- 82 *Ibid.*, p. 114.
- 83 Billington, *Sheen and Shade*, p. 117.
- 84 Billington, *Lancashire Songs*, pp. 127, 131.
- 85 Vicinus, p. 2.
- 86 Billington, *Lancashire Songs*, pp. 80-81.
- 87 Abram, pp. 334-35.
- 88 Joyce, *passim*; see especially p. 203.