DISABILITY, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

The risks of coalmining affected not just the working lives of British miners during the nineteenth century, but also their lives beyond the pit. Many contemporary commentators sought to interpret the experiences of miners and their communities through the prism of their susceptibility to danger in the workplace. For example, in his comparative statistical study of Britain's 'dangerous classes', *Tactics for the Times* (1849), Jelinger C. Symons calculated that rates of criminality were lower in the mining districts of Northumberland, Cumberland, Durham and Cornwall than in other industrial areas or London. Compared to a national average of 28 out of every 10,000 persons committing property offences, the rate in these districts was merely 7 out of 10,000. This fact was explained by a relative lack of large towns in mining districts; the 'primitive and simple habits' of mineworkers and their families; and, above all, the constant 'peril to life' in underground labour, which served as a 'quickener to the moral sense'. To 'no class of men', wrote Symons, is the 'barrier between life and death slighter than among pitmen', and consequently there was an 'awe, partly religious, and greatly superstitious' that 'obtains amongst the people and check[s] vice'. In mining areas, he claimed, children were 'less lawless, and more subordinate to parental control', and women too were less liable to the demoralisation found in the cotton manufacturing districts of north-west England.¹

Symons' association between 'uncertainty of human life caused by the frequency and terrible nature of accidents in mines' and low levels of theft in mining districts seemed 'fanciful' to other observers, who noted that criminality was high among other occupations who faced risk of accident and injury in their work, such as sailors.² Furthermore, in areas dominated by the iron trade, where ironworks and collieries existed side by side, rates of crime were notably higher.³ However, Symons' attempt to provide links between miners' work,

their exposure to risk and other aspects of their lives, was not uncommon. The historian K. S. Inglis explained that the success of Methodism in the mining communities of nineteenth-century England and Wales was due to the belief that 'miners lived closer to death' than other workers, and for the converted, experiences of loss and survival provided vivid evidence of the fragility of life and the importance of faith.⁴ The rhetoric of pitmen turned preachers such as Richard Weaver was intimately shaped by their exposure to the risk of accident when working underground, describing the torments of the damned with 'an imagery gathered from the dense darkness of the coal-pit, the flames of the fire-damp, and the suffocating vapour of choke-damp'.⁵ Yet if accidents reinforced the moral character of some, in others it produced a recklessness that found expression in a love for gambling and contributed to the stereotype of the miner as thriftless and lacking forethought.⁶ Miners' marriages, alleged the author of 'The Collier at Home', an article published in *Household Words* in 1857, were 'founded on a rough sort of calf-love', in which there was little consideration for 'community of interest or feeling'.⁷ To this author, proximity to danger produced an emotional detachment in miners' work and home lives, where the spectacle of a 'companion, burnt, or maimed or killed' merely lifted the 'deadly monotony' of labour at the coalface, and where grief for the dead may have been 'bitter in the first few days' but was speedily forgotten.⁸

When social commentators pronounced on the impact of risk on miners' social relations and emotional lives, they had in mind primarily miners' exposure to *fatal* accidents. However, as we have seen, non-fatal accidents were far more common. The living legacy of mining's dangers was visible for all to see in coal communities in the maimed bodies of survivors. While walking down a busy street in mid-century Merthyr Tydfil, the *Morning Chronicle's* correspondent observed that there were 'more men with wooden legs than are to be found in any town in the kingdom having four times its population' – a consequence of the great 'number of accidents in the works below and above ground resulting in amputation'.⁹ How were people with impairments viewed in coalfield communities; how did they regard themselves; and what social roles did they play? This chapter examines how social relations in mining areas were shaped by disability and asks how the lives of men, women and children were affected by impairments or chronic illness – whether their own, or those of family members. Despite significant research on evolving patterns of home life, leisure and religion in the coalfields, there has been little attempt to examine how social and familial relations of miners, and their emotional or spiritual attachments, were affected by illness or impairment.¹⁰ This chapter contributes to our evolving understanding of coalfield life by situating the disabled miner within three distinctive, but overlapping settings:

in the community; at home; and in the religious activities of mining areas. It explores the ways in which impairment became visible in these settings and how the norms and values associated with these arenas both delineated the experiences of disabled mineworkers and were challenged, modified and re-drawn after disablement.

The miner in his community

In spite of the image of the isolated, close-knit pit village, nineteenth-century coal communities were not homogeneous. Mining settlements varied considerably in their layout, quality of facilities and amenities, degree of isolation and in the extent of their dependence on coalmining alone.¹¹ The expansion of the coal industry led to considerable migration into mining areas, particularly from the surrounding countryside. The population of mining communities ebbed and flowed according to the demands for coal. Colliers were diverse in terms of ethnicity and religious affiliation. In 1891, for instance, the Durham mining village of Seaton Delavel was home to people born in 118 different towns and villages.¹² Migration, as we shall see in the following chapter, increased during times of strikes. Some mining areas, particularly in south Wales and Scotland, had significant Irish populations.¹³ Over the course of the nineteenth century, as the industry expanded and communities became more established, so religion, leisure activities and educational pursuits served to bind together coal communities in stronger cohesion, although the unity of social and cultural values should not be overstated.¹⁴

While the structure of coal communities was diverse, contemporary images of the miner in his community tended to divide between two stereotypes. On the one hand, the miner had long been presented in popular culture as a hard-drinking, raucous and irreligious character, spending his wages in merriment. This was a view cemented in eighteenth-century ballads, such as Newcastle poet Edward Chicken's *The Collier's Wedding*, originally dating from 1729, which celebrated a class of people who 'liv'd drunken, honest, working lives'.¹⁵ The image of the carefree, hard-drinking miner, survived into the nineteenth century, but was beginning to be challenged by alternative views of the miner in his home and community.¹⁶ Remarking on the moral state of English miners in his introduction to *The Pitman's Pay* (1843), Thomas Wilson remarked that 'the pitman's character has undergone considerable amelioration', since Chicken's time, a result of Sunday schools that increased children's literacy, the spread of useful knowledge in cheap publications and the introduction of savings banks which had produced 'care and economy among this invaluable class of men'.¹⁷ An article about the Durham and Northumberland miners

published in 1885 similarly noted that it was a 'mistake to suppose' that the typical miner lived life to the full 'while his wife and children starve'. By now, the pitman was 'frequently a teetotaller, and has no more favourite place of occupation for his leisure hours than the reading-room or the mechanic's institute'.¹⁸ The improvements brought about by education and religious instruction were underpinned by an ideal of physical and moral fitness.¹⁹ 'Veritas', a correspondent to the *British Miner* in 1862, celebrated the end of violent and cruel sports among miners of Northumberland and their replacement with 'cricket, bowling, running, etc, all of which help to develop their muscular strength'. 'Physical exercise', he continued, 'has made Englishmen what they are'.²⁰ The expansion of sport and leisure activities, chapels and institutions of learning, whether schools or miners' institutes that nurtured auto-didacticism, as coalfield communities became established all contributed to a reform of popular culture in which 'the humanising influences of religion, science and literature' challenged the image of the coalminer as a drunken hard man.²¹

Nevertheless, the raucous image of the miner in his community was not entirely displaced; nor was it confined to able-bodied men. Mid-Victorian Merthyr Tydfil's conspicuous population of amputee coalminers sometimes made themselves visible through acts of drunken violence, which made good copy in local newspapers. The *Merthyr Telegraph* published a number of reports taken from the town's police court in the 1860s and 1870s, detailing the aggressive behaviour of men with wooden legs, many of them former coalminers. In the summer of 1862, for example, an amputee collier named Henry Williams was charged with assaulting two police constables after they had tried to stop him beating his mother. Williams apparently threatened the officers, boasting that he had 'beat five policemen at Aberdare', and kicked at them with his wooden leg, tearing the coat and trousers of one of them. He was fined, ordered to pay fourteen shillings compensation for damage to the policeman's uniform, and sentenced to a month's imprisonment with hard labour.²² A year later, John Evans, a collier with a wooden leg, was charged with 'being drunk and fighting in the public streets', while in 1873 Morgan Price, alias 'Mockyn Croes-pen', another wooden-legged collier, was accused of 'pugilism' after staging a brawl on the highway near Cefn-coed-y-cymmer on the north western edge of the town.²³ Stories such as these simultaneously contributed to the rowdy image of this Welsh industrial town, which was notorious for drawing in disorderly people from the surrounding area and further afield, while also attesting to the attempts of the authorities to clamp down on unacceptable behaviour.²⁴ However, stories of violence involving disabled miners were found in other coalfields as well. In 1875, for example, the *Glasgow Herald* reported the trial of a 'blind brawler', collier James Marshall who was

‘totally blind’, accused of causing a disturbance in a public house at Rawyards, Airdrie, after being ‘repeatedly convicted of a similar offence’.²⁵

These stories of drunk and violent impaired colliers can be interpreted in various ways. On the one hand, they can be read as stories of displacement, in which men with significant impairments were reduced to the role of dangerous outsider, threatening the stability of their communities. They appeared at a time when the temperance movement was gaining ground in industrial south Wales and other parts of the country, and when working-class male respectability was becoming firmly associated with the ideal of the breadwinner who provided for his family rather than squandering money in the pub. In this context, the violent and disorderly amputees depicted in these reports represented the antithesis of ideals of sober manliness.²⁶ But at the same time, these stories show ways in which men whose livelihoods and status were threatened by impairment might fall back on the image of the tough, hard-drinking miner as a means of rejecting any associations between physical impairment and vulnerability or weakness. These were ‘disabled’ men determined to demonstrate their physical strength, whatever their impairment. They appear as not just getting into trouble, but positively *inviting* it, seeking opportunities to test their strength against able-bodied opponents. As Shani D’Cruze has noted in her study of crime in Victorian England, ‘[m]en’s reputation as fighters could form an important component of their masculine self-respect.’²⁷ Modern research shows that men with impairments acquired after birth sometimes attempt to defend their masculine identities from the potentially feminising threat posed by disability by ‘proving’ their manliness through acts of aggression or physicality.²⁸ With these insights in mind, the violence of men like Henry Williams and Morgan Price can be seen as a brutal assertion of their manhood.

By including details of brawling disabled miners’ impairments, journalists gave their stories about these men a ‘freakish’ quality, inviting readers to reflect on the surprising capabilities of amputees and other visibly injured people, or view them as figures of fun. In common with other Victorian newspaper accounts of violent crimes, many reporters emphasised the physical impairments and deformities of defendants to portray the accused as a ‘comic grotesque’.²⁹ A story printed in the *Merthyr Telegraph* about another coalfield amputee, David Thomas, who tussled with a police officer, appeared under the headline ‘A Dangerous Leg’, and described how Thomas had ‘used his wooden leg with *extraordinary proficiency*’, giving the constable a ‘punch’ on the shin, in such a way to ‘remind him that limbs of flesh were not always the most formidable weapons in a scuffle with a drunken man’. In the account of his trial, Thomas was described mock-heroically as ‘the hero of the wooden leg’. The newspaper reported laughter when the court told the defendant to ‘learn

to keep that wooden leg of yours in reserve for its proper purpose', and further laughter when he was warned not to 'kick out with such a dangerous limb as that, or you may find yourself kicking some one's brains out some of these fine days'. Although found guilty of a serious offence, Thomas's treatment by the court and in the press report repeatedly used his impairment to reduce the case to farce.³⁰

While some impaired colliers were seen as dangerous and disruptive presences in their communities, others were adopted more affectionately as local 'characters', whose physical impairments were part of a set of eccentricities that added to their distinctiveness and appeal. As James Gregory has argued, the 'eccentric biography' was a popular genre for writing about physical difference in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain and these narratives often imbued those with physical imperfections with compensatory mental qualities of character and personality.³¹ Such was the case in the *Merthyr Telegraph's* affectionate portrait of William David Richards, 'better known far and wide as Billy Davy Richards' the 'Bard of Pen-Heol-Gerrig', published posthumously on 29 May 1858. The narrative placed Richards, who wore a wooden leg for most of his life following a mining accident, at the centre of his community, a schoolmaster and bard, a man who acted as secretary to 'several clubs', who would spend his evenings smoking a pipe, discussing 'politics or gossip, bardism or antiquity, with a select knot of friends'. Richards was regarded as the 'oracle of the stony hamlet wherein he lived' and was consulted on all matters, taking up the cause of his neighbours in letters and petitions, particularly to the Crawshay family who owned the local collieries and iron works.

'None who knew him', wrote the author of his life story, 'would deny him the possession of virtues and of traits worthy of esteem, but he was frail.' Dying exhausted and emaciated by poverty, 'poor Billy' provided an example of determination and bearing with misfortune. Using a horticultural metaphor that at once captured his deformed body and his steadfast endurance, the author described him as being like 'one of the gnarled and wiry, the storm bent and dwarfed oaks upon our hill sides' which 'endures for an age', contrasted with the 'well grown and slender poplar' which was 'too often preferred' on the basis of its appearance, yet was merely a 'thing of the day'. In this account, Richards was presented not so much as someone who achieved much in his life *in spite* of his impairment, but rather as one whose physical difference had shaped his mental outlook in a positive way, giving him the qualities that were admired by those who knew him, but which went unappreciated by those who judged on appearances alone. Like the 'dwarfed oak', there were 'inherent powers within that rugged mass that would have displayed themselves in the stately form and ample proportions of the monarch of the woods', if only they

were planted 'in better soil, a different location, and under different circumstances'.³² Richards' misfortune lay in being born into a community where making a living for men was associated with physical prowess, which meant that the many compensatory qualities that made up for his broken body did not lead to the success he deserved.

The image of nineteenth-century mining towns and villages as cohesive settlements found its principal expression in the uniting of the community in worry and grief in the wake of accidents. An account of the aftermath of an explosion of fire-damp at Jarrow Colliery in 1826, published in the *Methodist Magazine*, was typical of many in its depiction of the 'whole neighbouring population' being 'drawn together' in the minutes and hours that followed the disaster, as rescuers searched for survivors and the dead were brought to the surface:

The cries and lamentations of the distressed relations, the suggestions and opposing shouts of the persons busying themselves in the work, the blazing of the surrounding fires, and the uncertainty of the extent of the destruction, conspired to fill every breast with terror and distress.³³

Bringing home the dead, and funerals of the victims of fatal accidents, were depicted as public events in which the grief of widows and children was shared by all.³⁴ Nevertheless, if fatal accidents were occasions for unity that bonded communities through sharing the burden of loss, the willingness of coalmining communities to embrace those left disabled by accidents, or people with disabilities in general, depended on a variety of factors. The mutualism spurring the worker-led welfare schemes examined in the previous chapter promoted the idea that local communities ought to support disabled workers. Yet this was not always the case in practice and attitudes towards disability in coalfield society could be indifferent, or openly hostile. Sympathies for the maimed were usually strongest immediately after an accident, but often waned over time. Jim Bullock's memories of growing up in a Yorkshire mining community around the turn of the twentieth century included seeing a 'once-strong miner', now paralysed with a broken back, lying on a water bed in the street 'where his relatives had wheeled him to get some sunshine and chat to the miners'. In the early days after his accident 'all his friends and relatives were helpful and sympathetic', but as time wore on and his condition did not improve, he became less interesting to others and increasingly aware of himself as a 'burden' and so he 'began to grumble and curse about the cruel blow struck him in the prime of life' – 'His complete manhood had been taken away from him'.³⁵

Although disability was normalised in mining communities of the nineteenth century, people with disabilities might on occasion be subject to

cruelty and laughter. On 6 May 1865, the *Aberdare Times* reported the pastime of 'Hunting a Packman', a game in which a female 'cripple' was chased by women and 'urchins' through the streets – she giving them 'knocks and tumbles' with her crutch and the chasers trying to trip her up. 'All seemed to enjoy it', reported the paper, although the views of the 'packman' herself were not recorded.³⁶ A 'packman' was a pedlar or itinerant trader, and the cruel treatment she received may have derived as much from the fact that she was a stranger in the neighbourhood, and possibly taken for a beggar, as from her physical difference. Social attitudes towards the disabled poor in mining communities were laced with concerns about imposture. The high number of 'cripples' produced in the expanding coal industry may have drawn beggars to some mining communities in the hope of getting assistance, heightening concerns about impairments being faked in order to gain sympathy.³⁷ While these concerns were universal during the nineteenth century and were centuries old, hostility to imposter beggars may have been felt particularly keenly in mining areas due to the high incidence of genuine impairment.³⁸ Accusations of fraudulent presentations of disability in mining and other industrial areas were often levelled at 'outsiders', reflecting tensions caused by migration in search of work. Irish migrants who came to coal and iron districts in Scotland and south Wales to supply shortages of labour during strikes were accused of using 'various and numerous devices to obtain assistance from the parish for their wives and families, whilst they are themselves at work'.³⁹ Such hostility helps explain why many Irish friendly societies were established in Britain's coalfields during the nineteenth century and suggests the role of ethnicity in shaping experiences of disability.⁴⁰ For outsiders seeking belonging and acceptance, mining settlements or neighbourhoods were often unwelcoming places. In such circumstances, sympathy and kindness could be hard to find, even in ill health.

'Strangers' presenting impairments who entered mining communities requesting alms were frequently met with suspicion, sometimes rightly. The Durham miner John Wilson described how the elder sister in the Todd family, with whom he lodged as a young worker at Ludworth Colliery around the middle of the century, had chased away a beggar feigning to be 'dumb' when he came to her house, exposing his imposture by beating him with a brush until he 'cried out for mercy'.⁴¹ At Risca in Monmouthshire in 1862, David Miles, 'a tall powerful looking fellow', was arrested for begging, claiming that his arm had been 'smashed at a coal pit in Aberdare'. Upon examination by a doctor, his arm was declared 'perfectly healthy' and Miles admitted to feigning impairment explaining that 'his reason for doing so was that he could not support his family otherwise than by begging' and felt 'ashamed to beg'

being 'an able-bodied man without an excuse'. He was sentenced to six weeks' hard labour, the judge declaring that 'these acts of gross deception must be punished, as they are calculated to deter persons from relieving the really necessitous'.⁴²

The judge in this case made a good point: community fears about fraudulent disability influenced the experiences of people with real impairments, often in negative ways. Hoping for sympathetic treatment, or at least respect, some people with genuine health problems encountered derision or outright animosity in their daily lives. In his autobiography, Edward Rymer recalled the time he visited north Wales to promote trade unionism among coalminers there in the late 1860s. During one of his speeches, some members of the audience, Rymer thought, 'grinned and laughed at my lameness'.⁴³ Rymer has been characterised as a divisive, controversial and difficult figure, sensitive and easily offended.⁴⁴ Coupled with the fact that he led a peripatetic life, this may have compounded his 'outsider' status in the places he lived and visited, exacerbating any prejudice and ridicule he experienced because of his impairments. He certainly claimed to have been hurt or angered on other occasions by comments allegedly made about his physical appearance or abilities.⁴⁵ If Rymer's personality and lifestyle contributed to the frequently harsh attitudes of others towards him, however, his belief that he faced prejudice because of his impairments was echoed in other eyewitness accounts of coalfield life. Born in 1835, James Dunn worked as a mineworker in the English Midlands as a child. During that time his health was badly affected by a tumour that eventually forced him to leave mining. Reflecting on his childhood many years later, Dunn referred to his tumour and highlighted it when he wrote that the 'poverty and affliction' he suffered 'excited pity in some hearts, but the opposite feelings in others'.⁴⁶ Like poverty, illness and injury provoked mixed responses and feelings within coal society. Despite romanticised portrayals of steadfast miners rallying together to support workmates in need, disabled mineworkers could not *count* on the acceptance and kindness of their communities.⁴⁷

Home life

In January 1873 the *Illustrated London News* (ILN) published an illustration of an 'interior of a collier's cottage' (Figure 3). The picture depicts a Welsh collier and his family inside their home. The collier, a serious looking man who holds a pick, is at the centre of the picture, standing close to a fireside in what is presumably the kitchen. Beside him are two women, one on each side. One does the laundry while the other woman sits with an infant on her lap, another child close by. A dog sits at her feet looking devotedly towards the miner.⁴⁸

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THE STRIKE IN SOUTH WALES: INTERIOR OF A COLLIER'S COTTAGE.

Figure 3 "The Strike in South Wales: Interior of a Collier's Cottage", *Illustrated London News*, 18 January 1873. Copyright Illustrated London News Ltd/Mary Evans.

Obviously an idealised scene, the picture does, however, reveal something of the reality of nineteenth-century miners' domestic lives. As its composition implies, mining was at the heart of mineworkers' households, influencing what they did and how they developed.

Mining households were essentially sites in which mining labour was reproduced, nurtured and maintained. Highly gendered, mining households' activities were geared towards meeting the fundamental needs of mineworkers so they could carry on the arduous mining labour on which their families relied financially. As suggested by the *ILN*'s picture, women kept the home and performed the vital domestic chores necessary to ensure miners were sufficiently nourished, clothed and cared for to continue working at their jobs. Women also bore, raised and tended the children that became the pit workers or miners' wives of the future. And so the cycle continued.⁴⁹

The *ILN*'s picture also speaks to another feature of miners' lives, including those who today might be considered 'disabled': family was very important to their everyday experiences. As we have seen, despite the rise of specialist medical and welfare institutions in the nineteenth century, sick and injured miners at this time overwhelmingly lived in family settings, not institutions. The families in which they lived, however, could vary quite widely. Many types of working-class household existed during the Industrial Revolution, including those tightly focused on the nuclear family unit, others that were more fluid and contained non-nuclear kin and others unrelated to the nuclear unit, such as lodgers.⁵⁰ Mining families were no different.

A sense of the range of households in which disabled miners lived is found in Scottish Poor Law records and the census of 1871. When the census was taken, William Scott was in his mid-fifties and living in Carluke, Lanarkshire. Described as a miner unable to work, Scott was listed as living with his wife, Margaret (fifty-one), and his three children: Janet (fifteen), William (twelve) and Robert (ten).⁵¹ A few weeks later, Poor Law officials confirmed his incapacity when they categorised him as 'wholly disabled' and granted him relief, noting he was 'suffering from Miner's Asthma'.⁵² Fifteen-year-old Robert Hamilton was also living in Carluke in 1871 when census enumerators surveyed his household. Like Scott, he too was listed as a mineworker and Poor Law officers considered him 'wholly disabled' (being 'unfit for work from pain in [his] left side') shortly before the census. His household was much larger and more complex than the one enumerators found when they called on the Scott family, however. An orphan, Hamilton was recorded as living with nine other persons. Headed by James Brown, the household in which Hamilton lived also included Brown's wife and five children along with another teenaged orphan (named Jonas Hamilton and possibly Robert's brother) and William

Neilson, a twenty-four-year-old boarder.⁵³ Scott and Hamiltons' domestic circumstances indicate that both nuclear and non-nuclear households were found in coalfield communities and that these could vary quite considerably in size and composition. Like the Browns, many families took in lodgers or other people seemingly unrelated to them by blood or marriage, such as Neilson or the Hamilton boys. It was rare, though, to find non-nuclear households where nobody was related to their fellow co-residents.

Kinship ties underpinned the vast majority of mining households. At the time of his death in the Gethin Colliery explosion of December 1865, amputee Griffith Ellis lived together with his brother and sister in Abercanaid, south Wales. The brothers, in line with the gender ideology of the time, had been the household's main breadwinners, working for pay in the pits, while their sister worked at home 'keeping house for them'.⁵⁴ Co-operation and mutual dependence between men and women in this way was the norm in mining communities. Given that essential domestic tasks such as cooking, cleaning and child care were considered 'women's work', women were a constant and *vital* presence in mining families. Jane Humphries has observed that working-class widowers were more likely to remarry than widows. That they did so, she suggests, was partly because men realised they were so dependent on the domestic labour of women that it was almost impossible to maintain a functioning household without a woman to assist them.⁵⁵ Although domestic arrangements similar to the Ellis's were not unusual, most mining households had a husband and wife at their core. The families in which Robert Hamilton and William Scott lived in 1871, for instance, may have been quite different in terms of size and composition, but both centred on a miner and his wife.⁵⁶

Although common-law unions or informal cohabitation were reported in colliery districts before the 1850s, and were believed to be common in some areas, marriage was the foundation upon which most mining households were built.⁵⁷ Men and women from mining families were noted for their tendency to 'marry among themselves' throughout the nineteenth century and this contributed further to the idea of miners as a 'distinct race of beings'.⁵⁸ Along with their endogamy, colliers also had a reputation for marrying young and having lots of children – a view supported by demographic evidence.⁵⁹ Miners were able to marry younger than other workers because of the relatively high wages they commanded, but their reasons for marriage were essentially the same as other labouring Britons'. While romance and sexual attraction may have played their part, the decision of working-class couples to marry or live together was frequently motivated by economic considerations.⁶⁰ For colliers, wives brought with them productive and reproductive capacities that were a significant boon, not only in the domestic sphere, but also in the

workplace. Referring to the time when women worked at the Scottish mines he managed, John Wright claimed that men there 'married more from the advantage their [spouse's] physical strength might procure them, than any degree of affection'.⁶¹ Before they were forbidden from doing so in 1842, miners' wives commonly worked underground in Scotland as coal bearers. By carrying the coal their husbands cut, wives enabled miners to spend more time at the coalface hewing, thereby increasing their earning potential. Even when not employed in mines themselves, wives still provided colliers with valuable mining labour by giving birth to their children. Miners' sons, particularly after the prohibition on underground female labour, were especially likely to follow their fathers into the mines.⁶² As we saw in the previous chapter, the income child mineworkers earned was crucial for the economic survival of many mining families. Wives and children were materially advantageous to miners in other ways too. In coal districts where company housing was common, the allocation of homes was often determined by the marital status of mineworkers and the size of their families. In north-east England, for instance, married men with lots of children received preferential treatment in this regard and were far more likely to get company accommodation than single men or those with small families.⁶³

As in the workplace, injury and ill health were ubiquitous in mining families. We have already observed the households in which 'disabled' mineworkers such as Griffith Ellis, William Scott and Robert Hamilton lived. Men and boys were not the only people in coalfield society with physical impairments, of course. As we saw in Chapter 2, prior to 1842 reformers calling for the prohibition of women and girls from working underground highlighted their susceptibility to ill health and disability. Furthermore, coal districts also included many people with congenital impairments or conditions who depended on the income of mineworkers for support, like the teenage 'dwarf ... in very bad health' mentioned in a letter detailing the families of dead mineworkers killed in the Gethin Colliery disaster of 1865.⁶⁴

The prohibition on women's underground labour in 1842 served to consolidate the male breadwinner ideal. While some miners' wives supplemented household income through economic activities of their own, such as running a 'small huckster's shop' selling food and other small articles, in many coal communities after 1842 married women's work was more likely to be centred on the home than in other working-class areas.⁶⁵ The landlady duties women performed for lodgers, for example, undoubtedly contributed greatly to the financial well-being of mining families, but this work was essentially an extension of the housekeeping responsibilities expected of wives and mothers *within* their households, not a foray into the world of work beyond.⁶⁶

With the gradual consolidation of the idea that a woman's rightful place was in the home and the ban on females working underground, the gendering of industrial disease and disabling injury as *male* also became more pronounced as the period wore on. Despite this, women continued to be hurt in the service of the coal industry. Their contribution to mining through the work they did at home supporting miners took a toll on their bodies that could be just as incapacitating as work in collieries. In mid-Victorian Merthyr Tydfil, for example, poor water supply there meant colliers' wives had to perform hard labour on a daily basis when they carried water long distances from the River Taff to fill their husbands' baths.⁶⁷ John Liefchild similarly observed the arduous nature of women's lives in northern coalfield settlements. 'The duties of a pitman's wife', he wrote, 'are very numerous.' Due to the fact that mineworkers in their families often worked different shifts, many women were busy 'preparing numerous meals ... at irregular and various hours of the day'. They also had to wash the incredibly dirty work clothes of their mining menfolk. All this activity, lamented Liefchild, echoing earlier critics of women's underground labour, left a woman 'with little time to attend to her duties as nurse' to her children.⁶⁸ Miners' wives were continually having to juggle the competing demands of childcare with looking after their fatigued husbands and mine-working sons. Usually they managed it, but often at a cost to their health. With the expansion of the coal industry, moreover, the physical burden women were under only increased.⁶⁹ Writing about the famous Welsh coal-producing communities of the Rhondda Valley in the late-nineteenth century, Dot Jones has argued that the 'unremitting toil of childbirth and domestic labour killed and debilitated Rhondda women as much as accident and conditions in the mining industry killed and maimed Rhondda men'.⁷⁰

Impairment was undoubtedly a part of life for many people in British mining communities, but what impact, if any, did it have on the households in which they lived? The social, economic and emotional consequences of disablement to the family lives of miners are often elusive. Reconstructing them requires careful piecing together of fragments of information from newspapers, official reports and autobiographies. While it is always difficult to document historic experiences of disability completely, the available evidence suggests that although impairment might re-draw domestic relations in quite profound ways, the experiences of mining families varied considerably.

In the first place, there can be no doubt that disablement could be challenging for all families, not simply because of the potential loss of income, but also because of the emotional strain it placed on individuals and their relatives. Some disabling conditions, to which miners were susceptible, such as lung diseases, might be distressing and disruptive for caregivers as well as patients.

Lung diseases were typically accompanied by violent coughing, expectoration and other physical effects such as 'groaning'. Symptoms meant that patients developed their own routines that might be at odds with the established rhythms of the household. For example, Thomas Lewis, a fifty-two-year-old former miner from Aberdare in south Wales, suffered from asthma that 'compelled him to spend whole nights kneeling by the fire instead of going to bed'. One morning in March 1839, after some 'cross words', his wife Mary had struck him with a hammer, killing him. Mary Lewis's actions were attributed to insanity, believed to have been hereditary in her family and which had commenced in her after the birth of her last child some four years previously, but it is possible that the strain of caring for an incapacitated husband and several children could have exacerbated the situation.⁷¹ In some cases, fear of becoming a burden was such a source of unhappiness for injured miners that they too felt the need to take similarly extreme measures. According to a newspaper account published in 1855, a thirty-year-old miner, Robert Perrie, employed by the Eglington Iron Works company in North Ayrshire, Scotland, who had become incapacitated from working thanks to a crushed ankle, shot himself through 'despondency ... apparently on account of his inability to work, and finding himself thereby a burden on his parents'.⁷² Such cases were infrequent, but they reveal deeper histories of familial relations, duties and feelings indelibly affected by impairment.

For unmarried men like Perrie, depending on parents was an important – and in his case apparently humiliating – source of support during incapacity. But for married men and fathers, as we saw in the previous chapter, reliance on the earning power of other family members, especially children, was crucial after impairment. In her study of child labour in the Industrial Revolution, Jane Humphries has employed the concept of 'breadwinner frailty' to explain why working-class children were sent to work. Families' dependence on adult male earners, she argues, made them economically vulnerable to breadwinner unemployment or incapacity. Consequently, when men were sick, injured or unemployed, families had a strong incentive to encourage or force their children into work. This affected family dynamics in a number of ways. Fit and healthy boys whose labour might help their families in times of need were valued, whereas others – girls and more fragile boys – might find themselves marginalised.⁷³ So 'useless are daughters considered – not being allowed to go to the pit to earn money', remarked a piece on 'Births in Colliers' Families' published in a Scottish newspaper in 1855, that miners were reported to prefer that their female infants were stillborn.⁷⁴ In John Saunders' fictional tale *Israel Mort, Overman* (1876), young David Mort, too weak to follow his father into the pit, found himself erased from view within the home. His father,

'on finding him unfit for pit work, apparently lost all recollection of his very existence; scarcely seeming to see him when he crossed his path or when he sat opposite him at meal-times'. Yet potentially there were opportunities for the 'weak' child too. David Mort was able to get a better education than his peers who were absorbed into mine work and dreamed of becoming a schoolmaster, until finally family circumstances meant that even he was sent to work underground, his childhood ambitions crushed.⁷⁵

Injury and illness, then, had the potential to disrupt established relations and dynamics in mining families in quite profound ways. As Julie Marie Strange has demonstrated, masculine authority within the family depended on the 'fulfilment of provider obligations' and when 'provision faltered, the power dynamics of domestic life changed'.⁷⁶ In his autobiography, former Northumberland miner Thomas Burt recalled how he became 'the responsible head of the house' following the 'breakdown of [his] father's health' and withdrawal from mining in the 1850s.⁷⁷ When sons stepped in to take their incapacitated fathers' place as the main breadwinners in their families they sometimes usurped the status of household head too. Such an occurrence represented a significant realignment of power relations within a family, at least symbolically.

Coal workers who found their position in their households under threat as a result of impairment had to adjust to their new circumstances. In extreme cases, this might lead to violence. Writing in the 1840s of his experiences as a doctor in Tranent, Scotland, S. Scott Alison recalled the time he 'attended a young married collier under disease produced by debauchery'. Not 'very able to work', the man in question, Alison reckoned, did not do so 'for a year or two'. During that time, the collier 'remained at home' and was supported financially by his wife who apparently had a job at a nearby colliery. Instead of treating his wife with gratitude and affection for all her efforts on his behalf, however, Alison reported that the man was known to have 'grossly assaulted' her on at least one occasion after she returned home from 'a day's hard toil'.⁷⁸ Whether or not this abusive miner was ever punished for his domestic violence is not known. Other impaired mineworkers were brought before judges for physically attacking their spouses. In February 1861, for example, the *Durham County Advertiser* reported that Edward Rymer had recently appeared in court 'charged with assaulting his wife' and was '[b]ound over to keep the peace for three months'.⁷⁹ Humphries has found that working-class men in the nineteenth century 'who were unsuccessful in the world of work were inclined to brutality at home'.⁸⁰ Like the hard-drinking, fighting miners with impairments referred to previously, then, men who felt their manliness and position within their families called into question

by their reduced or complete inability to work may similarly have resorted to violence as a way of reasserting their masculinity and dominance at home.

Nevertheless, we should not assume that impairment always led to a loss of status that demanded such drastic and desperate action. Neither did it necessarily change the gendered organisation of mining households in any fundamental way. As we have seen, impairment did not automatically equate to inability to work and many miners continued working at collieries despite serious injury. Men who took lighter work or alternative roles in and around the collieries found a means not just for earning a living, but also for potentially regaining some of the provider role expected of fathers. Such work may have been considered menial or low status, but 'boys' work' might at least enable men to maintain some self-respect.⁸¹ Fund-raising 'gatherings' held in some communities to buy tools or goods to enable men incapacitated from mining to take up alternative work furthermore demonstrates the importance attached to maintaining impaired men's dignity through helping them to provide for their families.⁸² As attempts made under the Poor Law to force men who deserted their families to support them suggest, impaired husbands and fathers were expected to maintain the role of family provider as far as possible. In 1857, for example, the Wolstanton and Burslem Poor Law Union in Staffordshire advertised a reward for the apprehension of William Wagstaff, a collier 'blind with one eye' with burn marks on his hands and face, who had absconded from his family leaving it in financial trouble.⁸³

Even when impaired miners did lose their ability to provide for their households, impairment never totally erased the gendered expectations that shaped men and women's roles within families – not even in the most exceptional circumstances. Although critics often accused women workers in early nineteenth-century Scottish collieries of neglecting their domestic responsibilities, evidence from the 1842 Children's Employment Commission report suggests otherwise.⁸⁴ For example, although Margaret Boxter (or Baxter) seemed to transgress gender roles by becoming one of the few women to work as a coal hewer (a job that epitomised 'masculine' skill and strength) after her husband could no longer work underground due to his trouble breathing, she was still expected to attend to the running of her home. According to her ten-year-old daughter, who also worked with her in the mines, Boxter went to the pit at four in morning, leaving 'at mid-day to do work at home, as father is bedridden'.⁸⁵ Although she subverted the gender ideology of the time by working as a hewer, then, Boxter was still unable (or unwilling) to overthrow it completely by relinquishing her duties as a housewife.⁸⁶ Disability might

challenge the gendered identities of family members in various ways, but gender ideologies were so entrenched and widespread that men and women were rarely able to escape the roles expected of them entirely.

It should also be remembered that, as important as work was, it was not the only way through which Britons 'performed' their masculine or feminine identities.⁸⁷ For working-class men, a capacity for (paid) labour may have been a measure of manhood, but so too was marriage and fatherhood and the head of household status that tended to flow from this. Although some might have resorted to violence, then, miners unable to work because of illness or injury had other options available to them than simple aggression to demonstrate their manliness. 'Fathering a child', as William Howard has observed, was particularly valorised as an indicator of manhood in mining communities, as it signalled '[s]exual experience' and 'vigour'.⁸⁸ Studies of sex and disability show compellingly that, despite popular stereotypes to the contrary, disabled people have sexual desires and often lead very active sex lives.⁸⁹ This is as true for the past as it is the present and is tangibly borne out by evidence relating to mining families. Ill or injured mineworkers continued to have children even if they had trouble working. While impairment could restrict mineworkers' ability to earn a living and fulfil the breadwinner ideal, it rarely deprived them of the ability or inclination to have sex. Although Margaret Boxter's husband had to give up mining because of respiratory problems, his shortness of breath seems to have been no hindrance to him impregnating her afterwards. According to Mary Boxter, his daughter, she was 'born two years after father ceased to work in the mines'.⁹⁰ Other mineworkers similarly fathered children after injury or the onset of chronic illness.⁹¹

Once they were married, most couples in mining communities seem to have stayed together in the face of impairment and many carried on doing one of the main things that couples were supposed to do: having and raising children together. Impairment could certainly change the power dynamics of mining families in profound ways, but it did not radically transform the basic form or function of miners' households. Neither did it inevitably lead to a loss of headship. If an incapacity for work may have forced some miners to relinquish their status as 'head' of their families to a son or other relative, this was not universally the case. No such fate appears to have befallen miner William Scott of Carlisle in the 1870s when he was struggling with the restrictive effects of respiratory disease. Although his entry on the 1871 census indicates he was unable to work, enumerators still described him as the head of his family.⁹² Census data, of course, as other historians have pointed out, reveal little about the real nature of the relationships that underpin everyday family life.⁹³ While census officials may have regarded Scott as the head of his family, this does

not mean he occupied the position in the fullest sense of the term's meaning. It is possible, indeed even probable, that Scott relied as heavily on his wife and children for support as they did on him. After all, the fact that he turned to the Poor Law suggests he struggled to fulfil the role of family breadwinner. It is also possible that he delegated some of the implied responsibilities of headship to others. Despite these caveats, however, Scott's classification as the 'head' of his household by officials still held great significance to his masculine identity and how others saw him. Given that nineteenth-century Britons regarded headship as a key sign of adult manhood, enumerators' recognition of Scott as family head represented a significant symbolic validation of his masculinity.⁹⁴

Without doubt, experiences of disability within mining families varied. They were affected by the degree of a person's incapacity, by gender roles and expectations, by the existence of others who could provide economic or emotional support and by the opportunities for returning to work outside the home (as examined in Chapter 1). They were also affected by a person's stage in the life cycle.⁹⁵ Those injured before they married might have had different experiences from older men who had wives and children to support. Given that marriage represented, above all else, the pooling of a couple's productive (and reproductive) resources, it is possible that injury, illness or disfigurement may have affected a person's ability to attract a spouse. Soon after his engagement to Sarah Bradshaw in the early 1850s, mineworker Richard Weaver broke his hand in an accident. A serious injury, staff at Manchester Infirmary feared for his life, but Weaver survived.⁹⁶ His prospects for marriage, however, hung in the balance. During his convalescence, his wife-to-be visited him one evening and they discussed their engagement. According to Weaver's recorded recollection of the incident: 'she told me that her friends in the factory had been trying to persuade her to give me up, on the ground that I should probably be a cripple for life'. Luckily for Weaver, Sarah Bradshaw ignored the advice of her friends, telling them 'I will marry him, even though I have work to keep him.' The couple were married in January 1853 and a few years later had their first child together. While the possibility that Weaver would be 'disabled for life' did not deter Sarah Bradshaw from becoming his wife, it did force her to reconsider her relationship with him and recognise that it might entail extra 'work' for her.⁹⁷ Moreover, the comments of her factory friends suggest that not all women in industrial communities were as willing as Bradshaw to accept suitors with impairments. Working-class women were aware that marriage was fundamentally an economic union and that husbands with restricted physical capacities might struggle to fulfil the breadwinner duties expected of them, thereby endangering family prosperity.

Women in mining areas were not immune from harsh judgements about

their bodies either. Like other working-class women, a miner's wife's health was '[c]rucial to her status within the household'.⁹⁸ When they chose a wife, men too looked for spouses with the physical attributes necessary to meet the gender expectations of the time. Wives were supposed to bear children and 'keep house'. Anything that was perceived to impinge on their abilities to fulfil these roles reduced their potential attractiveness to would-be husbands. Physical appearance was particularly important for some men in this regard. On being asked, '[w]hich on the whole make the best wives, pit women or others?' one Lancashire mineworker in the 1830s was reported as saying: 'I would as soon have one that has not been in the pit; many of them are crooked with going into the pit' – a judgement that reflected both their perceived lack of beauty and a potential inability to bear children.⁹⁹ Although functional assessments of bodily capacity could affect both men and women's marriage prospects, women were perhaps under greater pressure to conform to aesthetic standards as well.

While impairment could make finding a spouse more difficult, it was rarely an absolute barrier to marriage. Like Weaver, many other mineworkers also managed to marry *after* they were seriously injured or showed symptoms of chronic illness. In June 1847, William Smith, a 'collier by trade' in his early forties who had 'lost the use of his arms by an explosion in a coal-pit', died in Newbridge, Wales. Speaking at the inquest into her husband's death, Barbara Smith told the coroner that she had been William's wife for 'about twelve years' and that 'he had met with the accident *before* I married him'.¹⁰⁰ Although worthy of comment during the inquiry into his death, and clearly a physically restrictive feature of his life, William's industrial injury did not stop Barbara becoming his wife. As his court appearance for domestic violence in the 1860s indicates, Edward Rymer also managed to marry despite his impairments.¹⁰¹ Indeed, Rymer's circumstances speak to a wider issue in coalfield society concerning the influence of impairment on a person's chances of marriage. With a 'damaged' right eye and 'scorched and frizzled' right side that left him 'permanently injured' following a fire at his home when he was around three years-old, Rymer had been impaired since early childhood.¹⁰² This was something he shared in common with other mineworkers. Although few seem to have been so badly injured as early in life as Rymer was, the rigours of mining coupled with the young age at which miners tended to enter the industry meant many acquired impairments as children. Few mineworkers reached adulthood completely unscathed physically by their time in the mines. Impairment and chronic illness were so ubiquitous in mining communities that the prospect of a woman finding a husband free of permanent injury or ill health was slim indeed. Impairment in this context, then, was fairly unremarkable and women

may have chosen to marry injured mineworkers because uninjured suitors were simply unavailable. However, given the positive associations of scarring and other bodily injuries as marks of bravery or experience in coalfield society, it is also possible that less incapacitating 'war wounds' may have added to a man's physical attractiveness.¹⁰³

Religious life

While interpersonal relationships were tested and sometimes re-drawn by disability, the family was the bedrock of material and emotional support for sick, injured and impaired mineworkers. However, religious faith and fortitude and support from the spiritual community of believers were also important resources for some impaired coalminers. The final section of this chapter explores the place of religion in the lives of disabled mineworkers and their families.

A detailed study of the religious composition of mining communities goes beyond the scope of this study. However, historians have drawn attention to the strength and appeal of evangelical nonconformity, the various forms of Methodism in particular, in English and Welsh coalfields. At the vanguard of the evangelical revival sweeping across industrialising Britain in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Methodism fulfilled many needs in mining communities that were subject to economic upheavals, accidents and loss of life. As Colls, Moore and others have pointed out, Methodism helped explain suffering and death and offered solace to survivors, provided flexible educational opportunities for the young in communities that placed a premium on boys entering work in the mines from an early age, gave importance to lives otherwise worn down by repetitive and laborious work through involvement in class meetings, revivals and individual conversions, and provided roles for women beyond the walls of the domestic setting.¹⁰⁴ The appeal and durability of Methodism in the English and Welsh coalfields owes much to this broader social and community role, which was inextricably linked with its religious function.¹⁰⁵ Remembering his nineteenth-century ancestors, the Yorkshire miner Jim Bullock recalled that '[f]aith sustained them in sickness and poverty when everything seemed hopeless. The fact that they could tell God their troubles, and firmly believed that God did hear them and did something about it made it possible for them to bear life's hardships with patience and courage.' The importance of the chapel, he concluded, 'can never be over-valued'.¹⁰⁶

As with other aspects of community life in the coalfields, however, we should be cautious about assuming homogeneity of experience. While the chapels of Methodists and other nonconformist sects provided 'people the

opportunity to gain confidence in themselves', not everyone chose to avail themselves of these opportunities.¹⁰⁷ The chapel vied with other forms of leisure activity in pit villages.¹⁰⁸ The converted frequently saw themselves as engaged in a spiritual battle with non-believers who mocked or scoffed at their piety and while larger settlements might boast a rich variety of chapels and nonconformist sects, they were also home to many who lacked the time or inclination to attend divine service.¹⁰⁹ An account of the Hartley Colliery disaster of 1862 published in *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, for example, noted that although Methodism had 'done much to improve the habits and habitations of northern pitmen' there were few places where it had had *less* effect than in the community affected by the catastrophe, where fewer than one in ten employees of the pit were church members.¹¹⁰ In some parts of the Scottish coalfield, sectarianism produced significant divides between mining households, leading as we saw in the previous chapter, to separate friendly societies to address the welfare needs of Protestants and Catholics.

While the role of religion in working-class politics during this period has been the subject of much historical debate, the place of religion in the lives of disabled workers and their families has received very little attention.¹¹¹ Religious leaders of all denominations played an active role in the aftermath of serious accidents. The visits of ecclesiastical worthies to pit communities following disasters in north-east England were frequently noted in the press.¹¹² After the Hartley disaster of 1862 it was reported that '[t]he Bishop of Durham, and other Christian pastors, with devout men and "ministering women" have visited the fatherless and widows in their affliction.'¹¹³ Despite the strength of nonconformity in the north-east coalfield, the Anglican clergy conducted funerals, ministered to the bereaved and administered disaster relief funds.¹¹⁴ Methodists too used gatherings to raise funds for widows and orphans. Following the explosion of fire damp at Jarrow Colliery in January 1826, a special sermon was given at the Methodist chapel in New Brunswick Place, Newcastle, 'in aid of the fund for the relief of the eleven widows, forty-six children, and several other dependant relations, of the unfortunate persons who lost their lives on the melancholy occasion'.¹¹⁵ Local preachers provided spiritual comfort and leadership in local communities after accidents of all kinds.¹¹⁶ In *Black Diamonds*, an anonymous account of missionary work in the south Staffordshire coalfield published in 1861, the author described spending a solid three or four weeks in 'domiciliary visitation' to the sick and injured of the thirty pits in the area.¹¹⁷ For the faithful, belief in the power of prayer was just as important as – if not more than – medicine in recovery from accidents. The miner turned Methodist preacher, William Crister, for example, spent much time attending and praying for Mr Reay, his class leader, after he had

'met with a severe accident in the pit, by a fall of stone from the roof', from which his 'medical attendants' feared there was little hope of recovery. 'Till about the eighth or tenth day' after the accident, 'all were in despair except Crister' whose 'faith and hope' led him to the firm (and ultimately accurate) belief that Reay would survive.¹¹⁸

Placing particular emphasis on the importance of conversion, the authority of the Bible in providing lessons for faith and practice, and activism both in social causes and spreading the gospel, evangelical theology shaped thinking about accidents and disability in the religious culture of many mining communities.¹¹⁹ The tomb-like darkness of the mine, its dangers and physical hardships, made the colliery a richly symbolic emblem of the toils and torments awaiting sinners in the 'future residence of bad men'.¹²⁰ Yet mining accidents also provided opportunities for examining other key aspects of religious faith, including fortitude, patience, assurance, providential deliverance and an opportunity to reflect on God's motives in taking or sparing life. Surviving a mining accident, for example, was sometimes cast as a seismic event in a collier's life that triggered conversion or intensification of religiosity.¹²¹ These themes found expression in cheap religious tracts set in and around coalmining districts in the autobiographies of the converted and in a growing nonconformist newspaper and periodical press that was read widely in the coalfields.¹²² The *Morning Chronicle's* correspondent noted in 1849 that although the 'stock of books' was 'generally very small' in Durham pitmen's cottages, many had a 'large folio Bible' and a 'few Methodist tracts'.¹²³ Ironworkers and colliers residing in Merthyr's Cyfarthfa Row around the same time owned copies of exemplary conversion texts such as John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.¹²⁴ Conversion narratives, 'a sort of Pilgrim's Progress kind of book' and 'books of a religious kind' in general, were also the most widely read texts among those employees of the Marquis of Londonderry's Durham collieries who attended the reading rooms provided in their villages, according to colliery supervisor G. Elliott in 1854.¹²⁵ Periodicals such as the *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* had a national circulation of 24,000 by the 1840s and contained many exemplary biographies of converted colliers.¹²⁶ The *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, speaking to the strongest branch of Methodism among the Durham miners, documented missionary work in the coalfields and printed moral tales.¹²⁷ Taken together, these publications offer insights into the relationship between accidents, disability and religious faith.

Given the importance of chronic illness and disablement in coalmining, religious texts frequently emphasised the importance of patience and fortitude in the face of life-changing conditions. Sufferings of the body always had spiritual significance.¹²⁸ *The Lancashire Collier Girl*, a cheap tract published

in 1795, told the story of Mary, a young drawer in a colliery who witnessed the death of her father in an underground accident. Forced into the role of breadwinner after her grief-stricken mother 'became disordered in her senses', she continued to labour in the pit until she herself succumbed to a disabling illness that sapped her strength. In this narrative, a person's misfortunes and bodily afflictions were cast as a 'means of encreasing [*sic*] their trust in God'. Mary's faith was rewarded with being offered a place in domestic service by a local gentleman, leading the author to conclude that her tale showed that people should experience their 'afflictions' with forbearance.¹²⁹ The theme was reiterated in spiritual autobiographies and the evangelical press. An obituary of Thomas Cowey of Great Lumley, who converted to Methodism aged 16 after hearing Wesleyan ministers preaching at Shiney Row near Sunderland, related that he faced the many 'infirmities' occasioned by his work in the collieries with 'no murmuring' and was often heard to declare that '[a]fflictions are often God's choicest blessings'.¹³⁰ Durham miner George Parkinson related in his autobiography the story of 'Old Joe', one of his workmates who was also a Methodist lay preacher, who struggled to support his family during a nineteen-week lay off with a broken leg. With his wife, Sallie, unable to sleep for worry about their lack of money, Joe prayed for help and the next day discovered that a mysterious benefactor had paid for two weeks' groceries for the family. Bodily afflictions were a source of spiritual as well as material trial and ultimately this providential tale provided assurance of God's salvation for the converted.¹³¹

One of the most spiritually and emotionally testing experiences for mine-workers and others was amputation. Dismemberment was, as *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* described it in 1836, a special 'trial' of 'faith and fortitude', which required considerable 'moral courage' on the part of patients.¹³² For some, religious faith provided a source of strength with which to challenge the advice of surgeons to have damaged limbs removed. Following the accident in which his hand was crushed, Richard Weaver experienced 'pain' and 'fear of being unable now to earn his living', but 'was made to feel that it was all for the best' after 'God spoke to his heart' to say 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' Armed with this faith, Weaver refused the advice of the surgeon at Manchester Infirmary to have his hand removed in spite of medical opinion that the inflammation of his injury would kill him. 'If I die', Weaver reportedly told the surgeon, 'heaven will be my home; I don't fear death,' adding that 'Christ has taken away the fear of death, and I shan't let you take my hand off.' Weaver's faith was rewarded and over time 'in answer to prayer the inflammation subsided and it began to heal', although it remained 'permanently and seriously injured'.¹³³ Weaver's narrative simultaneously emphasised the frailty

of the flesh and the power of faith in the hour of adversity. His accident and its aftermath was an important rite of passage both spiritually and physically. The incident took place not long after Weaver's conversion to Methodism and his joining the Wesleyan Society at Openshaw, and this was a crucial opportunity to test his faith and find assurance in God's protection. Although he was left with a lasting bodily impairment, he emerged from hospital spiritually empowered and ready to preach the gospel himself.¹³⁴

The author of *Black Diamonds* (1861) similarly described amputation as a moment of spiritual significance in the case of 'George', an injured Staffordshire miner, who was 'regular in attending the evening school' that the author taught. George's thigh was 'fearfully crushed' after a horse-drawn skip was overturned onto it and he was sent to a 'neighbouring hospital'. The author described how he visited the hospital, following a request by George and his mother, and found that '[a]lthough his sufferings were of the most excruciating character, he was very pleased to see me, and was anxious to hear me speak about the Saviour, and to read the Scriptures, and pray with him,' such as to give the author hope that 'the work of grace had been commenced'. It fell to the author as a minister to convey to George the difficult advice of the house surgeon that his chances of survival would be greater if he had his severely infected leg removed. In spite of assurances that the use of chloroform would mitigate the pain of the operation, George was reluctant to undergo dismemberment, saying that without his leg 'I shall not be able to get my living.' Not wishing to live in a permanently disabled state, he declared that he 'should like to go to my Jesus at once'. Like Weaver, he 'appeared so happy in the assurance he had of pardon through the blood of Jesus, that he was not quite willing to have the dead limb amputated'. Nevertheless, 'after a little persuasion', George's wish to survive to see his chapel once more finally convinced him to have his limb removed. Three weeks after the operation, in spite of receiving the 'best attention' in hospital, he died.¹³⁵

For those like George who dreaded the prospect of disability for its threat to a man's ability to earn a living and its risk of dependency on others, religious faith could provide a source of strength and self-determination. Those who were unable to work were represented as facing many temptations and needed inner strength to avoid falling into despondency. If the heavy labours of the mineworker demonstrated the physical strength and bravery of the 'outer' man, the spiritual struggles of the incapacitated helped assert men's 'inner' qualities. Although physical infirmities sapped the strength of Durham miner Thomas Cowey, his friends 'rejoiced to see the proofs of increasing strength in the inner man' as he bore with his 'afflictions' stoically and through faith achieved 'inward happiness'.¹³⁶ An obituary of Joseph Wailles, a Cumberland

lead miner, published in the *Primitive Methodist Magazine* in 1843 described how he, like many underground workers, had been confined to his room by a 'pulmonary ailment which settled in a consumption'. During this confinement he was 'powerfully assailed with Satan' and was tempted with the idea that his Christian religion was 'delusive', but thanks to the power of prayer and the support of his fellow converts, he 'gained a complete conquest' over his adversary. These struggles with Satan in the sickroom provided edifying examples of how disease, incapacity and confinement might ultimately result in spiritual triumph, even if the physical body was defeated and beyond repair.¹³⁷

One of the hardest consequences of physical incapacity for patients to bear was that in an evangelical religious culture that valued sharing religious experience through Bible reading, class meetings, revivalist gatherings and chapel membership, it potentially robbed converts of the company of the faithful.¹³⁸ During a lengthy 'affliction' with 'severe and prostrating' symptoms that confined him to his bed, William Lee of Netherton Colliery, near Morpeth, was 'deprived ... of the blessings of public worship, and deeply felt the loss of the communion of saints, and of the ministry of the Word of Life'.¹³⁹ However, the community activism that characterised evangelical nonconformity might provide some opportunities for people whose impairments were less restrictive, as several exemplary cases reported in the Methodist press revealed. The *Methodist Magazine* in 1805 related the life of Thomas Handley of Coalbrookdale in Shropshire who, after losing one of his legs, was 'stirred up to seek the Lord in earnest' and visited local villages 'to warn the thoughtless inhabitants to flee the wrath to come'.¹⁴⁰ As we saw earlier, Richard Weaver's ministry began after the accident that left his hand permanently incapacitated.

The community activism of women with disabilities was also celebrated in the Methodist press. An account of Margaret Crozier of Pelton Fell, published in 1875, showed how faith and good works gave meaning to the life of a disabled wife of a Durham pitman. Margaret was 'for over thirty years a stranger to perfect bodily health' and had sustained a head injury after falling from a second storey window as a girl, 'which was the cause of intense suffering, physical and mental all through her after life'. She was widowed at age twenty-nine after her husband (a lay preacher and class leader) died in an explosion at Pelton Colliery. Left with three dependent children and suffering from a 'frail physical constitution', she embarked on a life of exemplary piety, both as a mother and as a 'most neighbourly woman', who undertook many 'weary watchings by the sick and dying'. Though this readiness to provide solace to the sick, injured and bereaved of her mining village 'involved great sacrifice and inconvenience', all was 'done and borne with a Christian cheerfulness' that earned her the respect of her community.¹⁴¹

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that injury, impairment and chronic illness had significant consequences for miners' lives beyond the workplace. They might affect mineworkers' emotional lives, family relationships and standing in the social and spiritual life of coalfield communities. The effects of disablement were gendered. Women as well as men experienced impairment in Britain's coalfield communities both through paid work (particularly before females were banned from underground labour in 1842) and through injury and ill health occasioned by childbirth and the arduous unpaid work of washing, cleaning and carrying water that was essential to servicing the industry. However, such impairments were far less publicly visible than those of male breadwinners. In a strongly masculine culture that valorised strength and the ability to provide, the impaired miner faced an uncertain future and potentially had to negotiate a loss of status in the community, at home as well as at work. However, emasculation was not inevitable and there were ways in which impaired miners might seek to regain control and shape meaningful lives that rebuilt their masculine identity, both in their own eyes and the eyes of others.

These strategies varied. The older stereotype of the miner as tough, hard-drinking and prone to violence, though losing some of its force as the period progressed, provided a means by which some impaired colliers sought to assert themselves, using fighting as a means of 'proving' their strength in the face of serious injury. Such forms of expression stood in contrast with Victorian ideals of temperance and respectability that emphasised self-control and restraint. However, the recourse to violence on the part of some impaired miners, both on the streets and in the home, shows its continued importance as a ready means of asserting potency. Others sought roles in their communities that earned respect through setting an example to others rather than through fear. The spread of evangelical nonconformity, with its emphasis on communal solidarity of the converted and social activism, offered new roles for impaired men and women in coal communities. For some miners facing a re-evaluation of their lives and prospects in the face of serious injury or disease, personal faith and involvement in the religious lives of their community provided means of coping with change and new forms of empowerment. While many of the examples of religious strength that survive in autobiographies or obituaries of the faithful printed in the Methodist press were often idealised and exemplary in function, they nonetheless highlight the significance of evangelical religion as a tool for adapting to impairment in industrialising Britain.

It was within the family that the effects of impairment or chronic illness were felt most keenly. The ideals of female domesticity and male breadwin-

ning were tested by impairment, which disrupted and re-drew conventional relationships within the home. However, while men's patriarchal authority was challenged by impairment, it often remained resilient in the face of physical adversity. In some cases, men were able (and were expected) to continue to make some provision for their families, even though the balance of economic power might shift towards their children. The continued retaining of the 'headship' role within families by impaired men – symbolically at least – helped them to maintain status within their communities and to mitigate the demeaning prospect of dependency.¹⁴² And while unmarried men might see their potential worth as suitors diminish after impairment, their marriage prospects were rarely damaged irreparably.

Mining communities were built on a cultural ideal of solidarity in the face of shared exposure to danger. Disabled people were supported, but they might also face distrust – especially strangers or those whose impairments drew suspicion. Differing approaches to disability in coalfield communities were exposed in times of political tension and unrest. The final chapter of this book turns its attention to the place of disability in the industrial politics of coalmining in nineteenth-century Britain.

Notes

- 1 Jelinger C. Symons, *Tactics for the Times: As Regards the Condition and Treatment of the Dangerous Classes* (London: John Olliver, 1849), 32–3.
- 2 P. E. Razzell and R. W. Wainwright (eds), *The Victorian Working Class: Selections from Letters to the Morning Chronicle* (London: Frank Cass, 1973), 230.
- 3 Symons, *Tactics*, 33–4.
- 4 K. S. Inglis, *Churches and the Working Class in Victorian England* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), 10, cited in Colin P. Griffin, 'Methodism in the Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield in the Nineteenth Century', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 39 (1973–4), 64.
- 5 R. C. Morgan, *The Life of Richard Weaver, the Converted Collier* (London: Morgan and Chase, 1861), 98–9.
- 6 John Benson, 'The Thrift of English Coal-Miners, 1860–95', *Economic History Review*, 31:3 (1978), 410–18.
- 7 'The Collier at Home', *Household Words*, 15:366, 28 March 1857, 291.
- 8 Ibid., 290, 291.
- 9 Jules Ginswick (ed.), *Labour and the Poor in England and Wales 1849–1851: the Letters to the Morning Chronicle from Correspondents in the Manufacturing and Mining Districts, the towns of Liverpool and Birmingham, and the Rural Districts*, vol. 3: *South Wales–North Wales* (London: Frank Cass, 1983), 49.
- 10 For example, John Benson *British Coalminers in the Nineteenth Century: A Social History* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1980); Robert Colls, *Pitmen of*

the Northern Coalfield: Work, Culture, and Protest, 1790–1850 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987); Robert Colls, *The Collier's Rant: Song and Culture in the Industrial Village* (London: Croom Helm, 1977); R. I. Moore, *Pit-Men, Preachers and Politics: the Effects of Methodism in a Durham Mining Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974); David Gilbert, *Class, Community and Collective Action: Social Change in Two British Coalfields, 1850–1926* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Alan Metcalfe, *Leisure and Recreation in a Victorian Mining Community: the Social Economy of Leisure in North-East England, 1820–1914* (London: Routledge, 2006); Jaclyn J. Gier and Laurie Mercier, *Mining Women: Gender in the Development of a Global Industry* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

- 11 Moore, *Pit-Men*, 16; Benson, *British Coalminers*, 82–4.
- 12 Metcalfe, *Leisure*, 16.
- 13 Paul O'Leary, *Immigration and Integration: The Irish in Wales 1798–1922* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 2000), 44–5; Alan B. Campbell, *The Lanarkshire Miners: a Social History of their Trade Unions, 1775–1874* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1979).
- 14 Metcalfe, *Leisure*, 21–3; David Gilbert, 'Imagined Communities and Mining Communities', *Labour History Review*, 60:2 (1995), 47–55.
- 15 [Edward Chicken], *The Comical History of the Collier's Wedding in Fyfe. Wrote by a Kirkaldy Gentleman* (Edinburgh, 1779), 3.
- 16 For the fullest account of changes in popular cultural images of coalminers, see Colls, *Collier's Rant*.
- 17 Thomas Wilson, *The Pitman's Pay and other Poems* (Gateshead: William Douglas, 1842), vii–viii.
- 18 'The Miners Life', *The Motherwell Times*, 4 April 1885.
- 19 Bruce Haley, *The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1978); Jennifer Esmail and Christopher Keep, 'Victorian Disability: Introduction', *Victorian Review*, 35:2 (2009), 45–51.
- 20 *British Miner and General Newsman: A Publication Devoted to the Interests of the Working Miners of the United Kingdom*, 4, 4 October 1862, 5.
- 21 *Ibid.*; Colls, *Pitmen*, 122–45.
- 22 'Assaulting the Police', *The Merthyr Telegraph*, 23 August 1862.
- 23 *The Merthyr Telegraph*, 28 November 1863; *ibid.*, 25 April 1873. 'Mockyn' seems to be a version of *mochyn*, Welsh for pig, whereas 'croes-pen' could translate as 'cross head', suggesting someone prone to anger. We are grateful to Carys Turner for advice on translation.
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- 25 *Glasgow Herald*, 16 February 1875.
- 26 Croll, *Civilizing the Urban*; W. R. Lambert, *Drink and Sobriety in Victorian Wales, c. 1820–1895* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1983); Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: the Temperance Question in England, 1815–1827* (London:

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- 27 Shani D'Cruze, *Crimes of Outrage: Sex, Violence and Victorian Working Women* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1998), 115.
 - 28 For example, Lenore Manderson and Susan Peake, 'Men in Motion: Disability and the Performance of Masculinity', in C. Sandahl and P. Auslander (eds), *Bodies in Commotion: Disability and Performance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 230–42.
 - 29 D'Cruze, *Crimes of Outrage*, 140.
 - 30 'A Dangerous Leg', *The Merthyr Telegraph*, 29 September 1866. Our emphasis.
 - 31 James Gregory, 'Eccentric Lives: Character, Characters and Curiosities in Britain c. 1760–1900', in Waltraud Ernst (ed.), *Histories of the Normal and the Abnormal: Social and Cultural Histories of Norms and Normativity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 73–100. See also Iain Hutchison, *A History of Disability in Nineteenth-Century Scotland* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2007), 61.
 - 32 'The Bard of Pen-Heol-Gerrig', *The Merthyr Telegraph*, 29 May 1858.
 - 33 James Dalglish, 'Explosion of Gas in a Coal-Mine', *Methodist Magazine*, 5 (April 1826), 242.
 - 34 Such scenes were a popular theme for visual representation in the illustrated press. For example, see 'Funeral of the Colliers Killed by the Late Explosion at Tredegar', *Illustrated London News*, 1 July 1865; 'Dinas Colliery, Rhondda Valley, South Wales, the Scene of the Late disaster', *Illustrated London News*, 23 January 1879.
 - 35 Jim Bullock, *Bowers Row: Recollections of a Mining Village* (Wakefield: E. P. Publishing, 1976), 220.
 - 36 'Hunting a Packman', *The Aberdare Times*, 6 May 1865.
 - 37 Keith Strange, *Merthyr Tydfil Iron Metropolis: Life in a Welsh Industrial Town* (Stroud: Tempus, 2005), 67.
 - 38 David M. Turner, "'Fraudulent" Disability in Historical Perspective', *History and Policy* (14 February 2012), <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/policy-papers/papers/fraudulent-disability-in-historical-perspective>, accessed 27 June 2016.
 - 39 Ginswick (ed.), *Labour and the Poor ...* vol. 3, 67.
 - 40 O'Leary, *Immigration and Integration*, 186–212.
 - 41 John Wilson, *Autobiography of Ald. John Wilson, J.P., M.P. ... Reprinted from 'The Durham Chronicle'* (Durham: Durham Chronicle, 1909), 19.
 - 42 *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 17 May 1862. For a similar case see 'A Begging Imposter', *The Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian*, 14 May 1870.
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 - 44 Chris Fisher and Pat Spaven, 'Edward Rymer and "The Moral Workman" – The Dilemma of the Radical Miner Under "MacDonaldism"', in Royden Harrison (ed.), *Independent Collier: the Coal Miner as Archetypal Proletarian Reconsidered* (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1978), 232–71.

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- 52 University of Glasgow Mitchell Library, Glasgow City Archives, CO1 27 91 Parish of Carluke, Record of Application for Relief, Years 1866–77.
- 53 Carluke, Lanarkshire, 1871 Scotland Census; University of Glasgow Mitchell Library, Glasgow City Archives, CO1 27 91 Parish of Carluke, Record of Application for Relief, Years 1866–77.
- 54 'Letter to Her Majesty the Queen on the Relief of the Sufferers by the Late Gethin Explosion', *Merthyr Telegraph*, 20 January 1866.
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- 57 Cf. PP 1842 (008), *Sanitary Enquiry – Scotland, Reports on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Scotland, in Consequence of an Inquiry Directed to be Made by the Poor Law Commissioners*, 98; John R. Gillis, *For Better, for Worse: British Marriages, 1600 to the Present* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 200–1.
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- 59 Michael R. Haines, 'Fertility, Nuptiality, and Occupation: a Study of Coal Mining Populations and Regions in England and Wales in the Mid-Nineteenth Century', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 8 (1977), 267; cf. Mary Jo Maynes, 'Fertility and Occupation: Population Patterns in Industrialization by Michael Haines' (review), *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 11 (1981), 712–14; Simon Szreter, *Fertility, Class and Gender in Britain, 1860–1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 526–7.
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- 61 PP 1842 (381), 451.

- 62 Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour*, 254.
- 63 Razzell and Wainwright (eds), *Victorian Working Class*, 226; M. J. Daunton, 'Miners' Houses: South Wales and the Great Northern Coalfield, 1880–1914', *International Review of Social History*, 25:2 (1980), 153.
- 64 'Letter to Her Majesty the Queen on the Relief of the Sufferers by the Late Gethin Explosion', *Merthyr Telegraph*, 20 January 1866.
- 65 Ginswick (ed.), *Labour and the Poor ...* vol. 3, 54; Metcalfe, *Leisure*, 18.
- 66 Andrew Walker, "'Pleasurable Homes'? Victorian Model Miners' Wives and the Family Wage in a South Yorkshire Colliery District', *Women's History Review* 6 (1997), 327.
- 67 Razzell and Wainwright (eds), *Victorian Working Class*, 252.
- 68 Leifchild, *Our Coal*, 197–198. For earlier comments of this nature that blamed working in mines for women's lack of time for maternal duties, see Robert Bald, *A General View of the Coal Trade of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Waugh and Innes, 1812), 138.
- 69 Howard, 'Miner's Autobiographies', 170–1.
- 70 Dot Jones, 'Counting the Cost of Coal: Women's Lives in the Rhondda, 1881–1911' in Angela V. John (ed.), *Our Mothers' Land: Chapters in Welsh Women's History, 1830–1939* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1991), 124–6. See also Colls, *Pitmen*, 257–8.
- 71 *The Cambrian*, 13 April 1839; *The Glamorgan, Monmouth and Brecon Gazette and Merthyr Guardian*, 6 April 1839.
- 72 *Glasgow Herald*, 31 October 1855.
- 73 Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour*, 43, 237, 368–70.
- 74 'Births in Colliers' Families', *Paisley Herald and Renfrewshire Advertiser*, 22 December 1855.
- 75 John Saunders, *Israel Mort, Overman* (London: Henry S. King, 1876), 18, 182. See also Alexandra Jones, 'Disability in Coalfields Literature c. 1880–1948: A Comparative Study' (unpublished PhD thesis, Swansea University, 2016), 49–50.
- 76 Julie Marie Strange, *Fatherhood and the British Working Class, 1865–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 51.
- 77 Burt, *Autobiography*, 134–5.
- 78 PP 1842 (008), 99.
- 79 *Durham County Advertiser*, 8 February 1861.
- 80 Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour*, 135.
- 81 Strange, *Fatherhood*, 54.
- 82 Benson, 'Thrift of English Coalminers', 412.
- 83 *The Poor Law Unions' Gazette*, 14 November 1857.
- 84 Robert Bald, *A General View of the Coal Trade of Scotland, Chiefly that of the River Forth and Mid-Lothian* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Waugh and Innes, 1812), 138.
- 85 PP 1842 (381), 475.
- 86 As Bourke has pointed out, working-class women were often reluctant to enter paid employment because they realised it would significantly increase their

workload. [Joanna Bourke, 'Housewifery in Working-Class England 1860–1914', *Past & Present*, 143 (1994), 173]. Given this, Boxter's example also suggests that disability could threaten the health of other family members, particularly women. In other words, by disturbing the gendered organisation of mining households, but not destroying it, disability may have increased pressure on women like Boxter to work even more than other working-class women did, thereby further undermining their health in the ways Dot Jones has argued.

- 87 For more on disability and the 'performance' of gendered identities, see Manderson and Peake, 'Men in Motion'.
- 88 Howard, 'Miner's Autobiographies', 173; Colls, *Collier's Rant*, 119.
- 89 For a sense of the breadth and scope of this work, see Robert McRuer and Anna Mollow (eds), *Sex and Disability* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).
- 90 PP 1842 (381), 475.
- 91 For example, Rymer, *Martyrdom of the Mine*, 16.
- 92 Carluke, Lanarkshire, 1871 Scotland Census.
- 93 Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour*, 53.
- 94 Ava Baron, 'Masculinity, the Embodied Male Worker, and the Historian's Gaze', *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 69 (2006), 151. On 'headship' and disabled men's status see Daniel Blackie, 'Disability, Dependency, and the Family in the Early United States' in Susan Burch and Michael Rembis (eds), *Disability Histories* (Urbana IL: University of Illinois Press, 2014), 17–34.
- 95 For an in-depth consideration of the many variables affecting the experiences of disability in Welsh mining families during a later period, see: Ben Curtis and Steven Thompson, 'Disability and the Family in South Wales Coalfield Society, c. 1920–1939', *Family & Community History* 20:1 (2017), 25–44.
- 96 Weaver's accident and its consequences for his spiritual development are discussed further below.
- 97 Richard Weaver, *Richard Weaver's Life Story: the English Evangelist*, ed. James Patterson (Kilmarnock: J. Ritchie, 1897), 61.
- 98 Bourke, 'Housewifery', 196.
- 99 PP 1833 (450), *Factories Inquiry Commission. First Report ... with Minutes of Evidence, and Reports by the District Commissioners*, minutes of evidence taken by Mr Tufnell, D (Lancashire District), 79.
- 100 *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian*, 12 June 1847. Our emphasis.
- 101 *Durham County Advertiser*, 8 February 1861; Rymer, *Martyrdom of the Mine*, 7.
- 102 *Ibid.*, 2.
- 103 Edward Slavishack, *Bodies of Work: Civic Display and Labor in Industrial Pittsburgh* (Durham NC and London: Duke University Press, 2008), 162.
- 104 Colls, *Pitmen*, part 2 *passim*; Moore, *Pit-Men, Preachers and Politics*; Hempton, *Methodism and Politics*, 214.
- 105 Griffin, 'Methodism in the Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield', 71.
- 106 Bullock, *Bowers Row*, 146
- 107 *Ibid.*, 141; Griffin, *Liberty's Dawn*, 201.

- 108 Metcalfe, *Leisure*, ch. 2.
- 109 Strange, *Merthyr Tydfil Iron Metropolis*, 119.
- 110 Henry Hine, 'The New-Hartley Pit Catastrophe', *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, 8 (March 1862), 252.
- 111 E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), 350–400; Moore, *Pit-Men, Preachers and Politics*, 8–12; Hempton, *Methodism and Politics*, ch. 7.
- 112 Jonathan Fryer, 'Preachers at the Pit: Methodists and County Durham Mining Disasters, 1880–1909', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 57:2 (2009), 27.
- 113 Hine, 'New-Hartley Pit Catastrophe', 253.
- 114 Robert Lee, *The Church of England and the Durham Coalfield 1810–1926: Clergymen, Capitalists, and Colliers* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), 254–7.
- 115 Dalglish, 'Explosion of Gas', 241.
- 116 Fryer, 'Preachers at the Pit', 27.
- 117 H. H. B., *Black Diamonds; or, the Gospel in a Colliery District* (London: James Herbert et al., 1861), 74.
- 118 James Everett, *The Wall's End Miner, or, A Brief Memoir of the Life of William Crister including an account of the Catastrophe of June 18th, 1835* (London: Hamilton, Adams and Co, 1835), 78. For later examples see Jones, 'Disability in Coalfields Literature', 135.
- 119 David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1989), ch. 1.
- 120 John Crosby, 'Some account of the Experience of Nathaniel Harrison of Bingley-Moor, near Leeds', *Methodist Magazine* (December 1801), 526.
- 121 For example, 'Obituaries' (Ralph Hall of Gateshead Circuit d. 3 January 1822), *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* 1 (April 1822), 272; E. H., 'Recent Deaths' (William Lee, Netherton Colliery, d. 17 February 1871), *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, 18 (May 1872), 478; J. Stephenson, 'Extraordinary Delivery of Two Colliers', *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 3rd ser., vol. 1 (1843), 243. The theme remained popular in Methodist coalfield literature until after the First World War: Jones, 'Disability in Coalfields Literature', 126–32.
- 122 See, for example, J. A. James, *The Pious Collier, or the Life of Joseph Round* (London: Religious Tract Society n.d.); *Perils in the Mine. A Colliery Tale, In Verse* (London: Jarrold and Sons, n.d. [c. 1863]).
- 123 Razzell and Wainwright (eds), *Victorian Working Class*, 227.
- 124 Ginswick (ed.), *Labour and the Poor ...* vol. 3, 53.
- 125 PP 1854 (258), *Second Report from the Select Committee on Accidents in Coal Mines; with the Minutes of Evidence Taken Before Them*, 18.
- 126 Hempton, *Methodism and Politics*, 182.
- 127 Colls, *Colliers' Rant*, 84.
- 128 Stuart Hogarth, 'Joseph Townend and the Manchester Infirmary: a Plebeian Patient in the Industrial Revolution' in Anne Borsay and Peter Shapely (eds),

- Medicine, Charity and Mutual Aid: the Consumption of Health and Welfare in Britain c. 1550–1950* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 103.
- 129 Anon., *The Lancashire Collier Girl. A True Story* (London: J. Marshall, 1795), 7, 15, 21–2.
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- 132 Thomas Beaumont, 'Memoir of Miss Grace Elizabeth Wilkinson, of Bradford, Yorkshire', *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, 15 (February 1836), 97.
- 133 Morgan, *Life of Richard Weaver*, 25–6. See also Weaver, *Richard Weaver's Life Story*, 60–1.
- 134 Weaver's case is similar to that of Manchester Methodist Joseph Townend: Hogarth, 'Joseph Townend and the Manchester Infirmary', 103–5.
- 135 H. H. B., *Black Diamonds*, 193–6.
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- 137 'Obituary', *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, Third Series, 1 (1843), 359.
- 138 Griffin, *Liberty's Dawn*, 193.
- 139 E. H., 'Recent Deaths', 479.
- 140 Samuel Taylor, 'The Grace of God Manifested, in a short Account of the Conversion, Experience and Happy Death of Thomas Handley, and Several Others', *Methodist Magazine*, 28 (November 1805), 505–8.
- 141 Forster Crozier, 'Memoir of Mrs. Margaret Crozier, of Pelton Fell, Durham', *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, 21 (April 1875), 295–301.
- 142 Blackie, 'Disability, Dependency, and the Family', 25.