

LITERACY IN MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

DEVON AND SUFFOLK

by

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ABSTRACT

In mid-nineteenth century, Devon and Suffolk were both agricultural counties and yet the level of literacy differed considerably between them. This thesis undertakes an investigation of literacy both between and within the two counties and in the process attempts to resolve why Devon was so much more literate than Suffolk.

The concept of literacy is still shrouded by a degree of vagueness and it has only been possible to provide some tentative explanations for many of the problems involved. Nevertheless, this thesis has succeeded in locating some of the factors influencing the growth of basic literacy in the two counties. These factors were the extent of poverty, higher concentration of professional and commercial people, lower involvement in agricultural work, greater degree of urbanization and better communication facilities. Also, some of the common assumptions of literacy, e.g., schooling, demand for child labour and religious allegiance of the people, has been challenged, and the doors for the most fruitful areas to pursue revealed for future scholars.

Most of the work for this thesis has stemmed from primary source material. The Parliamentary Papers is a mine of information and has been extremely helpful for this study. Even then, it should be pointed out that the Parliamentary Papers, despite its usefulness, have certain limitations which restricts the scope of this thesis.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

The history of the growth and development of English education in general, and of nineteenth century education in particular, has received considerable attention from historians and a wide number of studies have been made covering various aspects of local educational history. Surprisingly, however, educationists have displayed little interest in studying literacy and few efforts have been made to analyse the factors that are involved in creating literacy. Most of the work of educational historians simply focus on school reforms, provision of schooling, method of instruction, curriculum, attendance problems and socializing functions. Among the few to look on schooling as simply one aspect of the general subject of literacy are W. P. Baker's study of Parish Registers and Illiteracy in East Yorkshire¹, W. B. Stephen's, "Anatomy of Illiteracy in Mid-Victorian Devon"², and the recent debate between Professor Sanderson, Professor Laquer and Professor West on "Literacy and the Industrial Revolution"³. The central issue of the debate was whether the industrial revolution initiated or reversed literacy and no attempts were made to actually identify the factors promoting literacy. Professor Sanderson, in his study, tended to move from figures of literacy to figures of schooling and without investigation assumed that the two are related. Whether such an assumption is always valid remains to be seen.

Literacy is an important differentiating characteristic

between individuals, groups and cultures⁴, and its study is of great importance. Literacy acts to create an awareness of inconsistency between past and present, and promotes a sense of change and of cultural lag⁵. It raises the political consciousness of people and makes them more adaptable to new circumstances and receptive to new ideas. Its scope, therefore, transcends that of mere formal schooling, and its effects on popular mentalities are probably more profound than institutionalized education. Perhaps, one reason for its neglect by historians has been the difficulties involved in its measurement, the imprecise nature of its meaning, and the problems in weighing the large number of variables influencing it.

Evidence about the literacy of Englishmen before the nineteenth century is fragmentary and limited. Even then, Lawrence Stone, using the Protestation Oath Returns of 1642 and marriage marks in parish registers, tentatively suggests that between 1642 and 1840 towns had a higher degree of male literacy as opposed to the rural areas and that literacy rate for males had gone up to two-thirds (66 per cent) in 1840 from about one-third (33 per cent) in 1642. The geographic distribution of literacy pattern in 1840 showed that, outside London the very highest rates of literacy are recorded by the far north (81 per cent) - Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmorland, Durham and the East and North Ridings of Yorkshire - and some of the very lowest by a group of counties very close to the north and east of London (51 per cent) - Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Huntingdonshire, Buckinghamshire, Essex, Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and

Norfolk, the first two having the lowest rates in all England and Wales⁶.

The level of literacy was also not evenly spread among different European countries. In the early nineteenth century England, despite its advanced stage of industrialization and urbanization, was less literate than Scotland, Sweden, Prussia, Switzerland, Holland and parts of the Austrian Empire. France, however, was still lagging slightly behind England. Professor Stone has calculated from Marriage Registers that in 1855, 68 per cent of males in France were literate as opposed to 70 per cent for England and Wales and 89 per cent for Scotland.

The Report of the Register General of Births, Deaths and Marriages for 1870 showed that there were significant variations in the levels of literacy from one part of England to another. In 1870, 18.2 per cent of brides and grooms in Devonshire were unable to sign their names on marriage as compared to 26.6 per cent for Suffolk. The question naturally arises as to why there should be such a wide difference in literacy figures between two counties where the majority of people live in a rural environment. The issue becomes more complex and interesting when one considers that throughout the nineteenth century both Devon and Suffolk remained predominantly agricultural counties and neither had developed highly industrialized centres. The aim of this thesis is to explore the reasons for the difference and, in the process, attempt to locate the factors influencing the growth of basic literacy in these two counties.

The computation of literacy is an extremely complicated

task, particularly since the very definition of literacy still tends to be elusive. A degree of vagueness surrounds the concept. Speculation about all the possible inadequacies of any definition of illiteracy in a historical perspective could go on forever⁷. Nevertheless, Professor Schofield has convincingly argued that for practical purposes there is one test of literacy which satisfies all the requirements of a universal, standard and direct measure, and that is the ability to sign one's name⁸. Thus, in this paper, literacy has been treated in this admittedly limited but straightforward way.

The only practical source for the measurement of literacy is provided by the marriage registration of the country. Since the passing of Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1753, signing of the marriage register became binding for the contracting parties. From 1839 onward the Register General of Births, Deaths and Marriages, began to include in his annual report literacy data for both men and women, derived from marriage registers⁹. Those who made a mark on the marriage register instead of signing their names represent the illiterates of the country. It should be pointed out here that the measurement of literacy based on marriage registers, though fairly accurate, still suffers from several drawbacks¹⁰: First, the registers refer only to the marrying population; second, the registers record the signatures of people as they get married, thereby providing figures heavily biased towards the age group between 20 and 29 years; third, children leaving school at the age of thirteen were liable to forget how to write by the time of

their marriage through want of use; fourth, it is often alleged that the registers do not adequately represent the ability of the brides and grooms to sign their names because the solemnity of the occasion was such that the more timid among them made marks when they would ordinarily have signed their names; and yet another common objection to the use of the marriage register evidence has been that brides in particular were likely to have made marks when they could well have signed out of a feeling of delicacy for their husband if they saw that he had been unable to sign his name. All these weaknesses should be borne in mind throughout our subsequent discussion of literacy.

Since literacy or the lack of it is a crucial factor in the general culture of a society or a group within it, any attempt to examine the causes of changes necessarily involves almost all aspects of that culture and its environment. Such an enormous task cannot be attempted here. In an attempt to find some controls I have therefore, selected two counties in the southern half of England where the cultural and environmental facts, while different, are not radically different. Then I have selected those factors which are most commonly pointed to as causes of change in rates of literacy or factors that have commonly been supposed to be most important or that occur most readily to common sense. Comparisons between Devon and Suffolk should then make it possible to say something about the relative importance of the factors selected.

Facilities for formal schooling are commonly assumed to be an essential part of any study of literacy. Indeed it is difficult to imagine that literacy would not have been affected by

changes in the provision of education, particularly after the formation of the Lancastrian and National societies early in the century, but it is nevertheless possible to doubt that in a particular locality schools might not have been the crucial factor. I have treated education therefore, simply as one of my variables and have kept an open mind about its relative weight.

Another common sense assumption often thought to be crucial is the relation between literacy and the demand for child labour. This, too, I have decided to treat separately as another variable to determine if, in fact, work and literacy were closely related. Also, there is a *prima facie* case that there are more illiterates in the countryside than in urban areas, in poor areas than in wealthy ones, amongst peasants or unskilled wage labourers than among craftsmen¹¹. I have therefore, used nature of employment, state of poverty, and degree of access to the world outside (railway facilities) as some of my other variables. I have also used religion as another variable, since it could be assumed that non-conformity majority areas might put a higher value on Bible reading.

I have calculated literacy figures for a period of 6 years from 1865 to 1870 and have not relied entirely on the figures for the one particular year of 1870. The decision to focus my work on the mid-nineteenth century has been influenced by three factors: First, statistical materials necessary for assessing literacy for the periods preceding the second half of the nineteenth century are limited¹², and there is, therefore, no way

for me to concentrate on an earlier period; second, the closing years of the 1850's and the entire 1860's marked the golden period of British agriculture and both Devon and Suffolk had their share of this prosperity. The period after 1870 however, was an era of acute depression for the agricultural counties but its effect on Devon and Suffolk was not uniform. Suffolk was hit much harder than Devon. This, I feel, will somewhat adversely affect literacy rates for Suffolk. My plan is to study the two counties thriving under similar external conditions and have therefore decided to confine my work to the 1860's. Third, the period after 1870 was also a momentous era for the history of English education. The passing of the Education Act of 1870 pledged the government to make education accessible to every English home. From that date onwards to the end of the century, Parliament approved various other bills designed to regulate child employment, make school attendance compulsory, waive school fees, and improve the general quality of teaching. The history of the post 1870 era has been well attended to by scholars and a large amount of work has been done on various aspects of the period. However, relatively few studies have focussed on the 1860's and I have therefore, decided to concentrate on that period. This thesis, thus, analyses the situation prevailing in the 1860's, and leaves open the period of the 1870's and 1880's for future investigation.

Most of the work for this thesis is based mainly on the British Parliamentary Papers. The Population Census of 1851, 1861 and 1871, the Educational Census for 1851, and the Register

General's statistics for the years 1865 - 70 of brides and grooms unable to sign their name at marriage has been particularly useful. The reason for looking at 1851 reports is obvious. By the end of the 1860's the mean marriage-ages of men and women were 28 and 26 and, it can be said that many of those who had had any schooling would have received it 13 to 21 years earlier¹³.

In the course of my research investigation it became fairly clear that all questions concerning literacy could not be explored efficiently at the county level. The county as a unit has in some parts of the country a degree of homogeneity but it is sometimes defective as a statistical unit because most counties contain diverse areas - cities, towns, mining districts, farming communities - which are likely to cause wide variations within the county boundaries¹⁴. In Suffolk for the period 1865 - 1870, for example, an average of 30.2 per cent illiteracy on marriage includes Risbridge with 48.6 per cent and Ipswich with only 15.4 per cent. I have, therefore, decided to take a close look at the pattern of literacy existing within the counties themselves. This I have been able to do because the census material allowed me to break some county statistics down to the census district level. Even then, I should point out that this work has to some extent been handicapped by the fact that I did not have access to the local Devon and Suffolk publications and the various publications of the British Education Department. I have endeavoured to do the best I could from the available sources and, in all

fairness, would like to make clear at the outset that it has not been possible on my part to provide more than tentative and provisional answers to many of the problems involved.

Chapter 2

Contrasts

Nineteenth century Suffolk and Devon had significantly different literacy rates and yet were similar in many respects: Both were predominantly agricultural counties with little industrial strength; both had urban centres but none of them were major cities; the railway arrived about the same time in both counties, Devon in 1844 and Suffolk in 1846; and the wage level in both places were similar. The systems of farming pursued in the two counties however, were radically different. Both counties had their own distinct system of agriculture shaped by the physical properties of its environment, e.g., climate, soil and topography. The question to be examined here is whether these differences and the effect they had on living conditions can explain satisfactorily why so many more people in Devonshire learned at least minimum skills in reading and writing. To do so, we must have some understanding of the agricultural systems and how they changed or did not change from the beginning of the century.

The wide variety of soils prevailing in the two counties materially influenced the farming of their different regions. Strong clays constituted more than two-thirds of Suffolk and the remainder was formed of common mixed soils and light chalk lands. In Devon, carboniferous formation covered about 41 per cent, the rest was made up of old redstone, new red sandstone, old red sandstone, granite, poor sands and gravels. The

varying character of soil and climate led the Devonshire farmer to practice, according to his locality, nearly every agricultural art: Dairy, tillage, orchards, irrigated meadows, the breeding and feeding of stock, and the reclamation of waste land¹. The heavy clays of Suffolk, too, followed a mixed husbandry: Sheep and cattle were fattened, and a four course rotation used on the arable of clean fallow or tares, mangold or turnips, followed by barley, followed by clover or pulses alternately, followed by wheat².

The percentage of cultivated area under different kinds of crops in Devon and Suffolk in 1879 - 80 was³:

Table 1. Area distribution for different crops in Devon and Suffolk (1879-80)

Percentage for Suffolk	Description	Percentage for Devon
39.3	Area under Corn crops	15.74
16.9	Area under permanent Pasture	43.73

Source: Compiled from the Reports of the Assistant Commissioners, Royal Commission on Agriculture, Mr. Little's Report: Devon; and Mr. Druce's Report: Suffolk, BPP, Agricultural Interests; XIX, 1880.

This table shows that there is some substance to the popular impression that Suffolk is a corn county and Devon a pastoral one.

This had not always been the case. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the system of farming in Suffolk varied in accordance with the diversity of the soil. Then, Central Suffolk was mainly a dairying district and was well known for

its cheese and butter products, the western sands supported a sheep and barley husbandry, the eastern sands made good corn land when improved with marl, the unimproved heaths were sheepwalks, while the coastal marshes were used for cattle feeding grounds⁴. This system of farming underwent a gradual change following the Napoleonic war. The sharp rise in grain prices convinced Suffolk landowners and farmers of the need to substitute for dairy pastures the more profitable corn crops. Henceforth, conversion from dairy pastures to arable cropping was largely practised and Suffolk, which had been celebrated at the beginning of the nineteenth century for its dairies, was by the middle of the century noted as a major corn growing county. The following summary of the accounts of a Suffolk landowner (farming 253½ acres) illustrates clearly the degree to which the conversion of pasture into arable land had been effected:

The distribution of the land on this farm since 1780 has been:

Table 2. Land distribution on a Suffolk farm.

Land and buildings	1780 Acres	1870 Acres	1880 Acres	1895 Acres
Arable	52	154	160½	120
Pasture	150	48	41½	82
Woods and Waste	40	40	40	40
Buildings, garden etc.	11½	11½	11½	11½

Source: Royal Commission on Agriculture: Report by Mr. Wilson Fox (Asst. Commissioner) on the County of Suffolk,
BPP, vol. 31, session 1894-95, p. 49.

The gradual reversal of this pattern which takes place after 1880 no doubt indicates that the effects of the agricultural depression were giving farmers and landowners second thoughts about the wisdom of continuing with arable farming and persuading some to revert back to pasture.

In contrast, Devonshire farmers throughout the nineteenth century followed a system of mixed farming with particular stress on dairying. The wet climate of Devon was detrimental to the growth of corn and favourable for the cultivation of roots and green crops. This explains why so much attention and capital were devoted to the rearing of cattle, for which the abundance of grass and other green food offered singular inducements. Even during the period of 'high farming' (1840 - 80), Devon did not show many signs of change in its general outline. Here as elsewhere there were a few outstanding farmers, mainly engaged in breeding the famous Red Devon Cattle, but their ratio to the total was not high and it is difficult to conceive that farmers in the county were particularly affected by the propaganda of the day which was in the main directed towards the improvement of arable farming by the introduction of the 4 - course system to light lands⁵.

The picture that emerges reveals clearly that the two counties were in mid-nineteenth century pursuing widely different farming systems. Whereas Devonshire farmers stressed dairying, Suffolk farmers were relying on arable farming for their prosperity. The problem now is to determine the extent to which the differing farming systems created demands for child labour. It

is to this question and to the relation this factor might have to the extent of literacy that we now turn our attention.

It is generally accepted that heavy land requires more labour than light; arable land more than pasture; and a district that produces corn more than a district that produces butter and cheese⁶. It would follow from this that Suffolk farming required more labour than Devon but, obviously, demand for labour need not necessarily be demand for child labour.

The common age for children to begin work was 8 but many started as early as 6. The kind of outdoor labour done by them was similar in both counties: Bird scaring, watching cattle in the fields, taking care of the poultry, leading horses at plough, gathering crops, weeding, twitching, and harvest work. Furthermore, in Suffolk, in order to prevent damage to the land by horses and carts, the entire crop was frequently taken off the field by hand⁷, obviously creating a demand for child labour. The existence of 'organized' labour known as 'agricultural gangs' in Suffolk seems to testify too that there was a greater demand for child labour in that county. In no part of Devon do we come across the operation of the gang system.

Statistically, the census report for 1851 provides us with the means to measure the number of children engaged in agricultural labour in the two counties. The census figures show that in 1851, 4.93 per cent of all Suffolk children aged between 5 to 14 were engaged in outdoor agricultural labour as opposed to 1.50 per cent for Devon. Devon, however, on account of its reliance on dairying, showed a much higher proportion of

indoor farm servants. 4.43 per cent of all children aged between 5 to 14 were indoor farm servants in Devon as compared to 0.74 per cent for Suffolk. On the whole 5.68 per cent of all children aged between 5 and 14 in Suffolk were involved in agricultural work as compared to 5.94 per cent for Devon⁸.

It appears now that Devon had a slightly higher degree of child employment in agricultural work and yet a higher rate of literacy than Suffolk. This does not prove that child labour and literacy are not connected but it does show that the quantity of demand cannot be the vital factor in explaining the difference in literacy between the two counties. There does seem to be, however, a strong possibility that the quality or nature of that employment might be important.

Indoor farm servants, by virtue of their regulated job would not have to face the seasonal occupational hazard of the outdoor labourer and their schooling consequently would be less episodic than those working under the 'gang' system. In 'agricultural gangs', children of both sexes from the age of 6 to 13 were employed along with young persons and women, and worked under the supervision of the gang master. They usually had to travel long distances to get to their work site and were often worked so hard, that by the time they returned home they could hardly stand on their feet. There is general agreement that the gang system was a major obstacle to education:

"The interference with education is not limited to the actual requirement of the work. If children attended school whenever they are not wanted in the gang, a considerable amount of education might be received; but when they are taken to work, though for short times,

the habit of school going is broken, and loses its force, the children are thrown back and discouraged in their learning, and return, it is said, when they return at all, with less orderly habits, owing to the defective discipline at their work" ⁹.

On the other hand, the effectiveness of formal education depends not merely on the willingness or ability of children to attend but on the availability and quality of schooling and the support the teachers will receive from the families of the students, or in this case, surrogate families.

Many young indoor farm and domestic workers must have lived in close touch with literate people: The farmer, his wife and children. The indoor servant/master relationship may not, especially by the mid-nineteenth century, have been the close, affective relationship pictured by those with nostalgia for the world we have lost but it must have allowed for more socialization than service under an unscrupulous gang master. Professor Cipolla has linked domestic service with high literacy. Devon's higher proportion of indoor farm servants could be one reason for its higher literacy rate. The point is not proved but the probability seems high. Also, since gang labour in East Anglia seems to have had a very long history, it is possible that this factor may have had a cumulative effect.

Cipolla comments that it is often assumed that the prevalence of large farms or of small ones noticeably affects the rate of literacy of rural populations¹⁰. He does not, however, elaborate about what that relationship is or how it works, although he implies that the larger the unit, the higher

the literacy. It is therefore necessary to take a look at the size of holdings prevailing in nineteenth century Suffolk and Devon. I have only managed to procure statistics for 1880 and we will have to rely on that as an indicator of holding size in the 1860's.

The following is a comparative table between Devon, Suffolk and England, of the percentage of acreage of the various sized farm-holdings in 1880:

Table 3. Farm holdings size in Devon and Suffolk.

Class of holdings	% of total acreage in Devon	% of total acreage in Suffolk	% of total acreage in England
Under 50 acres	13.42	9	14
From 50 acres to 100 acres	18.21	13	13
From 100 acres to 300 acres	54.81	43	41
From 300 acres to 500 acres	11.74	19	18
From 500 acres to 1000 acres	2.24	14	11
Above 1000 acres	.08	2	3

Source: Compiled from the Reports of the Assistant Commissioners, Royal Commission on Agriculture, Mr. Little's Report: Devon; and Mr. Druce's Report: Suffolk,
BPP, Agricultural Interests; XIX, 1880.

These figures show that farm holdings in the two counties had both similarities and differences. Holdings of 100 to 500 acres constituted 66.55 per cent of total acreage in Devon as

compared to 62 per cent for Suffolk, not a wide difference. Suffolk, however, had a much larger proportion of farms above 300 acres. Thus, if large holdings tended to produce more literate people, then Suffolk should have had the advantage, and that of course, was not the case. To make a confident judgement on this matter it would be necessary to know much more than we now know about family strategies on the small holdings in both counties. Also, it is possible that the pattern of holding size within the counties might have varied significantly enough to influence literacy in a particular district, but unfortunately the statistics necessary to tackle that problem are not available. Therefore, all that can be said here is that one must be sceptical about Cipolla's generalization when dealing with the English situation.

One common complaint voiced frequently in the nineteenth century was that the wages earned by agricultural labourers were not sufficient to allow them to send their children to school. Many of the Commissioners investigating poor attendance of children in rural schools reported that labourers getting high wages usually preferred to send their children to school rather than to work. Tremenhere's report on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture (1867) showed that "the counties where the fewest children under 10 years of age were employed in farm work were for the most part those in which the total earnings of the agricultural labourers in permanent employ were high". In North Northumberland, where the earnings of farm labourers (nearly all being engaged by the year) amounted in

value to from 15s. to 18s. a week, the parents allowed their children to remain at school until the age of 11 or 12, and then only sent them to work in the summer up to the age of 14¹¹. It is therefore necessary to examine the wage structure of Devon and Suffolk, not with the intention of ascertaining the overall poverty level of the two counties, but only to determine whether either county had any distinct advantage.

It is extremely difficult to calculate accurately wages of nineteenth century agricultural labourers because of the system of making payments in kind as well as in cash, and it is possible only to make approximate estimates. In the 1840's the average wage of an ordinary labourer in Devon was about 8s. to 9s. a week, with 2 to 3 quarts of cider daily. In the 1870's, the lowest wage was about 11s. a week, in addition to which in most cases a cottage and garden was provided rent free. In Suffolk in the 1840's, it was customary to adjust wages according to the price of wheat, and H. Raynbird gives us the following scales¹²:

When wheat was 5s. per bushel and under 6s.,
wages paid were 8s. a week.

When wheat was 6s. per bushel and under 7s.,
wages paid were 9s. a week.

When wheat was 7s. per bushel and under 8s.,
wages paid were 10s. a week.

A. Wilson Fox investigated agricultural wages in England and Wales during the last fifty years of the nineteenth century and he gives the following particulars relating to weekly cash wages of ordinary agricultural labourers employed on a farm in Suffolk and in a farm in Devon:

Table 4. Weekly cash wages in Devon and Suffolk

SUFFOLK			DEVON		
Year	Rates of Weekly Cash Wages in		Year	Rates of Weekly Cash Wages in	
	June	December		June	December
1851	8s.	8s.	1851	9s.	9s.
1856	12s.	12s.	1856	10s.	10s.
1861	11s.	11s.	1861	11s.	11s.
1866	10s.	12s.	1866	12s.	12s.

Source: A. Wilson Fox, 'Agricultural wages in England and Wales during the last half century', Royal Statistical Society Journal; LXVI, 1903, p. 326 and p. 330.

The above table makes clear that the wage level in both counties were nearly the same¹³. Reports of inspectors confirm too that the dwellings and living conditions of agricultural labourers in both places were equally unsatisfactory. It appears then that neither Devon nor Suffolk could claim an advantage in wage levels or degrees of domestic comfort.

Professor Cipolla has calculated that persons engaged in industrial work were more literate than those involved in agriculture¹⁴. The common assumption that a literate labour force is relevant for the economy¹⁵ is open to question and in recent years has been the subject of energetic debate. Professor Sanderson examined literacy in industrial Lancashire over the period 1754 - 1815 and concluded that literacy was irrelevant to both industrialization and social mobility¹⁶.

He listed the availability of child labour as one of the factors hindering the growth of basic literacy. Professor West, on the other hand, has made a reasonable case that the Industrial Revolution did not depress literacy and asserted that the date of distinct improvement in the national literacy trend coincided with the beginnings of the large-scale factory system¹⁷. Thus, we must wait for the dust to settle before we can be sure whether optimist or pessimist is correct.

Neither Sanderson nor West give us much insight into why factory production should put more or less pressure on the population to become literate, nor do they tell us systematically what types of manufacture would require more or less literacy. And so far, no one has done a study, showing which of the domestic industries needed or promoted literacy and which did not. Nevertheless it is necessary to provide some idea of the industrial sector in order to complete our examination of the comparative demand for child labour in the two counties.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth century Devon was well established as a centre of industrial activity. The Devon serge industry and the Honiton hand-made lace industry both enjoyed a high national reputation. The serge industry reached a peak about 1720 and then, within a short period, under the combined impact of competition from other woollen fabrics at home and the collapse of markets overseas, it entered upon a long and lingering decline¹⁸. In the 1830's there were still about 40 woollen mills in Devon and some 3000 looms employed in weaving serges; but many of these ceased production later in

the century¹⁹. The Honiton lace industry was for a time in great demand and enjoyed a considerable market in London. The manufacture of machine-made net lace sounded the death knell of the Honiton industry and by the end of the nineteenth century it was practically out of operation.

Devon had also a substantial paper industry, manufacturing mainly wrapping paper. There were about 48 paper mills in operation around 1820, but from the 1830's onwards the number of paper mills in the South West was inexorably reduced by the trend towards concentration of production based upon the machine and the steam engine, the growth of large paper-making units elsewhere in Britain - especially near London and in some of the industrial regions - and the increased competition from imported paper²⁰.

Leather and tanning industry, lime-kilns, and quarrying and mining had all flourished in Devon during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. All of these industries entered upon a period of decline in the nineteenth century and by the end of the century most of them had disappeared.

Suffolk's textile industry also underwent various stages of development and growth from the earliest times into the nineteenth century. The wool spinning and cloth weaving industry attained its highest development around the end of the sixteenth century and then started declining. Its place was then taken up by the production of yarn and draperies, but by 1840, this industry too died out. In the 1840's silk weaving thrived in Suffolk and by the middle of the nineteenth

century was employing some two thousand people, two-thirds of whom were women and girls. About the middle of the nineteenth century, two new branches of textile manufacture were introduced into the county, still depending on handlooms: The weaving of horse-hair and of coconut fibre²¹. These two industries gave employment to many of the handloom weavers who had been displaced by the use of machinery in other branches of the textile industry. In the work of straw plaiting about 2200 women and girls were employed in 1851 and around 2335 in 1871²². Stay and corset making was another of the important cottage industries of Suffolk, the work being done mainly by women in their homes.

The making of agricultural implements, and of agriculture and milling machinery, including the manufacture of road engines and other locomotives, was the most important modern industry of Suffolk, whether measured by the number of men employed, the amount of capital invested, or the extent of the market served²³. This industry was concentrated in the eastern towns of Suffolk and it made improvements on the drill and developed harvesting and threshing machinery.

Apart from these, a number of other local industries flourished in Suffolk. One was brewing and small maltings existed in nearly every village. Fishing was also an important industry and a good number of boys, men and women found employment on shore in dealing with the fish caught. The manufacture of boots and shoes was carried on as a domestic industry and partly in factories, and the total number of males and females given as engaged in shoe - making in 1851 was 6,238²⁴.

The industrial picture of Devon and Suffolk shows no dramatic contrasts. Small scale domestic industries were the prevalent practice of the two counties. In both places, textile industry had once played the key role but had become insignificant by the middle of the nineteenth century. There was no operation of the large scale factory system except for Suffolk's agricultural implement manufacturing industry. The industrial environment in both counties appear to have been similar.

Does that mean that child labour (with its possible effect on school attendance and therefore literacy) was also similar? An answer can be worked out from the Census Report of 1851 ²⁵. Census figures show that in 1851, 3.07 per cent of all Devon children aged between 5 to 14 were engaged in industrial work as opposed to 2.46 per cent for Suffolk. Such a small percentage and the small difference between them implies that the demand for child labour could not have been an important literacy factor in Devon and Suffolk. However, since the industries were not spread uniformly all over the two counties, it is possible that the concentration of some industries in a particular area might have influenced literacy for that district. On the whole, the two counties present a rather uniform picture with the proportion of children engaged in industrial work being nearly the same.

This chapter has been a general county-wide comparative study of some of the relevant factors of literacy. Contrary to popular assumption, the demand for child labour appears not to be the crucial place to look in making our comparison. Devon

had a higher rate of literacy and yet a slightly higher degree of child employment in both the industrial and agricultural sector. The industrial environment and wage structure in both counties tended to be similar but Suffolk appeared to have had a slight advantage in the category of land-holding size. The conclusions drawn, therefore, are negative ones - showing what appear not to be significant factors in explaining the striking literacy difference - but none the less useful for being negative. The one positive factor, the much higher number of farm servants and domestics living-in in Devon, does suggest a potentially fruitful line for future research. But there is another positive relationship not yet mentioned. Professor Cipolla expects urban areas to be more literate than rural ones and the Census Report confirms that Devon and Suffolk conformed clearly and positively to this pattern. The census figures showed that in 1861, 52.4 per cent of Devon's population were living in towns as opposed to 35.2 per cent for Suffolk. Density and the urban environment deserves, therefore, careful attention. Fortunately the statistics available allow us to examine this question, not on the broad county level, where so many confusing variables are mixed together indiscriminately but within each county, at the more manageable level of the census district.

Chapter 3

Anatomy of Local Regions

Because both counties contain such diversity, county averages have only limited use. They can aid us in deciding what factors to investigate most carefully, but they do not lead us to any firm conclusions. Therefore, this chapter will examine the pattern of literacy existing within the two counties with the hope that such a study will provide us with positive clues for solving the mystery of Devon's higher literacy.

Table 5 shows the average literacy rate for the census districts of Devon and Suffolk over the six years 1865 - 70. The table clearly demonstrates the wide variations prevailing in the two counties. Risbridge, which figured at the bottom of the literacy scale in Suffolk, had three times as many illiterates as Ipswich; and similarly for Devon, Torrington was two and a half times more illiterate than Exeter.

For the sake of clarity, I have divided the two counties into areas of high literacy, medium literacy and low literacy. I have arbitrarily selected the top seven literate districts in Devon as representing high literacy, the next seven constitute medium literacy, and the remainder low literacy. Similarly, for Suffolk I have taken the first six as areas of high literacy, the next six form medium literacy and the remaining five census districts represent low literacy. In accordance with areas of high, medium and low literacy, I

Table 5. Percentage of brides and grooms able to sign their names on Marriage, 1865 - 70.

<u>Devon (Census Districts)</u>		<u>Suffolk (Census Districts)</u>	
Exeter	88.0	Ipswich	84.5
Newton Abbot	86.7	Bury St. Edmunds	83.9
St. Thomas	85.3	Mutford	78.5
Stoke Damerel	85.3	Samford	77.2
Barnstaple	83.3	Woodbridge	73.9
Totnes	82.9	Wangford	73.8
Bideford	82.5	Plomesgate	73.8
Kingsbridge	81.2	Stow	71.6
Plymouth	80.8	Thingoe	71.6
Plympton St. Mary	79.1	Blything	69.6
South Molton	78.2	Milden Hall	65.7
Tiverton	77.5	Bosmere	64.8
Honiton	76.3	Sudbury	62.4
Okehampton	75.7	Hartismere	61.3
Crediton	75.2	Hoxne	60.7
Tavistock	75.0	Cosford	60.0
Axminster	74.4	Risbridge	51.3
East Stonehouse	73.8	Average	71.4
Holsworthy	73.3		
Torrington	70.7	National average (England and Wales)	75.2
Average	80.4		

Source: Calculated from the Reports of the Register General of Births, Deaths and Marriages, BPP, 1867, XIX; 1868 - 69, XVI; 1870, XVI; 1871, XVI; 1872, XVII.

have computed corresponding average figures for my chosen variables: Degree of urbanization, level of poverty, occupational structure, extent of schooling, communication facilities and religious composition of the population.

Professor Lawrence Stone, using the Protestation Oath Returns of 1641 - 42, has suggested that rural areas had a lower literacy rate than towns¹ and Professor Cipolla has shown that in Italy in 1881 literate adults were 56 per cent in the urban population and 35 per cent in the rural population². The question that automatically comes to one's mind is how do we actually divide the inhabitants of a country into urban and rural? Obviously, such a division can only be roughly approximate, because in the first place, the terms urban and rural themselves have no very precise meaning, and secondly, because many places which must indisputably be reckoned as urban have no distinct boundaries³. The census report for 1881 stated:

"the method of division usually adopted is to select those registration districts and sub-districts in which are situated the chief towns, and to consider the inhabitants of these as representing the urban population, while the inhabitants of all the other districts and sub-districts are considered to be of rural character. The urban population, as thus determined, consists of the inhabitants of the chief towns and their immediate neighbourhood, while the rural population includes the inhabitants of the smaller towns as well as of the strictly country parishes" ⁴.

Following this distinction and using statistics provided by the 1871 census report, I have worked out approximately the percentage of people living in the towns and rural areas of

the census districts in the two counties. They are as follows:

Table 6. Literacy and Urbanization (Devon)⁵.

Percentage of population in census districts belonging to towns in 1871.

<u>More than 50%</u>	<u>Between 25 and 50%</u>	<u>Less than 25%</u>
Exeter (HL)*	Barnstaple (HL)	Tavistock (LL)
Plymouth (HL)	Totnes (HL)	Crediton (LL)
Stoke Damerel (HL)	Honiton (ML)	Torrington (LL)
Newton Abbot (HL)	St. Thomas (HL)	South Molton (ML)
East Stonehouse (LL)	Tiverton (ML)	Okehampton (ML)
Plympton St. Mary (ML)		Kingsbridge (ML)
Bideford (HL)		Axminster (LL)
		Holsworthy (LL)

*HL indicated High Literacy, ML Medium Literacy and LL Low Literacy.

Source: Calculated from Census Report 1871, BPP, Population, XV, Appendix A, Table 32.

It is fairly clear from the table that the high literacy districts in general had a greater proportion of the population living in the towns than low literacy districts. The most striking variation is presented by East Stonehouse, a low literacy area but having a high degree of town population. The two lowest literacy districts had less than twenty five per cent of the people living in the towns as opposed to the two highest which had more than fifty per cent. This further strengthens the conviction that urban areas in Devon were more literate than rural areas.

Table 7. Literacy and Urbanization (Suffolk).

Percentage of population in census districts belonging to towns in 1871.

<u>More than 50%</u>	<u>Between 25 and 50%</u>	<u>Less than 25%</u>
Ipswich (HL)		Woodbridge (HL)
Bury St. Edmunds (HL)		Stow (ML)
Mutford (HL)		Sudbury (LL)
Wangford (HL)		Blything (ML)
		Cosford (LL)
		Hartismere (LL)
		Thingoe (ML)
		Samford (HL)
		Bosmere (ML)
		Hoxne (LL)
		Mildenhall (ML)
		Plomesgate (ML)
		Risbridge (LL)

* HL indicates high literacy, ML medium literacy and LL low literacy.

Source: Calculated from Census Report 1871, BPP, Population, XV, Appendix A, Table 32.

Once again the same pattern emerges. With the exception of Samford and Woodbridge, the other four high literacy districts were the only ones to have had more than fifty per cent of the population belonging to the towns. One other trend is clearly apparent in the Suffolk statistics. Out of a total number of seventeen census districts, thirteen had

less than twenty five per cent of the people living in the towns, demonstrating clearly that the environment in Suffolk was essentially rural. In contrast, the population of Devon was more evenly spread between urban and rural.

I do not have the necessary statistics to break up accurately urban and rural populations for each census district individually⁶ and am therefore unable to weigh the relationship of the medium literacy Suffolk districts and urbanization. Nevertheless, statistics for the two counties does indicate a positive association between high literacy and high urbanization. Devon's significant lead over Suffolk in this respect could then be an important explanation of its higher literacy rate.

Another factor, related to urbanization, and often linked to literacy, is density of the population. Although 'urban' implies density, it is also possible for rural districts to have a high density too. For example, Sudbury in Suffolk had less than 25 per cent of the people living in the towns and yet had a higher density than the highly urbanized district of Ipswich⁷. It is commonly assumed that densely populated areas, whether rural or urban, would tend to show a higher literacy rate because such places have a greater degree of socialization and a stronger need for schools and commercial activities. Tables 8 and 9 test this hypothesis.

Table 8. Literacy and Density (Devon).

Number of persons to a square mile in registration districts
in 1851:

<u>250 persons and above</u>	<u>Between 150 and 250 persons</u>	<u>Less than 150 persons</u>
Plymouth (ML)* East	St. Thomas (HL)	Tiverton (ML)
Stonehouse (LL)	Totnes (HL)	Torrington (LL)
Stoke Damerel (HL)	Axminster (LL)	Tavistock (LL)
Exeter (HL)	Honiton (HL)	South Molton (ML)
Newton Abbot (HL)	Kingsbridge (ML)	Okehampton (ML)
	Bideford (HL)	Holsworthy (LL)
	Plympton St. Mary (ML)	
	Barnstaple (HL)	
	Crediton (LL)	

* HL indicated high literacy, ML medium literacy, LL low literacy.

Source: Census Report 1851, BPP, Population, VI, p. 241.

The first thing I should point out here is that the table does not fairly portray the actual extent of variation within Devon. For example, Plymouth had 20,441 persons to a square mile whereas Holsworthy had only 84⁸. However, the table does indicate that in general high literacy areas tended to coincide with high density and the two highest literacy districts of Exeter and Newton Abbot were much more densely populated than the two lowest literacy districts of Torrington and Holsworthy. East Stonehouse was again the only major exception to the pattern, having a density of 19,913 persons to a square mile

and yet was placed third from the bottom in literacy rate.

Table 9. Literacy and Density (Suffolk)

Number of persons to a square mile in registration districts
in 1851:

<u>250 persons and above</u>	<u>Between 150 and 250 persons</u>	<u>Less than 150 persons</u>
Mutford (HL)*	Stow (ML)	Thingoe (ML)
Bury St. Edmunds (HL)	Blything (ML)	Mildenhall (ML)
Wangford (HL)	Hartismere (LL)	
Sudbury (LL)	Cosford (LL)	
Ipswich (HL)	Risbridge (LL)	
	Hoxne (LL)	
	Bosmere (ML)	
	Samford (HL)	
	Woodbridge (HL)	
	Plomesgate (ML)	

* HL indicates high literacy, ML medium literacy, LL low literacy.

Source: Census Report 1851, BPP, Population, VI, p. 241.

Density in Suffolk was more evenly distributed than in Devon, the highest figure being 364 persons for Mutford and the lowest 108 in Mildenhall⁹. The overall picture appears to be mixed. The low literacy districts of Risbridge, Cosford and Sudbury were quite high in density and it was two medium literacy districts, Thingoe and Mildenhall, with the lowest density. However, as in Devon, most of the high literacy

districts continued to show a high degree of density.

Comparison for the average density figure for the two county shows remarkable similarity. Suffolk was slightly ahead of Devon with 239 persons per square mile as opposed to Devon's 236 ¹⁰. This suggests that density could not have been a significant factor affecting literacy for the two counties although it did tend to influence literacy within the census districts. Obviously, on the county level, other factors came into play which disturbed the links between density and literacy.

So far our figures confirm the expected pattern: Density and urban environment promoted literacy. It is however odd that few scholars have ventured to investigate what levels of density and what sort of urban environment is needed for literacy. Why, for example, was East Stonehouse so illiterate and why does Exeter show a higher literacy than Ipswich? Not all the questions one might raise about this can be satisfactorily answered with the information available. But some important features can be isolated. One is - did the urban areas have a comparatively large proportion of professional people?

Professor Cipolla, using the French National Census of 1901, has shown that the professions characteristically linked with literacy are generally concentrated in the urban areas¹¹. Tables 10 and 11 refer to the occupational structure of Devon and Suffolk ¹².

Table 10. Literacy and Occupation (Devon).

Occupations of males and females 20 years and upwards in 1871.

<u>Literacy level</u>	<u>Percentage of Professional and Commercial Class</u>	<u>Percentage of Industrial Class</u>	<u>Percentage of Agricultural Class</u>
High Literacy (7 districts)	13.3	24.9	11.2
Medium Literacy (7 districts)	10.3	23.8	16.3
Low Literacy (6 districts)	8.7	24.4	20.0

Source: Calculated from the Census of Great Britain, 1871, Population Abstracts: Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations, and Birthplaces of the People, BPP, Population, England and Wales, 1871, XVIII.

There is a clear association between high literacy areas having a large professional and commercial class and a low proportion of agricultural workers. Conversely, low literacy areas have a high proportion of agricultural workers and a much smaller number of professional and commercial people. Industrial workers were more or less evenly distributed in all three categories. A comparison of the average for the two highest and the two lowest literacy districts confirm the pattern¹³. Even then, there were some individual variations, the most striking being that of East Stonehouse¹⁴.

In Suffolk too, high literacy areas had a greater share of professional and commercial people, a high proportion of industrial workers and a very low percentage of agricultural

Table 11. Literacy and Occupation (Suffolk).

Occupations of males and females 20 years and upwards in 1871:

<u>Literacy level</u>	<u>Percentage of Professional and Commercial Class</u>	<u>Percentage of Industrial Class</u>	<u>Percentage of Agricultural Class</u>
High literacy (6 districts)	9.8	25.5	14.1
Medium Literacy (6 districts)	4.7	15.4	29.6
Low literacy (5 districts)	3.9	22.1	28.9

Source: Calculated from the Census of Great Britain, 1871, Population Abstracts: Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations, and Birthplaces of the People, BPP, Population, England and Wales, 1871, XVIII.

workers. There were individual variations but none as striking as East Stonehouse in Devon ¹⁵. Ipswich and Bury St. Edmunds, the two highest literacy districts, averaged 10.8 per cent in the professional category and 3.7 per cent in the agricultural sector. The corresponding figures for Risbridge and Cosford, the two lowest literacy districts, were 3.9 and 29.0 respectively. If we compare Exeter and Ipswich, the highest literacy districts in Devon and Suffolk respectively, we find that Exeter had a slightly higher professional and industrial class and a lower agricultural class ¹⁶. This could explain why more of its residents could read and write than those of Ipswich. The pattern is clearly established and Cipolla's generalization apparently holds true for both Devon and Suffolk. Comparison between Exeter and Ipswich makes clear that it is not just the

amount of urban people that matter but the kind of urban people.

Real income levels will be different from one urban area to another and investigations confirm that where there is poverty and insecure employment there is low literacy¹⁷. Calculation of wealth is extremely difficult, especially since rates of unemployment or underemployment are not available. What we can examine, as a rough indicator, are the numbers on poor relief. I have calculated the percentage of paupers in receipt of relief in the two counties as an indication of the extent of poverty, although only an indication, since poverty and pauperism are not the same things.

Table 12. Literacy and Poverty (Devon)

Literacy Level	% of total population of paupers on relief in 1860
High Literacy (7 Districts)	4.2
Medium Literacy (7 Districts)	6.6
Low Literacy (6 Districts)	5.7

Source: Calculated from BPP, Poor Law, 1868 - 69, LIII.

High literacy is associated with low poverty but the medium and low literacy areas do not conform to the pattern. Once again East Stonehouse is the principal offender¹⁸. Poor literacy districts like Holsworthy and Tavistock too had a fairly low degree of poverty. In general, however, the higher literacy districts like Stoke Damerel, Totnes, Exeter and Newton Abbot were much wealthier than the other districts.

One point to be noted here is that poor law policy varied from one district to another. Thus, statistics based solely on the percentage of paupers in receipt of relief may provide only rough indicators of poverty.

Table 13. Literacy and Poverty (Suffolk).

Literacy Level	% of total population of paupers on relief in 1860.
High Literacy (6 Districts)	5.8
Medium Literacy (6 Districts)	6.8
Low Literacy (5 Districts)	8.1

Source: Calculated from BPP, Poor Law, 1868 - 69, Vol. LIII.

Suffolk shows a more clear and positive relationship between literacy and poverty. In all three categories, literacy coincided with the poverty level. This, of course, does not mean that there were no individual variations. Cosford, for example, had a fairly low poverty level and yet was an extremely illiterate district¹⁹. However, exceptions were obviously not numerous enough to affect the general pattern. The point is further strengthened by the fact that the average poverty for the two high literacy districts of Ipswich and Bury St. Edmunds was only 5.7 per cent as compared to 7.3 per cent for Risbridge and Cosford.

It is generally expected that districts with a good communication system would tend to have high literacy because such places have a stronger contact with the outside world and

a greater need for economic and commercial activities. Greater accessibility of towns promotes greater urban awareness in rural areas and often ends rural isolation²⁰. Not only were the railways the most dramatic innovation in communication in the nineteenth century but, conveniently for this study, the rail network was in the process of being built in the middle of the century when our examination of literacy takes place. We will, therefore, use the opening date of rail lines in different districts as our index for determining the possible connection between literacy and communication facilities.

Table 14. Literacy and Communication (Devon)

Date of opening of rail lines in census districts ²¹.

<u>Before 1850</u>	<u>Between 1850 and 1860</u>	<u>After 1860</u>
Exeter (HL)*	Crediton (LL)	Okehampton (ML)
Newton Abbot (HL)	Barnstaple (HL)	Torrington (LL)
St. Thomas (HL)	Bideford (HL)	Honiton (ML)
Totnes (HL)	Tavistock (LL)	Holsworthy (LL)
Plymouth (ML)		Kingsbridge (ML)
Stoke Damerel (HL)		Axminster (LL)
Plympton St. Mary (ML)		
East Stonehouse (LL)		
Tiverton (ML)		

* HL indicates high literacy, ML medium literacy and LL low literacy.

Source: W. G. Hoskins, Devon, London, 1964, p. 161.

There seems to be a clear connection between high literacy and good communication. Exeter (1844) and Newton Abbot (1846), the highest literacy districts, were the first two districts to be connected by railway whereas lines reached both Torrington and Holsworthy, the lowest literacy districts, after 1870 ²². The most striking variation is again East Stonehouse which had the railway in 1848.

Table 15. Literacy and Communication (Suffolk)

Date of opening of rail lines in census districts:

<u>Before 1850</u>	<u>Between 1850 and 1860</u>	<u>After 1860</u>
Ipswich (HL)*	Wangford (HL)	Risbridge (LL)
Bury St. Edmunds (HL)	Woodbridge (HL)	Hartismere (LL)
Stow (ML)	Blything (ML)	Mildenhall (ML)
Mutford (HL)	Plomesgate (ML)	
Samford (HL)		
Cosford (LL)		
Sudbury (LL)		

* HL indicates high literacy, ML medium literacy and LL low literacy.

Source: David St. John Thomas, gen. ed., A Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain, 5 vols. (Newton Abbot: David and Charles Ltd., 1968), vol. V: The Eastern Counties, by D.I. Gordon.

In Suffolk too, railways generally came first to the more literate districts. Ipswich and Bury St. Edmunds, the two highest literacy districts, were both connected in 1846 ²³. Some of the low literacy districts appeared to have had the

rail connection fairly early; Cosford being connected in 1847 and Sudbury in 1849. Risbridge and Hartismere, however, did not see trains before 1865 and 1867 respectively. I have not been able to trace the opening date of lines in Bosmere, Thingoe and Hoxne, and believe that these districts were by-passed by the railway line.

In spite of some variations, the two counties present a similar picture: High literacy districts were usually the first to get rail connection. The districts to be by-passed by the railway were medium and low literacy districts. There seems then to be a connection between better communication facilities and literacy.

High density and the urban setting should, at least by mid-century, have provided the resources and clientele to support more schools than rural and low density areas. It can be argued that facilities for formal schooling are an essential part of any study of literacy because the structure of education probably largely determines the nature of literacy skills that can be acquired ²⁴. The common assumption is that better school provision will result in higher literacy. This assumption is worth investigating to see if it is always the case.

The figures in table 16 do not convincingly demonstrate the expected strong relationship between literacy and schooling. Although high literacy districts did have a higher proportion of day school children than medium and low literacy areas, the difference in all three categories was rather small. The

Table 16. Literacy and Schooling (Devon).

Level of literacy	% of children on books of day schools to total population 1851	% of children on books of Sunday schools to total population 1851	% of day school children in private schools
High Literacy (7 Districts)	12.51	9.49	43.22
Medium Literacy (7 Districts)	10.42	10.11	37.98
Low Literacy (6 Districts)	10.27	11.29	34.55

Source: Calculated from the Census of Great Britain, 1851, Education, England and Wales: Reports and Tables (1854), BPP, Population, XI.

table also illustrates that low literacy areas relied more on Sunday schools than the high and medium literacy districts. A positive relationship is evident between literacy and private schooling. Averages for the two highest and the two least literate districts confirm the general pattern²⁵. Still, individual figures do present certain puzzles. For example, Torrington (LL) had a better school ratio than Plymouth (ML), Tavistock (LL) nearly equalled Newton Abbot (HL) and St. Thomas (HL) was placed behind East Stonehouse (LL)²⁶.

Suffolk (table 17) presents us with a much more complex picture than Devon. Medium literacy districts had a slightly better proportion of children in day schools than high literacy areas but both enjoyed marginal advantage over low literacy districts. Sunday schools again showed to have been less

Table 17. Literacy and Schooling (Suffolk).

Level of literacy	% of children on books of day schools to total population 1851	% of children on books of Sunday schools to total population 1851	% of day school children in private schools
High Literacy (6 Districts)	12.61	8.41	34.29
Medium Literacy (6 Districts)	12.82	12.89	36.51
Low Literacy (5 Districts)	11.00	12.03	32.36

Source: Calculated from the Census of Great Britain, 1851, Education, England and Wales: Reports and Tables (1854), BPP, Population, XI.

important for literacy and the impact of private schooling is less clear. Reference to individual districts present us with a number of puzzles²⁷. Bury St. Edmunds was actually below the county average for children at school and Ipswich had a lower proportion of both Day school and Sunday school children than highly illiterate districts like Cosford and Sudbury.

It follows from the tables that the relationship between schooling and literacy is blurred and unclear. Although there was some association in Devon, the pattern did not hold for Suffolk. Low literacy areas in both counties tended to depend more on Sunday schools for their education and apparently did not gain much literacy in the process.

The most powerful stimulus to education in the early nineteenth century was provided by religion. The rivalry of

the various Christian churches and sects for control of men's minds did more to promote education in the West between 1550 and 1850 than any other single factor²⁸. All the different religious sects did not respond equally to the idea of promoting education and Professor Cipolla's analysis for Ireland in 1871 showed that Methodists were the most literate, followed by Presbyterians, Anglicans and Catholics²⁹. We will now proceed to analyze the general religious allegiance of the people in the two counties and see what pattern emerges.

The census of 1851 gives us the information regarding the number of churches and chapels in each parish, the number of 'sittings' in each church and chapel, and the number of people who attended each service on census Sunday. However, it should be noted that the census figures do not really enable us to estimate the real total of the attendants, since we do not know how many who attended in the afternoon or evening had also been present at an earlier service³⁰.

Table 18. Literacy and Religion (Devon)

Literacy Level	% of Church of England attendants calculated from total attendants on March 30, 1851.
High Literacy (7 Districts)	58.6
Medium Literacy (7 Districts)	57.3
Low Literacy (6 Districts)	52.8
Average	57.1

Source: Calculated from the Census of Great Britain, 1851, Religious Worship, England and Wales: Reports and Tables, BPP, Population, X.

In Devon, it appears that there was some kind of a fragile relationship between high literacy and a higher proportion of Church of England attendants, but in actuality this assumption may be misleading. There was a wide degree of variation with some high literacy districts having a low proportion of Anglicans and some low literacy districts having a high proportion of Anglicans³¹. The figures, therefore, do not permit accurate generalization.

Table 19. Literacy and Religion (Suffolk)

Literacy Level % of Church of England attendants calculated
from total attendants on March 30, 1851.

High Literacy (6 Districts)	57.0
Medium Literacy (6 Districts)	55.4
Low Literacy (5 Districts)	58.6
Average	56.9

Source: Calculated from the Census of Great Britain, 1851, Religious Worship, England and Wales: Reports and Tables, BPP, Population, X.

Suffolk, too, presents a varied and diffused picture. Here also, individual district figures show a complete mix up with some low literate districts having a high proportion of Anglicans and vice-versa³².

When compared side by side, county averages present a similar picture with Devon having 57.1 per cent of Anglicans as opposed to 56.9 for Suffolk. With differences being so small, logical conclusion would be that the religious

allegiance of the people did not operate as an advantageous factor in promoting literacy in either county.

A study of the census districts within the two counties has clearly revealed that in both places literate districts were the ones with large towns, lower poverty, better communication facilities and a greater concentration of commercial and professional people. Religious attitudes had apparently little bearing while the impact of schooling on literacy was unclear. We will now proceed to apply these factors to the two counties as a whole and see if the established pattern holds between the counties.

Table 20. Literacy and Urbanization (1861)

	Percentage of town population	Percentage of rural population
Devon	52.4	47.6
Suffolk	35.2	64.8

Source: Census of England and Wales, 1861, Appendix to Report, BPP, Population, XV, p. 124 - 125.

Table 21. Literacy and Occupation (1871)

	Percentage of Professional and Commercial Class	Percentage of Industrial Class	Percentage of Agricultural Class
Devon	11.5	24.5	14.4
Suffolk	6.6	21.3	23.2

Source: Calculated from the Census of Great Britain, 1871, Population Abstracts: Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces of the People, BPP, Population, England and Wales, 1871, XVIII.

Table 22. Literacy and Poverty.

% of total population of paupers on relief (1860)

Devon 5.3

Suffolk 6.8

Source: Calculated from BPP, Poor Law, 1868 - 69, vol. LIII.

Table 23. Literacy and Schooling ³³.

	% of children on books of day schools to total population (1851)	% of children on books of Sunday schools to total population (1851)	% of day school children in private schools (1851)
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Devon	11.4	10.0	40.0
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Suffolk	12.2	11.1	34.6
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Source: Calculated from the Census of Great Britain, 1851, Education, England and Wales: Reports and Tables (1854), BPP, Population, vol XI.

Tables 20, 21, 22 and 23 illustrate clearly that Devon's higher literacy was influenced, no doubt, by its greater degree of urbanization, significantly lower level of poverty, larger provision of private schools, much higher concentration of professional and commercial people and smaller involvement in agricultural work. Early railway facilities could possibly have been another factor, Devon being first connected in 1844 and Suffolk in 1846. Surprisingly, however, schooling clearly does not conform to the expected pattern and could not therefore, have been the crucial factor. Even in 1858 it was reported that one in 10.5 of Suffolk's population was enrolled in public day

schools as opposed to one in 12.5 for Devon³⁴. The common assumption that schooling constituted the main basis for literacy cannot therefore be unquestioningly accepted and we ought to be sceptical of its effects in other areas as well. Sunday schools again do not appear associated with literacy. Sunday Schools generally emphasized moral and religious instruction. The only literary skill that was taught was a little reading³⁵. The figures confirm that the influence of Sunday schools on literacy, at least in Devon and Suffolk, was minimal.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

Our study of literacy in Devon and Suffolk has clearly revealed that in mid-nineteenth century, the level of literacy varied not only from one part of England to another¹, but also considerably within county boundaries. In both counties, literacy appeared to have been associated with the condition of poverty, urbanization and commercial intercourse, and rural areas were generally found to be inferior in literacy to towns. Areas of urban or rural density tended to be literate, not because of better school provision, but because income was higher and opportunities for mobility greater. Victorian reformers apparently had their priorities wrong in considering that the problem of literacy was the problem of schooling or child labour and it appears that even the more sophisticated modern commentators of today also tend to make the same mistake.

However, this is not to suggest that schooling or the demands of various kinds of industrial and domestic industry or agriculture are unimportant or irrelevant. The problem is, we have no systematic information as to what forms of industry or agriculture require or stimulate literacy. For example, Devon had a much higher proportion of indoor farm servants than Suffolk but we do not know for certain the implication of that fact for literacy. Since schooling was not the crucial factor, it is possible that Devon's indoor environment could

have been instrumental for its higher literacy. Much more research needs to be done before we can attempt to draw firm conclusions in this area.

Efforts should also be made to know more intimately the actual learning process in schools. The educational census of 1851 gives us only an indication of the total number of children enrolled on school books. It does not provide the vital information of how many actually attended schools and for what length of time they remained in school. The master in charge of the Borough Road School in London, which was the model school of the Lancastrian system, reckoned that it took twelve months to teach a child to read and between three and four years to teach him to write well². It is, therefore, crucially important for us to know the period of time spent by children in schools.

Schooling is also largely dependent on the supply and quality of teachers. Efforts should be made to determine the number of certificated teachers in different schools and also to ascertain the ratio of the number of teachers to total student population.

Private schools in Devon tended to have a higher literacy, but it is wiser not to comment forcefully on this relationship without investigating the nature of the private schools. In the rural areas, private schools were often little more than 'dame schools' or 'baby-sitting' institutions whereas private schools in the towns were generally of a superior character with better quality teachers and facilities. The

fact that Risbridge and Holsworthy had a greater proportion of private school children than Ipswich and Exeter and yet a much lower literacy rate was probably on account of the differing character of private schools.

Professor Cipolla observed that one of the most relevant backward links of literacy is the proportion of a country's economic resources devoted to education³. Although it is extremely difficult to calculate such expenditure, it might nevertheless be possible to get some indication by examining charitable endowments and voluntary subscriptions of wealthy parishioners.

It ought to be remembered too that formal schooling does not necessarily constitute the only opportunity for education. In many societies, at many times, it is under the parental roof and by the parents that the child is taught the values and skills required to fit him into society⁴. In the district of Bogorodsk, a province of Moscow, in 1883 - 84, 7,123 literate factory workers learned to read and write in the following ways⁵:

38 per cent learned to read in village, town and district schools.

36 per cent learned to read outside school.

10 per cent learned to read in factory schools.

9 per cent learned to read with clergy.

7 per cent learned to read during military service.

It is evident from the figures that a sizeable proportion learnt to read outside of schools and this fact should be remembered in any discussion of schooling and literacy.

The attitude of the parents towards teachers and schools is important if schooling is to be effective. Teachers often complained that:

"parents of children who attend our national schools.. too often view the school at best as a convenient place to which they may send their children out of the way, till they are old enough to do something towards earning their bread by the sweat of their brow, and the teacher as a person paid to look after their children: One on whom they are conferring a great favour by sending their children to school, one whom they are at liberty to abuse, insult or speak of in language which a master would rarely employ towards his servant. In short, they do not value the school, nor the teacher" 6.

Even in the early twentieth century, Robert Roberts noted that in the houses of the lower working class one would not find a book of any sort and that parents often forbade all books and periodicals on the grounds that they kept women and children from their tasks and developed lazy habits⁷. A further exploration of parental attitude is obviously as important as it is difficult, difficult because the answers lie within the privacy of the home.

The influence of family pattern emerges once again when we consider that primary education in the nineteenth century was mainly conducted and dominated by spinsters and bachelor school mistresses. Because of the important role played by spinsters and young bachelors in manning the educational machine in many countries in the nineteenth century, especially at the primary levels, it seems reasonable to suggest that either an unbalanced sex ratio.. with more marriageable women than eligible men, or a pattern of either low nuptiality or a very late marriage age, or both, have often been an

important factor in the growth of mass education⁸.

Clearly, our available statistics do not enable us to measure the quality of education provided by the schools of Devon and Suffolk and a lot more laborious research is needed before we can comment with authority on the nature of the actual relationship between literacy and schooling. The Newcastle Commission Report was based on an investigation of the state of popular education in England and Wales and should be a useful but, unfortunately, highly biased source. The Report was strongly selective in the evidence it used⁹ and should therefore, be viewed with caution.

Our study has shown that urban areas are more literate than rural areas. While cities and dense areas are probably literate mainly because they are less poor, there is obviously more to it than that. All cities are not alike. Further research might show why, for example, Bury St. Edmunds is different in literacy rate than Exeter. East Stonehouse needs careful examination. Its performance in practically all the categories was high and yet it showed an unusually low degree of literacy. I can offer no satisfactory answer for this puzzle. Professor Stephen's explanation that East Stonehouse was a culturally deprived poor area of the port containing the docks needs more qualification in view of the fact that this area had relatively few paupers, a high proportion of women and a high proportion of professional people. Future scholars in the area should keep an eye open to solving the mystery of East Stonehouse.

Another largely unexplored area is the effect of sex on literacy. Examination of Appendix 15 suggests that districts with a higher female population tended to be more literate. Why this should be so is clearly a field for further research.

Paternalism is another neglected area. There is a need to investigate the presence of resident landlords in the two counties. The resident landlord was alleged to have made significant contributions to the educational level of the parish. The point was stressed in the Parliamentary report of 1861¹⁰:

"the fact that makes all the difference in the educational, and almost every other condition of a parish, is the residence of the owners of the land The school is a picturesque feature on the outskirts of the park. It is an expected feature - one which visitors will like to see, and will be sure to ask after But rare indeed are the instances of landowners who, wherever they have property, seem to feel it a first duty to do something for the social and moral elevation of the people".

However, in Devonshire, the Duke of Bedford had some estate in Tavistock which, as we know, was a low literacy area. Much more work needs to be done before we can determine as to whether attitudes of landlords were actually important for literacy.

Religion did not seem to be of great importance for literacy in Devon and Suffolk. It should be noted that the census figures did not really enable us to estimate the real total of Church attendants and it is possible that if those figures could be obtained, then, perhaps, some significant trends might be evident on questions of causes of literacy.

A detailed study of the state of schooling, family structure and land ownership pattern in the two counties has to be undertaken before a satisfactory explanation for literacy differences can be attempted. It is also important to know how the two counties had fared at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This would require careful work with parish register material and episcopal visitations and inquiries. It is possible that such an inquiry might show that Devon had a significant lead from the very beginning, which could then form an important explanation of its superior position in the 1860's. However, such a finding, despite its importance, would not in any case undermine the value of this study. This thesis has not only been an investigation of literacy difference between the two counties, but more importantly, it has also provided an intimate picture of the wide variations existing within the counties. In the process, some of the factors promoting literacy in the region and some of the important questions that scholars must ask have been identified. Clearly much more work remains to be done and it is up to future scholars, with better source material at their disposal, to pursue the issues raised.

Appendix 1

Literacy rate for different counties of England and Wales, 1870.

Percentages of brides and grooms able to sign their names on marriage.

Surrey *	88.0	Derbyshire	76.8
Rutland	87.3	Leicestershire	76.0
Westmorland	87.2	Herefordshire	75.5
Middlesex *	86.1	Cheshire	75.4
Sussex	85.1	Buckinghamshire	75.3
Hampshire	84.5	Huntingdonshire	74.3
Kent *	83.4	Warwickshire	74.3
Northumberland	82.9	Shropshire	73.8
Oxfordshire	82.7	Norfolk	73.5
Lincolnshire	82.5	Suffolk	73.4
Devonshire	81.8	Cornwall	73.4
East Riding		Nottinghamshire	73.4
Yorkshire**	81.8	Cambridgeshire	73.3
Gloucestershire	81.5	Worcestershire	73.3
Berkshire	81.4	Hertfordshire	73.1
North Riding		West Riding	
Yorkshire	80.5	Yorkshire	72.0
Dorset	80.1	Lancashire	71.1
Cumberland	79.5	Durham	69.6
Wiltshire	79.4	Bedfordshire	66.0
Northamptonshire	79.0	Staffordshire	60.0
Essex	78.5	Monmouthshire	59.7
Somerset	78.2		
		North Wales	65.8
* Extra metropolitan		South Wales	61.5
** Including the City of York		London	88.4
		National average	78.1

Source: Report of the Register General of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Abstracts for 1870, BPP, 1872, XVII.

Appendix 2

% of Population in the Census Districts of Devon and Suffolk
belonging to cities, boroughs, having defined municipal or
parliamentary limits.

*Devon (Census Districts)	1871	**Suffolk (Census Districts)	1871
Newton Abbot	70.5	Mutford	69.8
Bideford	57.9	Wangford	59.5
Barnstaple	46.9	Cosford	20.9
Tiverton	44.9	Woodbridge	19.6
Totnes	35.4	Stow	19.5
Honiton	34.0	Sudbury	19.3
St. Thomas	26.9	Blything	17.4
Tavistock	24.7	Hartismere	14.3
Crediton	21.7		
Torrington	21.6		
South Molton	21.0		
Okehampton	9.9		

* Exeter, Stoke Damerel, Plymouth, Plympton St. Mary and East Stonehouse had more than 75% people living in the towns but I have not been able to calculate the exact figure.

** Similarly, Ipswich and Bury St. Edmunds had more than 75% people living in towns but I have been unable to determine the exact figure.

Source: Calculated from Census Report 1871, BPP, Population,
XV, Appendix A, Table 32.

Appendix 3

Number of Persons to a Square mile in the Census Districts of
Devon.

(Arranged according to Density)

<u>District</u>	<u>Persons to a Square mile</u>
Plymouth	20,441
East Stonehouse	19,913
Exeter	11,670
Stoke Damerel	10,266
Newton Abbot	285
St. Thomas	240
Totnes	221
Axminster	210
Honiton	189
Kingsbridge	188
Bideford	171
Plympton St. Mary	167
Barnstaple	163
Crediton	151
Tiverton	140
Torrington	137
Tavistock	117
South Molton	107
Okehampton	103
Holsworthy	84

Source: Census of Great Britain, 1851, BPP, Population, VI,
p. 241.

Appendix 4

Number of Persons to a Square mile in the Census Districts of
Suffolk.

(Arranged according to Density)

<u>District</u>	<u>Persons to a Square mile</u>
Mutford	364
Bury St. Edmunds	303
Wangford	256
Sudbury	252
Ipswich	250
Stow	244
Hartismere	225
Cosford	220
Risbridge	216
Blything	194
Hoxne	192
Bosmere	190
Woodbridge	185
Plomesgate	183
Samford	159
Thingoe	148
Mildenhall	108

Source: Census of Great Britain, 1851, BPP, Population, VI
p. 241.

Appendix 5

Occupation structure in the Census Districts of Devon, (1871).

% of occupations of males and females aged 20 years and upwards
in the following categories:

	<u>Professional & Commercial Class</u>	<u>Domestic Class</u>	<u>Agricultural Class</u>	<u>Industrial Class</u>
Stoke Damerel	33.6	40.5	0.6	20.6
East Stonehouse	29.9	44.9	0.5	18.4
Plymouth	18.5	44.1	2.0	26.6
Exeter	11.9	42.4	2.7	35.6
Plympton St. Mary	10.1	47.8	18.2	17.1
Newton Abbot	9.3	48.1	11.1	25.0
Bideford	9.3	43.4	16.6	25.5
Totnes	8.7	45.0	16.0	22.5
St. Thomas	8.6	42.8	17.6	24.6
Kingsbridge	6.8	44.6	25.4	18.7
Barnstaple	6.7	44.3	18.2	22.9
Tavistock	6.3	42.7	16.7	26.6
Axminster	6.1	39.3	22.6	27.0
Honiton	5.3	37.7	22.0	28.2
Tiverton	4.8	41.2	22.8	26.4
Crediton	4.3	41.6	26.5	20.9
Torrington	3.9	32.5	25.9	32.3
South Molton	3.8	39.7	28.9	20.5
Okehampton	3.3	40.3	30.4	20.7
Holsworthy	3.3	41.5	34.8	15.9

Source: Census of Great Britain, 1871, Population Abstracts:
Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations, and Birthplaces
of the People, BPP, Population, England and Wales,
1871, XVIII.

Appendix 6

Occupation structure in the Census Districts of Suffolk, (1871).

% of occupations of males and females aged 20 years and upwards
in the following categories:

	<u>Professional & Commercial Class</u>	<u>Domestic Class</u>	<u>Agricultural Class</u>	<u>Industrial Class</u>
Mutford	13.5	44.3	14.3	21.8
Ipswich	11.2	43.7	3.4	34.0
Bury St. Edmunds	9.2	43.8	4.6	34.7
Woodbridge	6.3	45.8	27.0	16.1
Plomesgate	6.3	46.1	26.4	16.5
Samford	6.1	45.9	31.0	11.5
Wangford	5.9	44.7	20.7	24.8
Blything	5.4	45.0	27.6	17.7
Stow	4.7	44.9	26.9	18.4
Sudbury	4.3	34.9	24.6	32.5
Cosford	3.9	44.7	29.3	16.4
Risbridge	3.8	38.3	28.7	23.4
Hartismere	3.8	45.9	31.3	14.9
Bosmere	3.5	45.0	32.5	12.9
Mildenhall	3.4	46.1	32.8	11.1
Thingoe	3.3	45.3	35.4	11.2
Hoxne	2.9	45.1	35.1	12.2

Source: Census of Great Britain, 1871, Population Abstracts:
Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations, and Birthplaces
of the People, BPP, Population, England and Wales,
1871, XVIII.

Appendix 7

Percentage of paupers in receipt of relief to total population
in the Census Districts of Devon:

	Year ended Lady Day	% of paupers to total population
Stoke Damerel	1860	2.7
East Stonehouse	1860	2.8
Totnes	1860	3.9
Newton Abbot	1860	3.9
Exeter	1860	3.4
Holsworthy	1860	4.4
Tavistock	1860	4.2
South Molton	1860	5.8
Barnstaple	1860	5.0
Plympton St. Mary	1860	4.8
St. Thomas	1860	5.6
Plymouth	1860	5.4
Kingsbridge	1860	6.2
Bideford	1860	6.0
Okehampton	1860	6.7
Torrington	1860	6.6
Crediton	1860	8.2
Axminster	1860	7.5
Honiton	1860	8.6
Tiverton	1860	8.8

Source: Calculated from BPP, Poor Law, 1868 - 69, LIII.

Appendix 8

Percentage of paupers in receipt of relief to total population
in the Census Districts of Suffolk:

	Year ended Lady Day	% of paupers to total population
Mutford	1860	4.3
Ipswich	1860	5.5
Blything	1860	5.8
Samford	1860	5.7
Bury St. Edmunds	1860	6.0
Stow	1860	6.4
Wangford	1860	5.9
Plomesgate	1860	6.9
Bosmere	1860	6.7
Cosford	1860	6.4
Hartismere	1860	7.2
Woodbridge	1860	7.6
Mildenhall	1860	8.7
Thingoe	1860	7.9
Hoxne	1860	9.2
Sudbury	1860	9.1
Risbridge	1860	8.2

Source: Calculated from BPP, Poor Law, 1868 - 69, LIII.

Appendix 9

Date of opening of rail lines in the Census Districts of Devon.

	<u>Year</u>
Exeter	1844
Newton Abbot	1846
St. Thomas	1846
Totnes	1847
Plymouth	1848
Stoke Damerel	1848
Plympton St. Mary	1848
East Stonehouse	1848
Tiverton	1848
Crediton	1851
Barnstaple	1854
Bideford	1855
Tavistock	1859
Axminster	1868
Okehampton	1871
Torrington	1872
Honiton	1874
Holsworthy	1879
Kingsbridge	1893
South Molton by passed by railway line.	

Source: W. G. Hoskins, Devon, London, 1964, p. 161.

Appendix 10

Date of opening of rail lines in the Census Districts of Suffolk.

	<u>Year</u>
Ipswich	1846
Bury St. Edmunds	1846
Stow	1846
Mutford	1847
Samford	1847
Cosford	1847
Sudbury	1849
Wangford	1854
Woodbridge	1859
Blything	1859
Plomesgate	1859
Risbridge	1865
Hartismere	1867
Mildenhall	1885
Bosmere	
Thingoe	
Hoxne	

Source: David St. John Thomas, gen. ed., A Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain, 5 vols. (Newton Abbot: David & Charles Ltd., 1968), vol. V: The Eastern Counties, by D. I. Gordon.

Appendix 11

Schooling Statistics for the Census Districts of Devon.

	<u>No. of day schools</u>	<u>% of children on books of day schools to total population 1851</u>	<u>% of children on books of Sunday schools to total population 1851</u>	<u>% of day school children belong- ing to private schools 1851</u>
Exeter	114	14.76	6.43	43.80
Bideford	65	13.57	17.08	35.77
Stoke Damerel	103	13.42	9.47	49.09
Totnes	125	13.32	12.68	51.28
Newton Abbot	168	12.60	7.96	39.79
Tavistock	68	12.43	12.40	32.95
South Molton	68	12.12	13.02	29.48
Tiverton	92	11.69	11.36	27.07
Kingsbridge	83	11.59	11.51	58.85
Barnstaple	126	11.29	11.75	39.23
Axminster	66	11.23	12.56	38.75
East Stonehouse	18	10.73	5.74	30.79
St. Thomas	146	10.16	6.17	41.24
Torrington	49	9.99	14.23	33.44
Honiton	61	9.80	10.62	23.80
Plympton St. Mary	54	9.72	7.46	34.18
Okehampton	52	9.47	8.85	55.17
Crediton	55	9.32	8.89	31.39
Plymouth	96	9.23	8.70	43.61
Holsworthy	21	5.08	12.18	50.25

Source: Calculated from the Census of Great Britain, 1851,
Education, England and Wales: Reports and Tables
(1854), BPP, Population, XI.

Appendix 12

Schooling Statistics for the Census Districts of Suffolk.

	<u>No. of day schools</u>	<u>% of children on books of day schools to total population 1851</u>	<u>% of children on books of Sunday schools to total population 1851</u>	<u>% of day school children belong- ing to private schools 1851</u>
Cosford	65	14.61	12.42	29.65
Blything	90	13.71	13.05	39.52
Mutford	63	13.40	9.41	36.36
Stow	84	13.40	14.15	41.02
Samford	50	13.33	9.79	29.41
Thingoe	69	13.19	10.32	26.23
Plomesgate	77	13.12	12.04	39.17
Woodbridge	82	13.08	10.77	37.13
Wangford	63	13.40	9.41	36.36
Sudbury	87	12.63	12.65	29.98
Ipswich	82	12.35	4.91	32.69
Mildenhall	30	11.24	17.48	29.98
Bosmere	61	10.83	12.21	37.35
Bury St. Edmunds	23	10.51	8.03	34.26
Hartismere	59	9.24	10.00	30.45
Hoxne	51	9.04	10.88	34.42
Risbridge	51	8.21	13.71	43.65

Source: Calculated from the Census of Great Britain, 1851,
Education, England and Wales: Reports and Tables
(1854), BPP, Population, XI.

Appendix 13

Percentage of Church of England attendants in the Census
Districts of Devon calculated from the number of total
attendants at Public Worship on Sunday March 30, 1851,
(including Sunday Scholars).

St. Thomas	76.3
South Molton	68.0
Honiton	65.5
Axminster	65.1
Crediton	64.9
Exeter	64.7
Plympton St. Mary	64.3
Newton Abbot	60.0
Okehampton	59.6
Totnes	58.4
Tiverton	56.9
Barnstaple	55.4
Kingsbridge	53.8
Torrington	49.2
Plymouth	44.4
Tavistock	43.5
Bideford	43.2
Holsworthy	42.2
East Stonehouse	39.7
Stoke Damerel	38.7
(Average)	55.6

Source: Calculated from the Census of Great Britain, 1851,
Religious Worship, England and Wales: Reports
and Tables, BPP, Population, X.

Appendix 14

Percentage of Church of England attendants in the Census
Districts of Suffolk calculated from the number of total
attendants at Public Worship on Sunday March 30, 1851,
(including Sunday Scholars).

Thingoe	81.3
Sudbury	72.2
Mutford	71.1
Samford	62.3
Bury St. Edmunds	61.8
Plomesgate	60.3
Cosford	56.8
Ipswich	56.1
Bosmere	54.9
Blything	53.9
Woodbridge	52.7
Hoxne	52.3
Risbridge	52.1
Hartismere	51.0
Stow	44.4
Wangford	42.6
Mildenhall	37.6
(Average)	56.6

Source: Calculated from the Census of Great Britain, 1851,
Religious Worship, England and Wales: Reports and
Tables, BPP, Population, X.

Appendix 15

Male/Female Composition of the Population aged between 5 and
19 in Devon and Suffolk.

From the Census Report of 1851, I have calculated the percentage of females to the total population aged between 5 and 19 in the different districts of Devon and Suffolk.

The figures clearly show that in both counties, districts with a greater proportion of females tended to be more literate. Once again, in Devon, the principal challenge to the pattern comes from East Stonehouse. The most striking exception of the pattern in Suffolk is provided by Samford, a high literacy district, but showing an extremely low proportion of females as compared to the other districts. However, it should be noted that the only three Suffolk districts with a higher proportion of females than males were all high literacy districts.

Ages of Males and Females between 5 and 19 enumerated
March 31st, 1851 (Devon Districts)

	5 to 9 years	10 to 14 years	15 to 19 years	% of female to total population between 5 & 19
East Stonehouse	M- 653 F- 702	- 472 - 545	- 411 - 564	- 54.1 (L.L.)*
Stoke Damerel	M-2060 F-2088	- 1682 - 1741	- 1190 - 1889	- 53.7 (H.L.)
Exeter	M-1746 F-1647	- 1549 - 1625	- 1443 - 1814	- 51.8 (H.L.)
Totnes	M-1966 F-2010	- 1746 - 1870	- 1545 - 1681	- 51.4 (H.L.)
Plymouth	M-2741 F-2718	- 2341 - 2524	- 2466 - 2640	- 51.0 (M.L.)
Newton Abbot	M-2999 F-2914	- 2620 - 2704	- 2325 - 2585	- 50.8 (H.L.)
Bideford	M-1236 F-1256	- 1102 - 1095	- 967 - 1046	- 50.7 (H.L.)
St. Thomas	M-2804 F-2756	- 2571 - 2497	- 2222 - 2376	- 50.1 (H.L.)
Axminster	M-1213 F-1200	- 1110 - 1087	- 1038 - 1074	- 50.0 (L.L.)
Barnstaple	M-2248 F-2253	- 2244 - 2098	- 1914 - 2019	- 49.9 (H.L.)
Honiton	M-1420 F-1443	- 1407 - 1247	- 1215 - 1277	- 49.5 (M.L.)
Plympton St. Mary	M-1298 F-1258	- 1095 - 1116	- 980 - 899	- 49.2 (M.L.)
Torrington	M-1078 F- 993	- 961 - 923	- 920 - 946	- 49.2 (L.L.)
Kingsbridge	M-1418 F-1354	- 1297 - 1193	- 969 - 1009	- 49.1 (M.L.)
Tiverton	M-2487 F-2472	- 2221 - 2091	- 2038 - 1945	- 49.1 (M.L.)
South Molton	M-1251 F-1238	- 1182 - 1102	- 1088 - 960	- 48.4 (M.L.)
Okehampton	M-1230 F-1225	- 1143 - 1096	- 1126 - 946	- 48.2 (M.L.)
Holsworthy	M- 690 F- 732	- 685 - 591	- 652 - 546	- 48.0 (L.L.)

Tavistock	M-1789	-	1463	-	1544	-	47.8 (L.L.)
	F-1701	-	1419	-	1277		
Crediton	M-1360	-	1193	-	1137	-	47.3 (L.L.)
	F-1288	-	1063	-	963		

* L.L. Indicated Low Literacy, M.L. Medium Literacy, H.L. High Literacy.

Source: Census of Great Britain, 1851, Population Tables:
Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations and Birth-
Place of the People, BPP, 1852-53, VIII.

Ages of Males and Females between 5 and 19 enumerated

March 31st, 1851 (Suffolk Districts)

	5 to 9 years	10 to 14 years	15 to 19 years	% of female to total population between 5 & 19
Bury St. Edmunds	M- 762 F- 817	- 772 - 796	- 648 - 685	- 53.4 (H.L.) *
Mutford	M-1211 F-1186	- 1118 - 1153	- 846 - 033	- 51.5 (H.L.)
Ipswich	M-1714 F-1756	- 1595 - 1570	- 1522 - 1751	- 51.2 (H.L.)
Mildenhall	M- 657 F- 689	- 572 - 559	- 533 - 513	- 49.9 (M.L.)
Stow	M-1360 F-1387	- 1166 - 1192	- 1067 - 969	- 49.7 (M.L.)
Sudbury	M-1926 F-1870	- 1661 - 1714	- 1581 - 1528	- 49.7 (L.L.)
Wangford	M- 761 F- 793	- 878 - 775	- 688 - 712	- 49.5 (H.L.)
Plomesgate	M-1359 F-1350	- 1271 - 1200	- 994 - 980	- 49.3 (M.L.)
Blything	M-1738 F-1743	- 1620 - 1539	- 1281 - 220	- 49.2 (M.L.)
Risbridge	M-1185 F-1152	- 1055 - 1009	- 908 - 889	- 49.2 (L.L.)
Hartismere	M-1164 F-1189	- 1105 - 1050	- 1020 - 928	- 49.1 (L.L.)
Woodbridge	M-1443 F-1380	- 1303 - 1230	- 1109 - 1036	- 48.6 (H.L.)
Thingoe	M-1260 F-1216	- 1058 - 1062	- 961 - 802	- 48.4 (M.L.)
Cosford	M-1089 F-1038	- 1033 - 1016	- 1008 - 884	- 48.4 (L.L.)
Bosmere	M-1063 F-1123	- 984 - 890	- 932 - 754	- 48.2 (M.L.)
Hoxne	M- 967 F- 929	- 935 - 872	- 857 - 761	- 48.1 (L.L.)
Samford	M- 811 F- 715	- 698 - 652	- 595 - 524	- 7.3 (H.L.)

* H.L. indicates High Literacy, M.L. Medium Literacy, L.L. Low Literacy.

Source: Census of Great Britain, 1851, Population Tables: Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations and Birth-Place of the People, BPP, 1852-53, VIII.

Notes

Chapter 1

Introduction.

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2. W. B. Stephens, 'An anatomy of illiteracy in mid-Victorian Devon', in Jeffrey Porter, ed., Education and Labour in the South-West, University of Exeter, 1975.
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4. R. S. Schofield, 'The Measurement of Literacy in Pre-Industrial England', in Jack Goody, ed., Literacy in Traditional Societies, Cambridge, 1968, p. 311.
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6. Lawrence Stone, 'Literacy and Education in England 1640 - 1900', Past and Present, XXXXII, 1969, p. 122.
7. Carlo M. Cipolla, Literacy and Development in the West, London, 1969, p. 13.
8. Schofield, op. cit., p. 319.
9. Stone, op. cit., p. 118.
10. Schofield, op. cit., p. 321.
11. Cipolla, op. cit., p. 18.
12. Ibid., p. 15

13. G. R. Lucas, 'The diffusion of literacy in England and Wales in the 19th century', Studies in Education, III, 1960 - 61, p. 247.
14. Stephens, op. cit., p. 8.

Chapter 2

Contrasts

1. James Caird, English Agriculture in 1850 - 51, London, 1967, p. 48.
2. Joan Thirsk and Jean Imray, Suffolk Farming in the nineteenth century, Suffolk, 1958, p. 27.
3. Reports of the Assistant Commissioners, Royal Commission on Agriculture, BPP, 1880, XIX, Mr. Little's Report on Devon, p. 92; and Mr. Druce's Report on Suffolk, p. 410.
4. Thirsk and Imray, op. cit., p. 18.
5. G. E. Fussell, 'High Farming in South Western England 1840 - 1880', Economic Geography, XXIV, 1948, p. 70.
6. First Report of the Royal Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture, BPP, 1867-68, XVII; Rev. J. Fraser's Report, p. 36.
7. Thirsk and Imray, op. cit., p. 27.
8. I have calculated percentages from the Census of Great Britain, 1851, Population Abstracts: Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations, and Birthplaces of the People, BPP, 1852-53, VIII.
9. Children's Employment Commission, Sixth Report of the Commissioners on Organized Agricultural Gangs, BPP, 1867, XVI.
10. Carlo M. Cipolla, Literacy and Development in the West, London, 1969, p. 75.
11. Second Report of the Royal Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture, BPP, 1868 - 69, XIII, Mr. Tremenhere's Report, p. ix.
12. H. Raynbird, 'On the Farming of Suffolk' Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society, VII, 1847, p. 323.
13. It should be noted that indoor farm servants were often provided with free accommodation. Devon's indoor farm workers, therefore, probably had an advantage over Suffolk labourers in this respect.

14. Cipolla, op. cit., p. 76
15. Michael Sanderson, 'Literacy and Social Mobility in the Industrial Revolution in England', Past and Present, LVI, 1972, p. 89.
16. Ibid., p. 102.
17. E. G. West, 'Literacy and the Industrial Revolution', Economic History Review, XXXI, 1978, p. 382.
18. W. E. Minchinton, 'Economic history since 1700', in Frank Barlow, ed., Exeter and its Region, Exeter, 1969, p. 178.
19. A. H. Shorter, W. L. D. Ravenhill and K. J. Gregory, South West England, London, 1969, p. 161.
20. Ibid., p. 164.
21. William Page, ed., The Victoria History of the County of Suffolk, II, London, 1907, p. 251.
22. Ibid., p. 253.
23. Ibid., p. 253.
24. Ibid., p. 254.
25. Census of Great Britain, 1851, Population Abstracts: Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations, and Birthplaces of the People, BPP, 1852-53, VIII.
The census report does not clearly class occupations under industries. I have used persons engaged in art and mechanic production, persons working and dealing in animal matters, persons working and dealing in matters derived from the vegetable kingdom and persons working and dealing in minerals, as representing industrial work.

Chapter 3

Anatomy of Local Regions

1. Lawrence Stone, 'Literacy and Education in England 1640-1900', Past and Present, XXXXII, 1969, p. 100.
2. Carlo M. Cipolla, Literacy and Development in the West, London, 1969, p. 75
3. Census of England and Wales, 1881, General Report, BPP, 1883, IV, p. 22.
4. Ibid., p. 22.
5. I have calculated town population from the Census Report 1871, BPP, Population, XV, Appendix A, Table 32. Those census districts which did not show any towns in this appendix, has been taken to represent areas with less than 25 per cent urban population.
6. Appendix 2 shows the census districts for which I have been able to determine urban and rural population.
7. Appendix 4 shows individual density figures for the census districts of Suffolk.
8. See Appendix 3 for individual density figures of Devon districts.
9. See Appendix 4.
10. These figures have been given in the Census of England and Wales, 1871, General Report, BPP, 1873, XV, p. 302.
11. Cipolla, op. cit., p. 75.
12. Professional Class denotes persons engaged in the general or local government work, persons engaged in the defense of the country and persons engaged in the learned professions or in literature, art, and science (with their immediate sub-ordinates). Commercial Class denotes persons engaged in the conveyance of men, animals, goods, and messages, and persons who buy or sell, keep or lend money, houses, or goods of various kinds. Industrial Class represents persons working and dealing in food and drinks, in animal substances, in vegetable

substances and in minerals. Agricultural Class represents persons possessing or working the land, and engaged in growing grain, fruit, grasses, animals and other products.

13. Exeter and Newton Abbot averaged 10.2 per cent Professional and Commercial people, 28.6 per cent in the Industrial category and only 8.2 per cent were engaged in agricultural work. In contrast, the corresponding figures for Torrington and Holsworthy were 3.7, 26.3 and 29.1 respectively.
14. Appendix 5 gives details of individual Devon districts.
15. Appendix 6 gives details of Suffolk districts.
16. Exeter had 11.9% of Professional and Commercial people, 35.6% Industrial and 2.7% were engaged in Agricultural work. Ipswich showed 11.4% in the Professional category, 34.0% in the Industrial sector and 3.4 per cent were involved in Agricultural work.
17. Cipolla, op. cit., p. 75.
18. Appendix 7 gives complete picture of individual Devon districts.
19. See Appendix 8 for individual figures of Suffolk districts.
20. David St. John Thomas, gen. ed., A Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain, 5 vols., Newton Abbot, vol. V: The Eastern Counties, by D. I. Gordon, p. 23.
21. South Molton was by-passed by the rail line.
22. Appendix 9 gives date of opening of rail lines in Devon districts.
23. Appendix 10 shows opening dates for individual Suffolk districts.
24. R. S. Schofield, 'The Measurement of Literacy in Pre-Industrial England', in Jack Goody, ed., Literacy in Traditional Societies, Cambridge, 1968, p. 315.

25. Exeter and Newton Abbot averaged 12.5% children in Day schools, 9.5% in Sunday schools and 43.2% in Private schools. In comparison, Torrington and Holsworthy had 8.1% Day school children, 13.4% children in Sunday schools and 37.6% children in Private schools.
26. See Appendix 11 for complete details of Devon districts.
27. Appendix 12 gives details of schooling figures of Suffolk districts.
28. Stone, op. cit., p. 81.
29. Cipolla, op. cit., p. 73.
30. Alan Everitt, 'Non-conformity in the Victorian Countryside', in T. G. Cook, ed., Local Studies and the History of Education, London, 1972, p. 60.
31. See Appendix 13 for individual Devon district figures.
32. Appendix 14 lists figures for each Suffolk district.
33. I have also calculated the total percentage of children aged between 5 and 14 in the two counties and have worked out their ratio to children on books of Day schools and Sunday schools. Suffolk still showed a higher percentage than Devon.
34. W. B. Stephens, 'Regional Variations in Education during the Industrial Revolution 1780-1870', Educational Administration and History, Monograph No. 1, Leeds, 1973, p. 30.
35. Schofield, op. cit., p. 316.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

1. See Appendix 1 for literacy figures of different counties in 1870.
2. R. S. Schofield, 'The Measurement of Literacy in Pre-Industrial England,' in Jack Goody, ed., Literacy in Traditional Societies, Cambridge, 1968, p. 317.
3. Carlo M. Cipolla, Literacy and Development in the West, London, 1969, p. 24.
4. Lawrence Stone, 'Literacy and Education in England 1640 - 1900', Past and Present, XXXXII, 1969, p. 94.
5. Cipolla, op. cit., p. 25.
6. Asher Tropp, The School Teachers, London, 1957, p. 34.
7. Robert Roberts, The Classic Slum: Salford life in the first quarter of the century, Manchester, 1971, p. 166.
8. Stone, op. cit., p. 95.
9. Tropp, op. cit., p. 77.
10. The State of Popular Education in England, BPP, 1861, XXI, p. 70.

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