

**“From the Gutter and the Hedgerow”:
Working Class Education and Motives of Education Reform**

Abstract: The Elementary Education Acts of 1870, 1876, and 1880 changed the face of working class education in England from its previously unregulated state. This paper serves to expose motives of the government in these changes through popular opinion expressed in various journals from 1868-1893. Most of the motives expressed by these authors, most of whom are anonymous, concern educating the working class to develop a more moral and useful populous. The government accomplished this through removing the ability of working class schools to function through the Elementary Education Acts, in part by changing the way schools enforced attendance and legally disallowing children from working.