

Letter in the CHESTERFIELD GAZETTE and SCARSDALE and HIGH PEAK ADVERTISER,
Saturday, June 14th 1828

To: The Editor of the Chesterfield Gazette.

Sir - The mineral district of this county have long complained of the depreciation of British Lead ore, in consequence of the admission of foreign ore and lead without sufficient protective duty.

They have accordingly petitioned Parliament for relief; and there is no reason to doubt that their petition will meet with the attention which their importance demands.

As there is at present so much to complain of in the hardness of the times, the miners would certainly act wisely in retrenching some unnecessary expences which unfortunately adhere to their trade; and I have reason to believe, that many of them are disposed to do so, but it too often happens that these good inclinations are over-ruled by those who ought rather to encourage them.

Instead of paying their men at the reckoning house on the mine as ought to be done, they are paid at different alehouses in the neighbourhood, where there is always drink, and after dinner, and the same unnecessary expences are frequently incurred at making a bargain.

There are also, in some places, occasional dinners at which the miners are in the habit of attending through fear of giving offence; all these are expences which it is cruel to lead the poor miner into, when in almost every instance they ought to be avoided.

There is another evil, which pervades almost all great trades to a certain extent, and mining among the rest, I mean the implied obligations upon workmen, to purchase goods of their employer or his friend; and even to accept goods in lieu of wages.

This practice is contrary to express statute, and is punishable by heavy penalties; to this unjust mode of dealing with poor workmen, there are, I admit, many honourable exceptions; but it is extremely difficult to bring home the offence; several proprietors of mines set their faces against it, and see that the men are not supplied with goods, but are paid in money, I have little or no doubt, that were all great proprietors to look but once, into details of their concerns, strict justice would be done between parties; and this, as well as many of the other evil practices above hinted at, would be abolished.

Let me hope, that at all events, the miners will not be wanting to themselves, but will, as far as depends upon their own endeavours instantly relinquish all habits which are injurious to the interests of their

families; and to this, let me add another hope, that the proprietors will ultimately (if not immediately) see it to be a duty to protect the industrious miner from everything that tends to depress him.

I am, your abt. humble servt.

Miners' Friend

June 9, 1828

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